

JASPERS Evaluation

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JASPERS Evaluation

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Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

Introduction and Terms of Reference for the Evaluation

JASPERS was established in late 2005 as a technical assistance facility to increase the capacity of beneficiary countries to make the best use of EU funding. Improvement of the quantity and quality of projects submitted for funding approval was anticipated to increase the benefits of these projects to the new Member States and the European Union as a whole. JASPERS support is extended to projects in a number of sectors including ports, airports, railways, roads, urban infrastructure and services, energy and solid waste, water supply and wastewater, and the knowledge economy.

The purpose of this Evaluation was to establish the impact of JASPERS, from 2005 until the end of June 2011, on the quality and timeliness of the preparation, submission, approval and implementation of Major projects in the countries which joined the European Union in 2004 and 2007. The Evaluation was also to obtain evidence of improved technical capacity on the part of Member States, and to discuss the future direction of the JASPERS Initiative.

Findings

JASPERS Resources and Outputs

Since its inception in 2006, JASPERS staff numbers have grown from 16 to 89. The largest increase was 40 additional staff between 2006 and 2007, when JASPERS was still in a building-up phase, though the number of staff has increased every year since. JASPERS annual budget increased from €11.6m in 2006 to €38.2 m in 2011. During the period 2006-2011 as a whole JASPERS expenditure totalled some €167m.

The total investment value of JASPERS-supported projects from 2006 to 2011 was almost €64bn. Of these, project with a value of approximately €30bn had been approved by the Commission by the end of the evaluation period.

The total annual assignments being undertaken by JASPERS rose from 98 in 2006 to 493 in 2011, while annual completed assignments increased from 3 to 98 over the same period.

Use of JASPERS

In the period since the Inception of JASPERS in 2005 up to end June 2011, the twelve new Member States submitted 313 major projects to the DG for Regional Policy for funding. Of these, 231 or 74% were Jaspers assisted.

- Seven Member States – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia used JASPERS for all their major project applications.
- Poland and Estonia were the only two Member States with low levels of use of JASPERS: approximately 50% of Major projects in these two Member States were JASPERS assisted.
- There were 82 non-assisted Major projects of which 62 or 76% were in Poland
- JASPERS provided assistance for 91 non-Major projects, of which Romania was responsible for 26, followed by Poland with 19.
- JASPERS undertook 87 horizontal assignments in the period, of which 29 or one-third were in Romania.

Duration of JASPERS Assistance

The average duration of JASPERS involvement in the planning of Major projects was 489 elapsed days. In general terms, the larger the capital costs of the project, the longer the JASPERS involvement. There is evidence that the

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JASPERS Duration was longer for railway projects, urban transport projects and energy and knowledge economy projects and lower for water and wastewater projects.

For non-Major projects the average duration of JASPERS involvement was 594 days. Again the duration tended to be longer for rail projects and shorter water and wastewater projects. The average JASPERS duration for horizontal assignments was 388 days.

Scale and Scope of JASPERS Assistance with Major Projects

The scale of JASPERS support to Major projects was extensive. Overall, the average number of topics per Major project on which JASPERS provided advice was 4.8, while the average number of meetings/visits was 5.3. The Czech Republic was notable for availing of relatively lower levels of JASPERS assistance, with an average of 2.9 topics per project and 2.7 meetings/site visits per project.

There is a disparity in the scale of JASPERS support required by different sectors. Solid Waste projects had relatively few topics assisted on by JASPERS, averaging 3.4 compared to the Knowledge Economy or Road sectors both of which sought advice on an average of 5.4 topics. The Knowledge Economy also appears to have required a greater level of JASPERS assistance in terms of the number of meetings attended by JASPERS, which averaged 8.1.

Over time, it appears that there has been little change in the scale of JASPERS effort, however it is evident that larger projects require assistance in relation to a higher number of topics and the number of meetings attended by JASPERS is larger.

With regard to the scope of JASPERS Supports, Cost Benefit Analysis was the topic on which JASPERS support was most frequently sought occurring in 74.4 per cent of all projects. This was followed by Funding and Financing Issues at 35.1 per cent of projects, Project Concept and Programming at 30.4 per cent, and Environmental Issues at 29.2 per cent. Larger projects of greater than €150m tended to have greater need for support across a range of topics than smaller projects.

The topics for which JASPERS Support was least required were Competition and State Aids at 8.3 per cent of projects, Project Cost Estimation at 9.5 per cent and Procurement at 10.1 per cent.

There was a tendency for the relative support on some topics to decline over time. Distinguishing between the DG for Regional Policy Decision periods 2006-2009 and 2010-2012, the latter period saw a decline in support relating to Project Design, Cost Benefit Analysis, Funding and Financing Issues, Procurement and Project Implementation and Structures Issues. In contrast, there was an increase in support in relation to Project Concept and Programming, Demand Analysis and Modelling, Risk and Sensitivity Analysis, and Competition and State Aids.

Impact of JASPERS on the Timelines for Major Projects

The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration relates to the time between the submission of a Major project application to DG for Regional Policy and the funding decision. An analysis of Decision Durations for Major JASPERS-assisted projects revealed an average Duration of 272 days. The equivalent Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects was found to be 386 days. The availability of JASPERS assistance appears to have reduced the Decision Duration, on average, by 114 days.

The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration is broken down into periods during which the DG is actively accessing the project application (the active Decision Duration); and periods when the applications are interrupted (the interrupted Decision Duration). The additional 114 days required by non-JASPERS assisted projects was split into

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42 active Decision days and 74 interrupted days. Hence, non-assisted projects experienced proportionally more interruption days, relative to their JASPERS-assisted counterparts.

Across all sectors, for which there was comparison data (namely 'Roads'; 'Water and Wastewater'; 'Railways'; 'Urban Transport'; and 'Knowledge Economy'), the average Decision Durations for JASPERS-assisted Major projects were shorter than for non-assisted projects. The largest variation between Decision Durations was in respect of the Urban Transport sector, where the Decision Duration for non-assisted projects exceeded that of assisted projects by 231 days. The shortest variation was experienced in the Water and Wastewater sector, where the Decision Duration for non-assisted projects exceeded that of assisted projects by 25 days.

Although, the fact that the reduction in the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration held true for different project types is reassuring, nonetheless the fact that JASPERS-assisted and non-assisted projects might differ in composition remained a cause for concern. Analysis was conducted to ensure a like for like comparison and this reduced the impact of JASPERS assistance from 114 days to 86 days.

The fact that a disproportionate number of the projects not yet decided by the end of the Evaluation period were non-JASPERS, suggests that these findings will understate the eventual impact of JASPERS on Decision Duration.

The case studies and discussions with stakeholders indicate that this positive effect on Decision Durations was not offset by any negative effect on the time taken by Member States to prepare applications.

Impact of JASPERS on the DG for Regional Policy Decision Making Process

Of JASPERS-assisted Major projects, 82% were subsequently interrupted by the DG for Regional Policy. An identical proportion of non-JASPERS assisted Major projects were interrupted. These are high rates and reflect the large range of topics that can precipitate an interruption. There is some evidence that JASPERS were called on to provide advice on the more technically difficult projects.

The extent to which JASPERS successfully provided advice on a topic that was not subsequently the topic raised in an interruption varied across the topics. Of the eleven topics identified, JASPER achieved a success rate over 70% in respect of seven of them and over 50% in respect of another three. This indicates that in at least some cases, there was an apparent overlap in that the topic that JASPERS advised on was nevertheless the subject of an interruption

Of a sample of 20 projects that fell into this overlap category, the reasons why this had occurred included:

- JASPERS were asked to vet the feasibility study and or the project application and DG for Regional Policy identified an issue that was not explicitly considered by JASPERS;
- JASPERS may have felt that it was not practicable to recommence the feasibility study process without inordinate delays or that the issue raised did not cast doubt on the overall economic value of the project; and
- JASPERS explicitly advised on an issue, but DG for Regional Policy subsequently took a different view of the issue from a technical viewpoint.

In more than half the cases reviewed, it is apparent that there was a conflict between the JASPERS advice and the views of the DG for Regional Policy. This raises the need to ensure that there is better co-ordination of views on technical issues between JASPERS and DG for Regional Policy.

Impact of JASPERS on Project Quality

JASPERS had an impact on the quality of project development as well as on the underlying quality of projects themselves. The evidence from timelines, case studies and consultations with Member States all confirmed its positive impact on the quality of project development by Member States.

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It was clear that in the vast majority of cases JASPERS is involved in projects at a late stage of development. JASPERS is usually involved at the stage where a project is being appraised and a decision is made by a sanctioning authority on whether to proceed with the project. In some cases, JASPERS was involved when the project was completed, and the Member State in question was retrospectively seeking funding from the Commission. This resulted from the timing of JASPERS establishment relative to the lead time required to develop a Major project for implementation in the current programming period.

The scope for JASPERS to improve project quality itself was therefore limited, as it has typically become involved in projects at a stage when specific projects have already been chosen for development by Member States and the design of each project is relatively fixed.

However, JASPERS has had a positive impact on project quality in at least some cases and these instances have delivered significant benefits. In at least some projects JASPERS did get involved at an early stage of project development and was able to contribute to project quality. In some other cases, JASPERS advice at a late stage of project development led to a Member State revisiting the earlier stages of development and securing improvements in project quality. Other positive impacts on project quality were secured as follows:

- JASPERS advice and intervention occasionally had a positive impact on the detailed design and implementation work that takes place after a project application has been made;
- JASPERS advice following a review of draft application material has occasionally led a Member State to revisit its option selection, and hence led to a better project design being selected;
- JASPERS may highlight shortcomings in project quality in its Completion Note on a project, and these issues are then taken up by the DG for Regional Policy. This leads either to an eventual improvement in the quality of the project or the postponement or withdrawal of a low quality project.

JASPERS was able to provide examples of projects where its intervention and advice led to a reduction in the cost of a project, or prevented a non-beneficial project from proceeding. These examples indicate the scale of the benefit that can be realised from even a small number of interventions to improve the quality of projects.

AECOM also reviewed a sample of major project applications where funding had not yet been approved by the Commission. This review identified applications where JASPERS had raised concerns about the quality of the project in its Completion Note, and this had been picked up in Interruption Letters from the Commission with the result that projects were deferred until the issues had been dealt with.

Impact of JASPERS on Administrative Capacity

Both JASPERS work on individual projects and its horizontal assignments have the potential to increase administrative capacity among stakeholders in the Member States. Member States acknowledged that transfer of technical knowledge had occurred through project related JASPERS assistance. The focus on advice at the application stage had led to a much greater understanding of both EU legislation, the requirements the funding eligibility appraisal process, cost-benefit techniques, and EIA procedures.

The potential for assistance with individual projects to build administrative capacity is limited in Member States with relatively few projects under development. Beneficiaries in such Member States have relatively little interaction with JASPERS and officials in beneficiary organisations may have had limited subsequent involvement in further project planning activities.

Conversely, the potential for project advisory work to impact on the capacity of beneficiaries is enhanced where those beneficiaries are in one of the larger Member States and the beneficiary is responsible for a number of projects or indeed a programme.

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Managing Authorities, government Ministries and intermediate bodies can act as a useful repository of knowledge gained through JASPERS assistance with individual projects.

Horizontal assignments have a major role to play in developing administrative capacity. Greater dissemination of the results of horizontal assignments both nationally and internationally would pay dividends.

JASPERS Structures and Performance

JASPERS structures are working well. The separation of JASPERS from other EIB activities has facilitated the necessary focus on the task at hand, while retaining access to the wider EIB skill base. The focus on major projects is justified in terms of the potential impact on absorption of funds and quality of projects. The sectoral approach adopted by JASPERS is complementary to the approach used by the DG for Regional Policy, which is based on Member State desks.

The priority for JASPERS as a technical assistance facility is to ensure that they acquire experts with the best skills and experience. This approach should not be compromised for the sake of language capability.

Over time, there has been an evolution to a tripartite arrangement, with JASPERS sharing more information with the DG for Regional Policy and informal contacts between all parties. It is our view that this now needs to be formalised with the development of a protocol to elaborate on the working arrangements between the three parties.

Project beneficiaries, managing authorities and DG for Regional Policy desk officers have a positive view of JASPERS performance, although there were concerns that the advice was somewhat deficient in the early stages of the JASPERS initiative. In this regard, problems with the quality of advice on environmental matters were cited on a number of occasions. The concerns of DG for Regional Policy desk officers with regard to some technical issues reinforce the view that more interaction between the desk officers and JASPERS officials to reach an agreed approach on a range of technical issues would be valuable.

Recommendations

Overview

The JASPERS initiative has proved to be of substantial value to Member States in the development of projects and applications for funding. It is recommended that JASPERS continue to operate, as there continues to be strong demand for its services among Member States.

At the time of writing, it is understood that JASPERS future role may be changed. The recommendations which follow are based on JASPERS continuing to function as a source of advice to Member States on project planning.

Our prime recommendation for change is that JASPERS should seek to influence project selection and design in the Member States to the greatest extent possible. This would involve a shift away from advising on the project application form to an involvement in project planning in its totality and, where possible, in strategy development.

Our second major recommendation is that JASPERS should have an explicit objective of developing the project planning capacity of the Member States and there should be an increased focus in its work on this objective.

JASPERS was set up to work on behalf of the Member States, but its involvement in project planning was not made mandatory. This meant that JASPERS responded to requests for support from Member States and had to earn their

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trust. The way it interacted with DG for Regional Policy at the level of project planning and applications for funding had also to be developed over time.

The JASPERS initiative has now matured and it is recommended that JASPERS should adopt a more strategic approach to its work and that working arrangements between JASPERS, the DG for Regional Policy and the Member States should be more formalised.

A Strategic Approach

JASPERS will be wholly successful when the Member States no longer have need of its services, and can “graduate” to developing investment projects without assistance. It is recognised that some Member States may have stronger project planning institutions and capabilities than others and that the evolution of JASPERS involvement will differ from one Member State to the other. It is also recognised that if JASPERS is to adopt the additional objective of capacity building and to change its focus, it will have to reallocate its resources. To address these issues, it is recommended that JASPERS operate via Strategic Plans for each Member State of, say, three years duration. These plans would be informed by an assessment of the areas of project planning where individual Member States have most need of JASPERS assistance. Member States will remain ultimately responsible for their own project planning and development, and strategy development by JASPERS will not reduce in any way this responsibility and power of Member States. However, by developing its own assessment of priorities JASPERS will be able to engage with and advise Member States more effectively. The existence of these Strategic Plans would create pressure for Member States to adapt their use of JASPERS and to further develop their own project planning capacities.

These Strategies will have to be tailored to the needs and strengths of each Member State so must be developed based on JASPERS knowledge from working with Member States. It is not possible to make generalised recommendations at this stage. For example it might seem plausible to state that JASPERS should not give advice on non-Major projects. However in practice a specific future non-Major project could be the ideal opportunity to develop a key piece of capacity in the Member State in question.

The effort to be put into assistance with Major projects will be only one element of these strategies for JASPERS engagement with Member States. In practice it is often difficult to predict how many Major projects will be developed by a Member State, and the timetable for their development. These strategies will have to set ceilings or targets for the total number of Major projects where JASPERS will be able to assist.

More Formalised Working Arrangements

We believe that the concerns expressed by some Member States about the duplication of work by JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy are overdone. In our view, these are largely based on a misunderstanding of the respective roles of the two institutions. They demonstrate, nevertheless, that there is a need for greater clarity about how the project application and decision-making processes is expected to work. The fact that differences between the DG for Regional Policy and JASPERS on technical issues occur from time to time suggests that increased contact between the two entities to agree common interpretations would be valuable. Finally, project applications are referred to other Directorates General for comment, most notably the DG for Environmental Policy. The whole application process would benefit from a better understanding on the part of all the stakeholders of the precise approach taken by DG for Environmental Policy. It is recommended that a protocol be established that outlines the roles of respective stakeholders and establishes mechanisms to ensure that there is a common understanding of both the application rules and technical projects planning issues to the maximum extent possible.

This protocol would cover the areas of work where there can be a three way relationship between the Member State in question, JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy. Clarifying the roles of the three actors, and in particular that

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of JASPERS, would increase its ability to function effectively by enhancing its legitimacy and authority. It would also make JASPERS more accountable by further clarifying what is expected of it. The protocol would have to cover such areas as:

- Establishing a process for JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy to identify areas where they have a different interpretation of technical issues, and to arrive at a common position on these;
- Clarifying the respective roles of JASPERS, Member States and the DG for Regional Policy in the development of sectoral strategies. Specific recommendations for this area are set out in Section 11.3.5 below;
- Clarifying the respective roles of JASPERS, Member State and the DG for Regional Policy in the development of specific projects. This relationship has evolved over the current programming period. Sufficient experience now exists to develop a protocol covering such questions as:
 - The extent to which JASPERS can develop an opinion of a project and communicate that opinion directly to the DG for Regional Policy; and,
 - The status of Completion Notes and their intended audience. There is a need to clarify the purpose and primary audience of Completion Notes. If they are primarily advice from JASPERS to the Member State they could, in principle, be issued at any state of project development at the request of the Member State. A Completion Note primarily intended for a Member State could highlight areas where JASPERS regards project development as incomplete or flawed and set out JASPERS recommendations for completing and correcting the project development, e.g. amending a cost benefit calculation or carrying out an appropriate environmental assessment. If the primary audience is the DG for Regional Policy, the note would normally be issued when a Member State has completed its project development work. The emphasis of the Note would be different. For example, rather than pointing out that a cost benefit calculation had been carried out incorrectly and advising a Member State on how to correct the error, JASPERS might estimate the maximum effect of an error on the results of a cost benefit calculation and reach a judgement as to whether such a change in the result would materially affect the assessment of the project in question. Both approaches are potentially very useful for all parties, however there is a need to clarify which should be applied in practice.
- Communications between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy once an application for funding has been made. For example it can be useful for a DG for Regional Policy desk officer to contact JASPERS to discuss issues raised in a Completion Note. If this is to take place, all parties must be clear that this is a standard procedure. Similarly it could be useful to formalise the practice of sending JASPERS a copy of any Interruption Letters, and to make it clear that JASPERS can assist in preparing responses to Interruption Letters.

Impacting on the Design Stage of Projects

It has been concluded that JASPERS would have a greater impact on project quality if it is involved in project planning at an earlier stage. There are indications from some Member States that this is already happening. At the same time, it is recognised that JASPERS does not have the resources to be engaged in all aspects of the process. It is considered that the optimum use of JASPERS resources would be in advising on the terms of reference for

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project feasibility studies and on the assessment of these studies prior to their finalisation. This focus should be written in to the JASPERS Strategy Plan.

Sectoral Strategy Development

It is recognised that major investment decisions are made at the level of sectoral strategy plans and operational programmes. It would be highly desirable that JASPERS advice be available to Member States in the development of sectoral strategies. Again, there are instances of this occurring in some Member States, often through the support of the DG for Regional Policy desk officer. Final responsibility for strategic planning must stay with Member States, and JASPERS involvement would have to be advisory in nature, and take place at the invitation of Member States. However, given the benefits that would arise from greater involvement, it is recommended that JASPERS seek out this role and that DG for Regional Policy desk officers advocate for their inclusion. This process could feature in the protocol to which reference was made above.

Developing the Technical and Project Planning Capacities of Member States

It is clear that while project advisory work has positive benefits in terms of advancing the project planning capacities of Member States, there are barriers to significant progress if this pathway is relied on. This places the focus on horizontal assignments.

Horizontal Assignments have contributed to project quality by improving the capacity of Member States to select and develop high quality projects. However, JASPERS tends to carry out these assignments in response to Member State requests, rather than identifying opportunities to carry out these assignments. A more strategic approach is required, and it is recommended that, based on an analysis of Member States' project planning capacities, a programme of horizontal assignments should be put in place focusing on activities that would have the greatest impact on project planning and, ultimately, project quality.

Given resource constraints, the programme should contain activities that are cross Member States in impact, such as creating generic handbooks and other guidance material for all Member States based on the work already done in individual horizontal projects.

Successful transfer of knowledge requires action by Member States as well as JASPERS. It is recommended that DG for Regional Policy consider how it can incentivise Member States

to put structures in place to ensure that this happens. A first step in this process could be for the Managing Authorities to equip themselves to act as repositories and "clearing houses" for knowledge from individual projects.

Improving Knowledge Transfer from JASPERS Assignments

The JASPERS Steering Committee in June 2011 endorsed the establishment of a Networking Platform to facilitate dissemination of guidance and the outputs of other horizontal assignments. The evidence of this evaluation confirms the need for and the importance of such an initiative.

JASPERS experience with individual projects has also been a source of technical knowledge and one which will become more important as JASPERS becomes more involved with project design stage. There is a need for JASPERS to put in place a system to highlight technical issues that have been addressed and resolved in individual projects where they are considered to be of more general relevance. The Networking Platform could be a means of disseminating this material.

Section 1: Introduction



Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Context

JASPERS was established in late 2005 as a technical assistance facility to increase the capacity of beneficiary countries to make the best use of EU funding. Improvement of the quantity and quality of projects submitted for funding approval was anticipated to increase the benefits of these projects to the new Member States and the European Union as a whole. JASPERS support is extended to projects in a number of sectors including ports, airports, railways, roads, urban infrastructure and services, energy and solid waste, water supply and wastewater, and the knowledge economy.

By the end of 2011 JASPERS had provided assistance to Member States for 541 projects which had reached the stage of being approved for funding by the European Commission. It was providing assistance to a further 351 projects which were at various earlier stages of development. The total value of the projects which had reached the stage of approval with JASPERS assistance was almost €64bn. By the end of 2011 JASPERS had 89 staff and annual running costs of €32m.

Projects seeking support under the European Regional and Cohesion Funds must comply with the Implementing Regulations, of which Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 is the most relevant. In particular, Annex XXI of that Regulation sets out the application form that must be completed for project grant assistance. JASPERS provides technical support to Member States in the completion of this application process.

1.2 Terms of Reference

The Call for Tenders for this Study stated that the purpose of this evaluation was to establish the impact of JASPERS, from 2005 until the end of June 2011, on the quality and timeliness of the preparation, submission, approval and implementation of major projects in the countries which joined the European Union in 2004 and 2007.

There is a further requirement to obtain evidence of improved technical capacity on the part of Member States through identification of the extent to which the nature of the advice sought has changed over time, the extent of learning on the part of Member States and mechanisms to transfer technical knowledge to project applicants and Member States. Finally, those carrying out the study are asked to discuss the future direction of the JASPERS Initiative with regard to preparation of projects for the 2014-2020 programming period, strategic and horizontal support, capacity building and project implementation support. The discussion of the future direction of JASPERS is a minor objective of this study.

In addition to setting out the overall objectives of this study the Call for Tenders specified in details the Tasks that the evaluator was to complete. These were:

- Task 1: Construction of timelines for JASPERS assignments and approval of projects by the DG for Regional Policy and statistical analysis of these timelines;
- Task 2: Examining the links between specific areas of JASPERS advice and the DG for Regional Policy project assessment process;
- Task 3: Preparation of 10 Case Studies. Each case study is to examine the impact of JASPERS by comparing a project that received JASPERS support with a comparable project that did not receive JASPERS support;
- Task 4: Analysis of feedback from Member States and project beneficiaries. This Task is to include desk research, interviews with the DG for Regional Policy and JASPERS personnel as well as visits to key stakeholders in Member States and a series of workshops for representatives of Member States.

The Study was directed by a Steering Group convened by the DG for Regional Policy and comprising representatives of that body and JASPERS.

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1.3 Methodology Employed

1.3.1 Task 1: Construction of Timelines for JASPERS Assignments

Four different types of Timeline were developed for Task 1, namely:

- Timelines for the major projects which received JASPERS support and which were submitted to the DG for Regional Policy for approval;
- Timelines for the non-major projects which received JASPERS support and where the Member State then decided the future of the project;
- Timelines for the “horizontal” assignments which received JASPERS support; and,
- Timelines for the major projects that have been submitted to the DG for Regional Policy for approval without any assistance from JASPERS.

The completed timelines were then analysed to produce insights into the work done by JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy’s decision making process, and to isolate evidence of the impact that JASPERS had on the speed at which project applications were processed.

1.3.2 Task 2: Links between JASPERS advice and the DG for Regional Policy project assessment process

This Task examined the relationship between the scale and scope of JASPERS advice and the DG for Regional Policy’s project assessment for evidence of the impact of JASPERS through an assessment of:

- The correlation between the JASPERS duration for major projects and the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration; and
- The topics covered by JASPERS advice on major projects and the topics giving rise to delays in reaching decisions on applications for funding.

1.3.3 Task 3: Case Studies

Task 3 of this evaluation consisted of 10 case studies of Major JASPERS assisted projects which had been approved for funding by the DG for Regional Policy. The objective of these case studies was to provide an analysis of the effect of JASPERS technical assistance on the timing, quality, project development and preparation for submission to the DG for Regional Policy of Major projects. Each case study examined a Major JASPERS assisted project and compared it to another Major project which had not received JASPERS assistance but which was, in all other respects, comparable to the JASPERS assisted project. These case studies:

- Compared the length of time the comparable JASPERS assisted and non-JASPERS assisted projects took to be approved by the DG for Regional Policy;
- Identified the key issues which arose during the planning process of the case study projects;
- Established how these issues were resolved; and
- Evaluated other factors that had a significant influence on project development.

1.3.4 Task 4: Analysis of Feedback from Member States and Project Beneficiaries

Task 4 of this evaluation consisted of face to face interviews and workshops with key JASPERS stakeholders in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. These interviews and workshops were intended to refine and extend the findings from Tasks 1 to 3 on the impact of JASPERS. In particular they are intended to analyse the impact of JASPERS on the administrative capacity of these Member States. Specifically these interviews and workshops identified:

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- The key lessons learned in each country from participation in the JASPERS initiative;
- The mechanisms in place to transfer technical knowledge from JASPERS staff to project applicants and Member State authorities in general;
- Whether projects are encouraged to learn from each other within Member States;
- Factors affecting or limiting knowledge transfer between JASPERS and project applicants; and,
- Factors affecting or limiting knowledge transfer within Member States.

1.4 Reporting of the Results

The work of these tasks and their implications for the Study were summarised in two reports that were presented to and approved by the Steering Group. These were:

JASPERS Evaluation: First Intermediate Report 14th May 2012, which focused on Tasks 1 and 2; and

JASPERS Evaluation: Second Intermediate Report 4th October 2012, which was concerned with Tasks 3 and 4.

These reports were published on the DG for Regional Policy web site.

1.5 Structure of this Report

This Report is organised as follows:

- Sections 2 and 3 set out the context for this Evaluation and an overview of the processes followed by Member States, JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy as they develop Major projects;
- Sections 4 and 5 introduce the results of the Evaluation by presenting a profile of JASPERS assignments and setting out details of their duration, scale and scope;
- Sections 6 to 9 set out the Evaluation findings on the impact of JASPERS on:
 - o Project timing;
 - o The decision making process of the DG for Regional Policy;
 - o Project Quality; and,
 - o Administrative Capacity.
- Section 10 presents the Evaluators assessment of JASPERS structures and performance; and,
- Section 11 draws together the conclusions and recommendations of the Evaluation.

Section 2: Context for the Evaluation of JASPERS



Section 2: Context for the Evaluation of JASPERS

2.1 Introduction

Before setting out the main results of this Evaluation it is useful to summarise some key features of the context in which JASPERS operates. This section of the final report sets out the relevant background information on:

- The establishment and aims of JASPERS;
- Key features of JASPERS' structure;
- JASPERS' inputs, outputs and activities; and,
- The evaluation of JASPERS carried out by the European Investment Bank in 2006;

2.2 The Establishment of JASPERS

JASPERS was established in late 2005 as a technical assistance facility to increase the capacity of beneficiary countries to make the best use of EU funding. Improvement of the quantity and quality of projects submitted for funding approval was anticipated to increase the benefits of these projects to the new Member States and the European Union as a whole. JASPERS support is extended to projects in a number of sectors including ports, airports, railways, roads, urban infrastructure and services, energy and solid waste, water supply and wastewater, and the knowledge economy.

JASPERS provides technical support to Member States in the completion of applications for funding to the DG for Regional Policy. Each beneficiary Member State draws up an annual Action Plan of proposed JASPERS assignments. A Managing Authority operates in each Member State and is the first point of contact for agencies seeking JASPERS support. The technical issues covered include: reviewing cost-benefit analyses, reviewing feasibility studies, reviewing tender documents, support in preparing application forms, support in carrying out environmental impact assessments, review of project development, and the assessment of strategies or development of guidelines.

JASPERS assignments relate to major projects, non-major projects and horizontal assignments. Major projects are defined as those with a total cost of at least €50m for transport projects and €25m for environment and other projects. Since 2009, all projects with a total cost of at least €50m are major projects. Non-major projects are projects below €50m in value. Horizontal assignments are not related to a specific project. The JASPERS technical assistance offered is in the early stages of the project development.

JASPERS is a partnership between the European Commission (EC), the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) and has an annual budget in the region of €35m. By the end of 2010, JASPERS had undertaken 399 assignments, of which major projects accounted for 77%, while small projects and horizontal assignments accounted for 23%.

2.3 The Aims of JASPERS

Various documents refer to the role of JASPERS, from which inferences as to its objectives can be drawn.

The JASPERS concept paper refers to the need to ensure "a future pipeline of good quality projects on a scale not previously seen" and that "best use is made of the available resources in the coming programming period". It states clearly that the "objective of JASPERS is to assist the Member States to prepare projects of high quality which can be approved more quickly by the services of the Commission." Elsewhere in this document, there is a reference to the role of JASPERS in recommending "as part of its work programme how the functioning of the national administration can be improved, either by direct assistance from JASPERS or by assistance from other kinds of technical assistance". However, capacity building in the Member States is not an overt objective for JASPERS.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The Memorandum of Understanding between the institutions participating in JASPERS does not repeat this statement of objectives, but indicates that JASPERS is intended to support cohesion policy by increasing the quality of the technical advice available to project promoters”.

The most recent JASPERS brochure states that the aim of JASPERS is to “increase the quality and timely submission of projects to be approved by national authorities and the Commission” and that it “is geared towards accelerating the absorption of the available funds”. It further notes “JASPERS’ core focus is support for the preparation of projects for the current Structural Funds programming period (2007-2013) “ and that in “anticipation of the next programming period (2014-2020), JASPERS also provides assistance in the preparation of projects to be submitted for funding after 2013 and support on horizontal and strategic issues, capacity building and implementation of projects”.

It is clear from the above that JASPERS is focussed on improving the quality and timeliness of projects and that these are the principal criteria against which it should be evaluated. If timely and high quality projects are developed, then a high rate of absorption of funds is more likely to be achieved.

2.4 Key Features of JASPERS’ Structure

JASPERS is a technical assistance facility implemented in partnership between the EIB and the DG for Regional Policy. JASPERS is a separate structure within the EIB. It was set up to offer advice on programming, project preparation and project appraisal to twelve new Member States. The principal focus of its advisory activities is on major projects.

It has a regional structure with offices in Warsaw, Vienna and Bucharest, as well as a head office in Luxembourg. It is overseen by a Steering Committee which undertakes annual reviews of JASPERS operations. Its working language is English.

There is no obligation on the part of the Member States to use JASPERS, so that it is a demand driven process. Action Plans setting out JASPERS activities are agreed with the Member States on an annual basis. Completion Notes are issued when assignments are complete. While JASPERS advises Member States on their project applications, the decision to provide grant assistance remains with the European Commission.

JASPERS provides technical advice largely on a sectoral basis. That is, sectoral experts are recruited to the regional offices, rather than having generalists who focus on particular Member States.

It is important to note that JASPERS, like all new initiatives or institutions, is evolving over time as experience with the initial working arrangements is obtained.

2.5 JASPERS Inputs, Outputs and Activities

The first part of 2006 was used by the JASPERS Steering Committee to focus on the establishment and governance of JASPERS. Three legal documents were produced, detailing JASPERS’ structure, finances, reporting and control; a Memorandum of Understanding and two Contribution Agreements. The later stages of 2006 were used to identify the three regional offices out of which JASPERS would operate and to recruit suitable technical experts to employ. Since then, JASPERS has grown annually both in terms of funding and staff numbers, and in terms of assignments completed and assignment portfolio size.

2.5.1 Funding & Staff

JASPERS budget, which comes from amounts contributed to it according to the annual Contributions Agreements with the EC, EIB and EBRD, has grown annually from €11.6m in 2006 to €38.2m in 2011.

Table 2.1 below shows a summary of the staff numbers employed by JASPERS for the years 2006-2011. Since its inception in 2006, JASPERS staff has grown from 16 to 89. The largest increase was 40 additional staff between

Capabilities on project:
Economics

2006 and 2007, when JASPERS was still in a building-up phase, though the number of staff has increased every year since.

Table 2.1: JASPERS Staff as at Year End

	EC	EIB	EBRD	KfW	Total
2006	-	-	-	-	16
2007	37	16	3	0	56
2008	41	16	2	2	61
2009	56	16	3	2	77
2010	64	18	3	3	88
2011	66	18	3	2	89

Source: JASPERS Annual Reports

2.5.2 Activities

Table 2.2 below shows the number of JASPERS assignments completed each year, along with the total number of active assignments remaining in the JASPERS portfolio at year-end, the total number of projects that JASPERS was supporting during the year, and a cumulative count of the number of JASPERS assignments completed since its inception. As the table shows, the total number of project assignments per year has grown rapidly each year until 2009, after which it has dropped slightly. JASPERS completed increasing numbers of project support assignments every year until 2010, after which there was a slight drop in 2011.

Table 2.2: Completed Assignments by Year End

	Assignments Completed by YE	Total Assignments Active at YE	Total Portfolio for Year	Cumulative completed projects
2006	3	95	98	3
2007	22	266	288	25
2008	82	280	362	107
2009	133	426	559	240
2010	159	366	525	399
2011	142	351	493	541

Source: JASPERS Annual Reports

Table 2.3 below shows JASPERS' performance since its inception in terms of assignments completed and successful project applications. JASPERS had completed 541 assignments on Member States' projects since 2006, of which 250 projects were subsequently submitted to the DG for Regional Policy for assessment. Since 2006, 172 of these projects have been approval for funding by the DG for Regional Policy.

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Table 2.3: JASPERS Performance since inception

	Total 2006 to 2011	2006	2007	2008	2008	2010	2011
Number of assignments completed	541	3	22	82	133	159	142
Number of JASPERS-supported applications submitted to DG REGIO	250	0	5	30	60	87	68
Number of JASPERS-supported applications approved by DG REGIO	172	0	0	10	35	58	69

Source: JASPERS Annual Reports

The number of projects supported by JASPERS that were approved for funding by the DG for Regional Policy has increased every year since 2008, with a record of 69 JASPERS-supported projects approved in 2011.

The total capital value of JASPERS-supported projects approved by the Commission between 2006 and 2011 is almost €30 billion.

2.6 EIB Evaluation of JASPERS

In 2010 the EIB carried out an evaluation of its role in the JASPERS initiative¹. This evaluation was carried out for the management of the EIB, and focussed on the role of the EIB in JASPERS. In particular, the evaluation did not necessarily take into account JASPERS own objectives when assessing its effectiveness and efficiency. This evaluation also took place when JASPERS had only been fully operational for a limited period of time. The evaluators concluded that the initiative was “fully justified and potentially still had much to do”. However, this evaluation was critical of what it regarded as an under emphasis on capacity building by JASPERS. This conclusion was based on a priori arguments that capacity building was desirable in itself, rather than a consideration of the specific goals set for JASPERS.

¹ Available at http://www.eib.org/attachments/ev/ev_jaspers_initiative_en.pdf

**Section 3: The Project
Development, JASPERS
Assistance and DG for Regional
Policy Project Application
Processes**



Section 3: The Project Development, JASPERS Assistance and DG for Regional Policy Project Application Processes

3.1 Introduction

Infrastructure projects are developed by Member States and proceed through various planning stages before being procured and constructed. Projects seeking support under the European Regional Development and Cohesion Funds must comply with the Implementing Regulations, of which Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 is the most relevant. In particular, Annex XXI of that Regulation sets out the application form that must be completed for project grant assistance. JASPERS provides technical support to Member States in the completion of this application process. Each beneficiary Member State draws up an annual Action Plan of proposed JASPERS assignments. A Managing Authority operates for each Operational Programme in every Member State and is the first point of contact for agencies seeking JASPERS support. The technical issues covered include: reviewing cost-benefit analyses, reviewing feasibility studies, reviewing tender documents, support in preparing application forms, support in carrying out environmental impact assessments, review of project development, and the assessment of strategies or development of guidelines.

JASPERS assignments relate to major projects, non-major projects and horizontal assignments. Major projects are defined as those with a total cost of at least €50m for transport projects and €25m for environment and other projects. Since 2009, all projects with a total cost of at least €50m are major projects. Non-major projects are projects below €50m in value. Horizontal assignments are not related to a specific project. The JASPERS technical assistance offered is in the early stages of the project development.

3.2 The Project Development Process

To better understand the role of JASPERS in project planning, it is worth outlining how projects are generally developed. The steps in the project planning and implementation process are as follows:

- Project Concept
The first Step in project planning an appraisal is identifying a need that an investment could fulfil. For example, a Member State could identify a need to increase the level of waste water treatment in a number of agglomerations in order to comply with the Waste Water Treatment Directive or to build a bypass around a town to decrease journey times on an important national road. This identification of needs is usually done when preparing an overall investment strategy such as an Operational Programme or a transport plan for an urban area. At this stage the objectives of the investment are defined.
- Project Feasibility and Preliminary Design
Based on available technology, and the context in which the investment will take place, the relevant authority will then identify a number of options for an investment to meet the identified need. The authority will also, on a preliminary basis, identify the key features and likely cost of each option. For example an objective to treat waste water from a number of adjacent towns could be met by a large central treatment plant and an extensive network of sewers or by a smaller treatment plant in each town and a less extensive sewer network. An objective of bypassing a town could be met with a range of road routes around the town in question.
- First Appraisal
Each of the options identified in Step 3 is then subjected to economic and financial appraisal and a risk analysis. The economic appraisal will normally be a cost benefit analysis for a significant project. On the basis of this work a preferred option for the project will be selected for further development.
- Detailed Design
The preferred option identified at Step 2 is designed in more detail. Detailed estimates of future use of the piece of infrastructure are prepared. For example, detailed transport modelling of the likely use of a new road is carried out.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

- Detailed Project Costing
An accurate estimate of the capital and operating cost of the project is calculated based on the detailed design and forecast of future use prepared in Step 4.
- Second Appraisal
A detailed economic and financial appraisal and risk analysis of the preferred option can then be carried out based on the more accurate forecasts of use and cost prepared in Steps 4 and 5.
- Statutory Processes
The proposed project will then be subject to a range of independent, legally binding, controls to ensure that it is in conformity with other policies such as environmental protection and spatial planning. For example a new, or upgraded, motorway will not be allowed to proceed until an Environmental Impact Assessment has been prepared and submitted to the relevant authority. Similarly, the authority building the road will have to obtain planning permission from the relevant local authorities responsible for spatial planning. In some cases, spending public funds will have State Aid implications and the project will have to be notified to DG Competition for State Aid approval.
- Procurement
Once all of the previous steps have been completed the project can proceed to procurement. The procurement process will have to comply with the EU Procurement Directives to ensure that the process is open, transparent and competitive and is open to the whole internal market.
- Final Appraisal Check
When procurement is completed there will be a degree of certainty on the cost of the project. It is good practice to revisit the appraisal at this stage to ensure that the case for the project is still strong when its actual cost is known.
- Project Implementation
For a project to deliver its potential benefits, care will have to be taken to ensure that the construction of the infrastructure is properly managed and that structures are in place to manage the operation of the infrastructures once it is in place.

JASPERS has been concerned with advising Member States on all aspects of this project planning process, with a focus largely on the steps before implementation.

3.3 The JASPERS Process

JASPERS has been established as a resource for Member States and all of JASPERS activities are carried out at the request of Member States. Demand for JASPERS services from Member States exceeds the capacity of JASPERS. In order to ensure a fair allocation of the services of JASPERS between the beneficiary Member States the work that JASPERS carries out for each Member State is agreed on an annual basis, by negotiating an Action Plan for the services JASPERS will provide to that Member State for the year. Once the Action Plan is agreed by JASPERS and the Managing Authority of the Member State, it forms the basis of JASPERS work for the year. These Action Plans identify a number of discrete project assignments that JASPERS will carry out for the Member State in the year. These assignments fall into three groups:

Assistance with the preparation and/or appraisal of major projects that will eventually be submitted to the DG for Regional Policy for approval;

Assistance with the preparation and/or appraisal of non-major projects that will be supported by the Funds without having to receive individual approval from the DG for Regional Policy;

Assistance with "Horizontal Issues" that concern more than one project, or even more than one Member State.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The main steps in the management and recording of these project assignments are as follows:

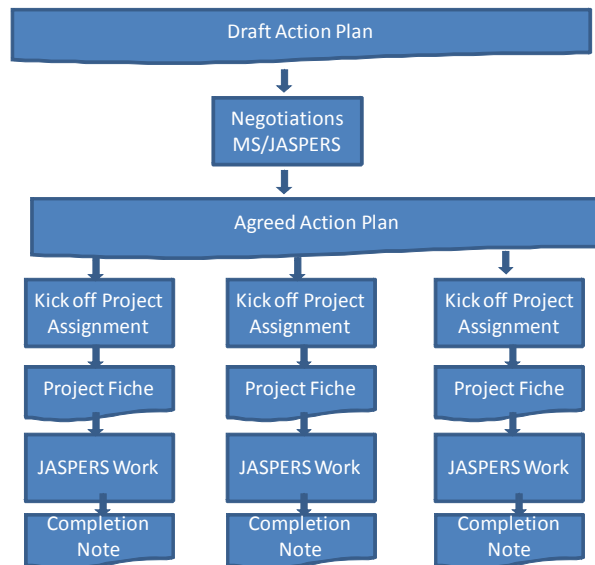
As soon as a project is included in an Action Plan it is allocated a unique JASPERS project assignment number and a record is created for it on the JASPERS database;

At some point in the year substantive work will start on the project assignment. Work normally starts with a kick off meeting between JASPERS staff and Member State officials. This is on foot of a "Project Fiche". This contains a basic description of the project assignment. This Fiche is updated throughout the work and records the progress of the project assignment;

When JASPERS has completed its work on the assignment a formal "Completion Note" is prepared and issued to the relevant Managing Authority. This note sets out details of the project, the work done by JASPERS and the resulting advice to the Managing Authority in relation to the project. Since 2009, Managing Authorities have been required to attach these completion notes to the related applications to the DG for Regional Policy for funding for major projects.

This process is tracked on a database of all assignments maintained by JASPERS. Figure 3.1 below gives an overview of this process:

Figure 3.1: JASPERS Process



Source: AECOM

3.4 The DG for Regional Policy Application Process

Member State Managing Authorities are required to submit individual applications for funding to the DG for Regional Policy for Major projects. The DG for Regional Policy will:

- Acknowledge receipt of the application;
- Determine whether or not the application is admissible;

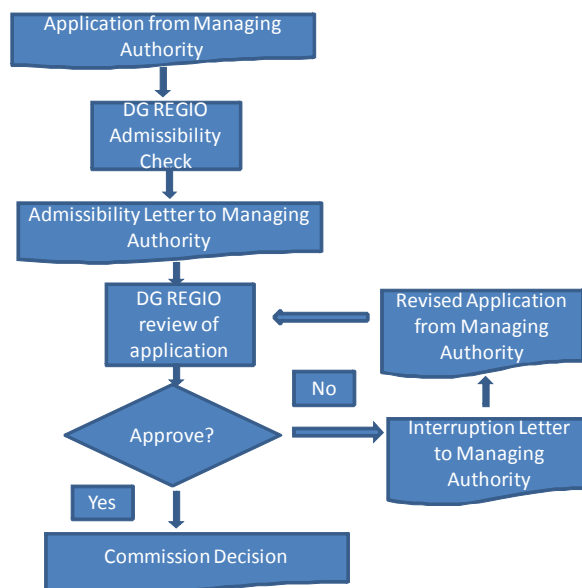
Capabilities on project:
Economics

- Review the form and substance of the application;
- If unable to approve the application issue an “Interruption Letter” to the Managing Authority. This letter sets out reasons why the DG for Regional Policy cannot yet approve the application;
- If an Interruption Letter is received the Managing Authority prepares and submits a revised application to the DG for Regional Policy incorporating the Managing Authority’s response to the issues raised in the Interruption Letter; and,
- Once the DG for Regional Policy is satisfied with the application a Commission Decision is taken regarding grant aid for the project.

In principle the DG for Regional Policy is required to complete this process in three months if there are no questions arising from the application. This deadline has not been met in practice².

This process is summarised in Figure 3.2 below:

Figure 3.2: the DG for Regional Policy Application Process



Source: AECOM

Each project application is tracked on a database by the DG for Regional Policy. This database is linked to copies of the documents generated during the funding application process. This generates useful information on the length of time that elapses between the initial submission of an application for funding and the eventual Decision to provide funding, and where and why delays arise.

² Article 41(2) of Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 of 11 July 2006. OJ L [2006] 210/25 31.7.2006

Capabilities on project:
Economics

A major task in this evaluation is to analyse this data, combined with the information available from the JASPERS database, to generate insights into the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of JASPERS.

Section 4: Profile of JASPERS Assignments



Section 4: Profile of JASPERS Assignments

4.1 Introduction

As an introductory step to the analysis, a profiling of the projects and assignments was carried out and is summarised below.

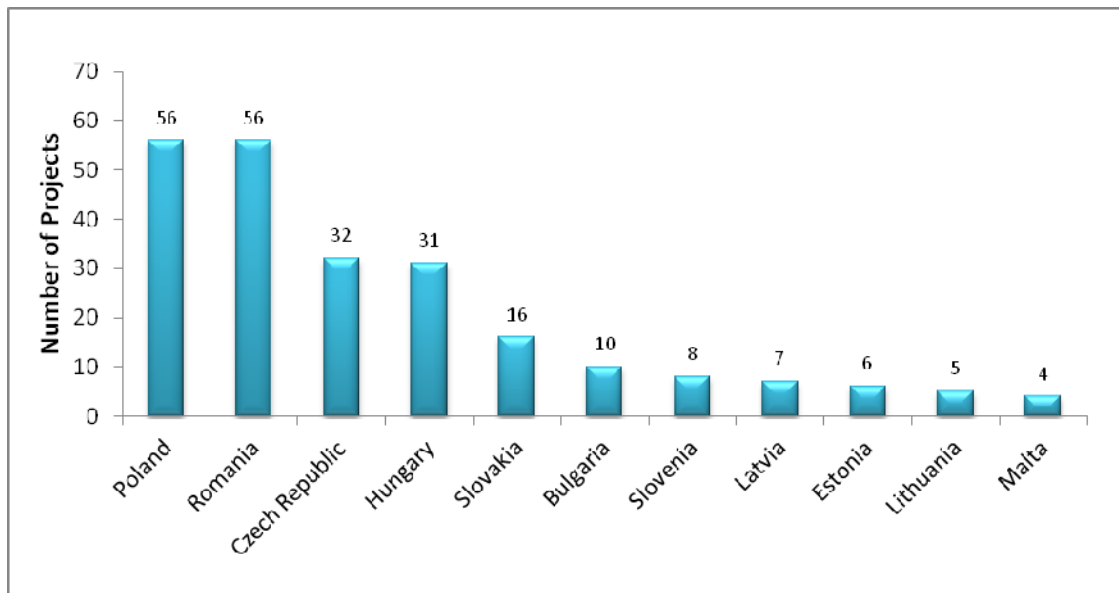
4.2 Major Projects in Receipt of JASPERS Assistance

In the period since the inception of JASPERS in 2005 up to end June 2011, the twelve new Member States submitted 313 major projects to the DG for Regional Policy for funding. Of these 231, or 74%, were Jaspers assisted. There were 82 non-assisted major projects of which 62, or 76%, were in Poland.

Seven Member States – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia used JASPERS for all their major project applications. Poland and Estonia were the only two Member States with low levels of use of JASPERS: approximately 50% of major projects in these two Member States were JASPERS assisted.

Poland and Romania each accounted for one-quarter of all major JASPERS-assisted projects that have been submitted to the DG for Regional Policy for funding, so that together they accounted for half of all major JASPERS-assisted projects. An additional 14% of major JASPERS-assisted projects originated in the Czech Republic and Hungary respectively. (See Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.1: Number of Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects by Member State, 2005- June 2011

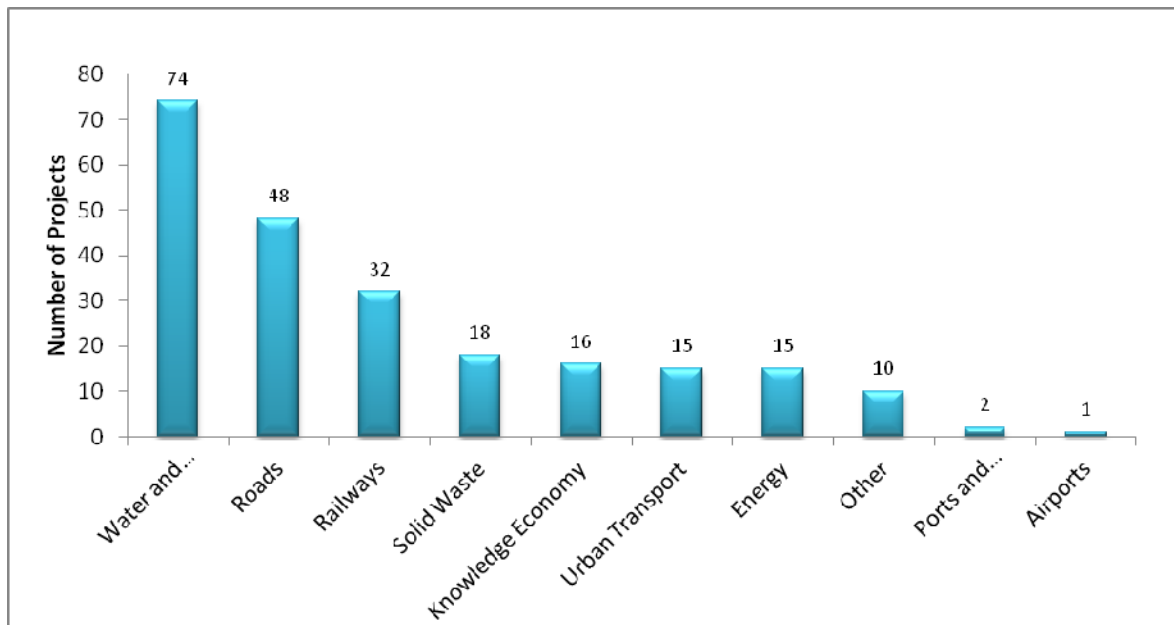


One in three major JASPERS-assisted projects belonged to the 'Water and Wastewater' sector; while 'Roads' accounted for one-quarter of all major JASPERS-assisted projects. In total, 18% of projects belonged to the 'Energy' sector. There were small numbers of both 'Ports and Waterways' and 'Airports' major JASPERS-assisted projects. (See Figure 4.2). In four Member States, namely Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, the largest proportion of major JASPERS-assisted projects were 'Water and Wastewater' projects. Romania submitted the largest number of Water and Waste Water projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The average size of all major JASPERS-assisted projects, as measured by total project costs, was €185m. One-third of all major JASPERS-assisted projects cost between €50m and €100m; 30% had costs between €100m and €200m; while one quarter (24 per cent) had project costs exceeding €200m.

Figure 4.2: Number of Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects by Sector



4.3 Non-Major Projects in Receipt of JASPERS Assistance

In total, 91 non-major JASPERS-assisted projects received JASPERS assistance over the period covered by the evaluation

All 12 Member States asked for JASPERS assistance on non-major projects. Romania and Poland accounted for 29% and 21% of projects respectively. An additional 13% and 11% were located in Bulgaria and Slovenia respectively (see Figure 4.3)

Approximately 29% of non-major JASPERS-assisted projects belonged to the 'Solid Waste' sector, while 'Water and Wastewater' accounted for 22% of projects. In total, 16% of projects belonged to the 'Railways' sector. There were small numbers of non-major JASPERS-assisted projects in the 'Airports', 'Knowledge Economy', 'Other' and 'Ports and Waterways' sectors. (See Figure 4.4).

The average size of all non-major JASPERS-assisted projects, as measured by total project costs, was €30m. One-quarter of all non-major JASPERS-assisted projects cost between €20m and €30m, 20 per cent had costs exceeding €40m. The largest non-major JASPERS-assisted projects were in the Water and Wastewater sector (€34.6m).

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Figure 4.3: Number of Non-Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects by Member State

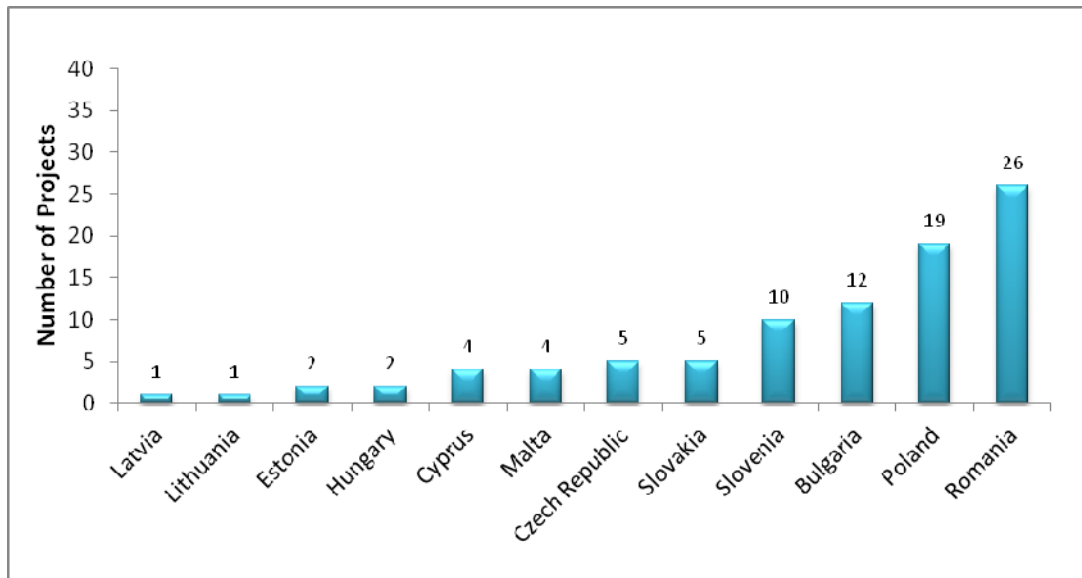
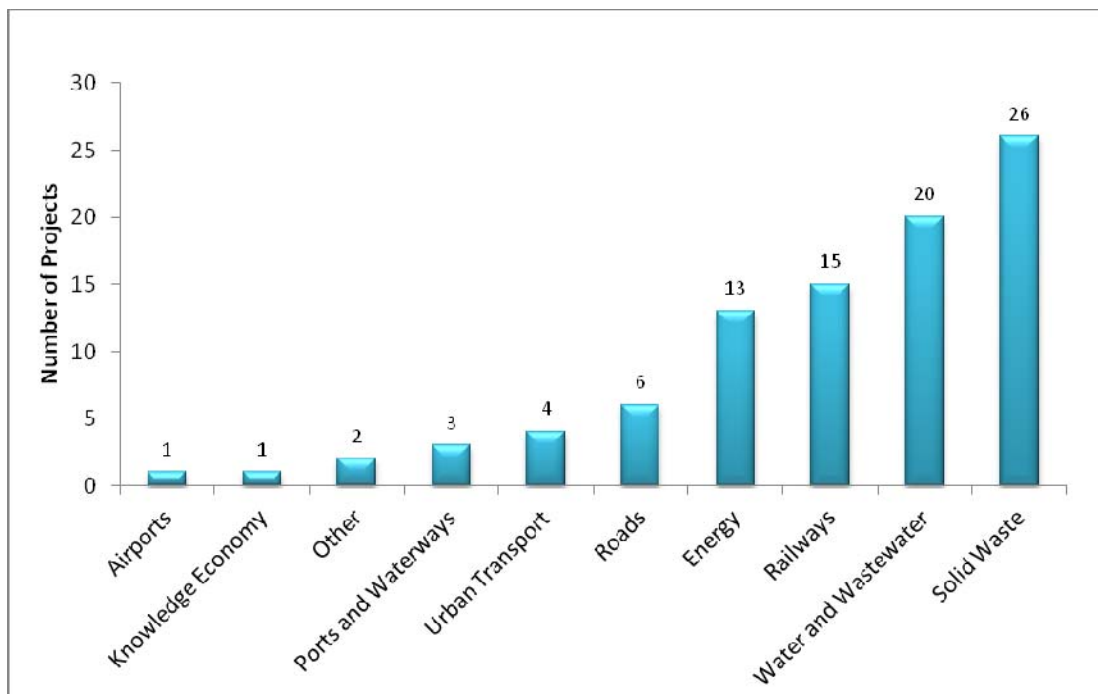


Figure 4.4: Number of Non-Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects by Sector



Capabilities on project:
Economics

4.4 Horizontal Assignments conducted by JASPERS

In total, 87 JASPERS horizontal assignments were completed by JASPERS over the period 2005 – June 2011. All 12 Member States participated in JASPERS horizontal assignments over this period. Across the Member States, one-third of all horizontal assignments were Romanian, while 22 per cent were Polish (See Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5: Number of JASPERS Horizontal Assignments by Member State

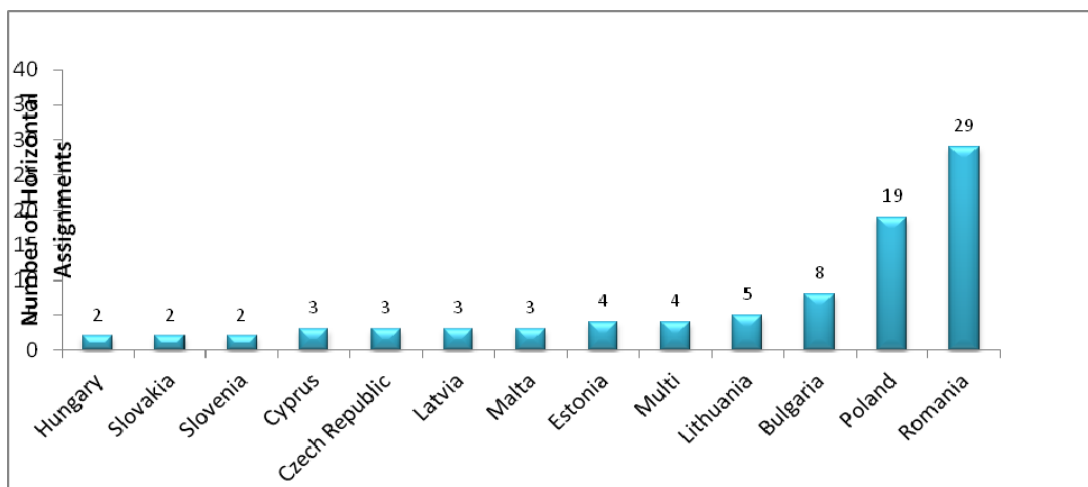
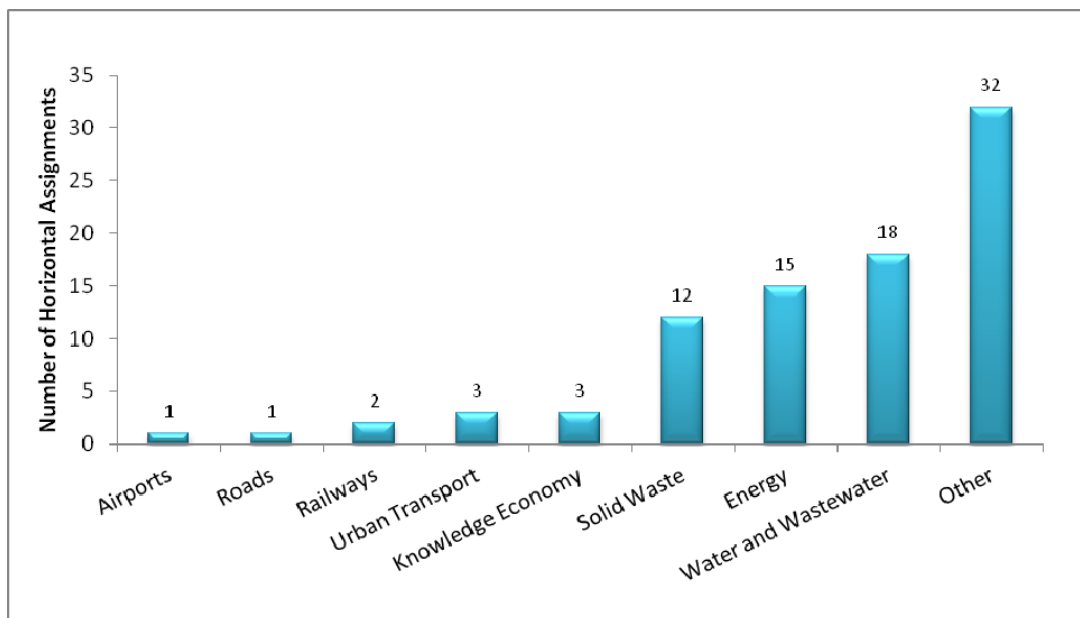


Figure 4.6: Number of JASPERS Horizontal Assignments by Sector



Capabilities on project:
Economics

Thirty-seven per cent of all horizontal assignments were not sector specific. One in five horizontal assignments related to the Water and Wastewater sector, while 17% were Energy related. Just 1% of all horizontal assignments belonged to the 'Roads' sector (See Figure 4.6). In Romania, 31% of assignments were not sector specific, with 31% in the Energy sector and 17% in Solid Waste.

4.5 Conclusions

In the period since the inception of JASPERS in 2005 up to end June 2011, the twelve new Member States submitted 313 major projects to the DG for Regional Policy for funding. Of these, 231 or 74% were Jaspers assisted. Seven Member States – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia used JASPERS for all their major project applications.

Poland and Estonia were the only two Member States with low levels of use of JASPERS: approximately 50% of major projects in these two Member States were JASPERS assisted. There were 82 non-assisted major projects of which 62 or 76% were in Poland

JASPERS provided assistance for 91 non-major projects, of which Romania was responsible for 26, followed by Poland with 19. JASPERS undertook 87 horizontal assignments in the period, of which 29 or one-third were in Romania.

Section 5: Duration, Scale and Scope of JASPERS Assistance



Section 5: Duration, Scale and Scope of JASPERS Assistance

5.1 Introduction

This Section of the Report provides details of the duration, scale and scope of JASPERS assistance to Member States. Analysis of the scale and scope of JASPERS assistance focused on major projects and was facilitated by categorising the topics on which JASPERS had provided technical input.

5.2 Duration of JASPERS assistance

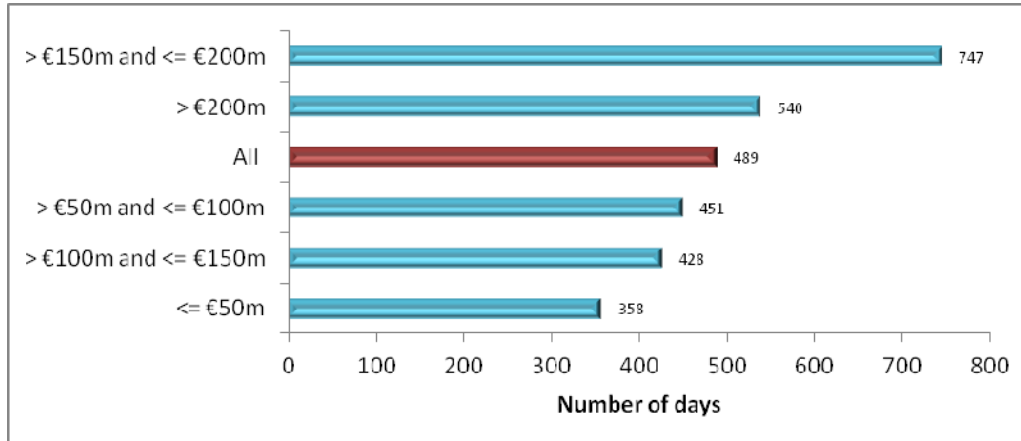
The JASPERS Duration relates to the time between the start of JASPERS assistance and the completion of JASPERS assistance for a project.

5.2.1 Major Projects

The average duration of JASPERS involvement in the planning of major projects was 489 elapsed days. For the many Member States that had relatively few JASPERS assisted major projects, estimates of the average JASPERS duration would be misleading. However, for the two countries with large numbers of projects, the average duration was 594 days for Romania, 476 days for Poland, 411 days for Hungary and 362 days for the Czech Republic.

In general terms, the larger the capital costs of the project, the longer the JASPERS involvement (See Figure 5.1) There is evidence that the JASPERS Duration was longer for railway projects (543 days), than for roads (455 days) and water and wastewater projects (442 days) .

Figure 5.1: Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects: Average JASPERS Duration (Days) by Project Size



Source: AECOM

5.2.2: Non-Major Projects

For non-Major projects the average duration of JASPERS involvement was 594 days. Analysis of the JASPERS duration is limited by the relatively small number of projects involved. Again, the duration tended to be longer for rail projects and shorter water and wastewater projects.

5.2.3 Horizontal Assignments

The average JASPERS duration for horizontal assignments was 388 days.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

5.3 Scale of JASPERS Assistance

The average number of topics covered by JASPERS was recorded and analysed. The more topics covered in relation to a particular project, the greater the JASPERS support. Additionally, JASPERS officials conducted meetings and site visits in the Member States to better understand the projects and to gather relevant information. Again, the larger the number of such meetings/visits, the greater the level of JASPERS involvement in the project. The scale of JASPERS support to major projects was extensive. Overall, the average number of topics per major project on which JASPERS provided advice was 4.8, while the average number of meetings/visits was 5.3 (see Table 5.1). The Czech Republic was notable for availing of relatively lower levels of JASPERS assistance, with an average of 2.9 topics per project and 2.7 meetings/site visits per project.

Table 5.1: Some Measures of the Scale of JASPERS Assistance

Projects	Average No of Topics Covered by JASPERS per Project	Average No of Meetings attended by JASPERS per Project
Member States		
Czech Republic	2.9	2.7
Hungary	4.7	4.6
Poland	5.5	5.9
Romania	5.0	5.1
All other Member States	4.9	7.1
Sectors		
Water Waste Water	4.7	4.2
Roads	5.4	5.2
Rail	4.8	5.6
Knowledge Economy	5.4	8.1
All Other Sectors	4.7	5.9
Solid Waste	3.4	5.6
JASPERS Office		
Bucharest	5.0	6.0
Vienna	4.1	4.2
Warsaw	5.5	6.0
Project Size		
<=€150m	4.4	4.5
>€150m	5.5	7.5
DG for Regional Policy Decision Year		
<=2009	4.7	5.3
>=2010	4.8	5.3
Number of Projects Analysed	168	115

Source: AECOM

Capabilities on project:
Economics

There is a disparity in the scale of JASPERS support required by different sectors. Solid Waste projects had relatively few topics on which JASPERS assisted, averaging 3.4 compared to the Knowledge Economy or Road sectors both of which sought advice on an average of 5.4 topics. The Knowledge Economy also appears to have required a greater level of JASPERS assistance in terms of the number of meetings attended by JASPERS, which averaged 8.1.

Over time it appears that there has been little change in the scale of JASPERS effort, however it is evident that larger projects require assistance in relation to a higher number of topics and the number of meetings attended by JASPERS is larger.

5.4 Scope of JASPERS Assistance

5.4.1 Categorisation of Projects

Based on the standard stages in the project planning process and the required contents of the DG for Regional Policy project application form, AECOM developed a standard list of relevant topics. This list is set out in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2: Standardised List of Topics

Project Concept and Programming
Project Design
Project Cost Estimation
Demand Analysis & Modelling
Cost Benefit Analysis
Environmental Issues
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis
Competition and State Aids
Funding and Financing Issues
Procurement
Project Implementation & Structures

Source: AECOM

The issues incorporated into these topics include:

- Project Concept & Programming - Establishing project need, including defining the project objectives and scope and its interaction with relevant programmes and master plans;
- Project Design – Assessing options for project design including issues of project size, service levels or project location;
- Project Cost Estimation – Establishing the costs associated with project works;
- Demand Analysis & Modelling - Forecasting potential demand for the project, which may incorporate traffic or patronage forecasting in the case of transport projects or modelling settlement patterns in the case of Water and Waste Water treatment plants;
- Cost Benefit Analysis – Identifying the costs and benefits associated with a project in line with European Commission guidelines on Cost Benefit Analysis;
- Environmental Issues – Undertaking Environmental Impact Assessments and assessing the impact of the project on Natura 2000 sites;

Capabilities on project:
Economics

- Risk and Sensitivity Analysis – Identifying the likelihood of potential risks to the projects, quantitatively or qualitatively and testing the sensitivity of the project to changes in key parameters such as investment costs, revenue, patronage volumes or value of time;
- Competition and State Aids – Seeking advice in relation to legislation on competition and State Aids rules;
- Funding & Financial Issues – Identifying the costs and revenues for the project once it is operational, establishing the financial rate of return or net present value for the project and the funding gap, identifying funding sources;
- Procurement – Tendering and the awarding of contracts for the project implementation;
- Project Implementation & Structures – Establishing a timetable for completion of the project and identifying the institutional arrangements in place to bring the project to fruition.

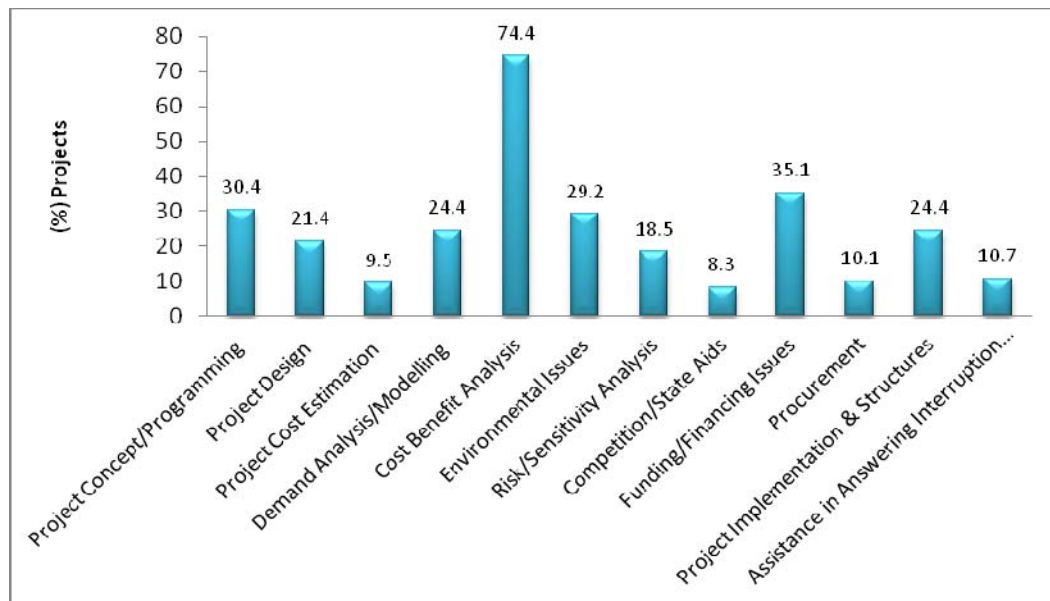
5.4.2 Analysis of Scope

With regard to the scope of JASPERS Supports, Cost Benefit Analysis was the topic on which JASPERS support was most frequently sought occurring in 74.4 per cent of all projects. This was followed by Funding and Financing Issues at 35.1 per cent of projects, Project Concept and Programming at 30.4 per cent, and Environmental Issues at 29.2 per cent. (see Figure 5.2) Larger projects of greater than €150m tended to have greater need for support across a range of topics than smaller projects. The topics for which JASPERS Support was least required were Competition and State Aids at 8.3 per cent of projects, Project Cost Estimation at 9.5 per cent and Procurement at 10.1 per cent.

With regard to sectors, the Knowledge Economy had high levels of support in relation to Project Concept and Programming (57.1 per cent) and Competition and State Aids (also 57.1 per cent).. Roads had high levels of support generally, but particularly in relation to Cost Benefit Analysis (85.3 per cent of projects), Environmental issues (61.8 per cent) and Demand Analysis and Modelling (50.0 per cent). Rail was an intensive user of support for Cost Benefit Analysis (66.7 per cent of projects), Environmental Issues (42.9 per cent) and Project Concept and Programming (42.9 per cent). Solid Waste projects were also intensive users of advice on Cost Benefit Analysis. The Water and Wastewater sector was a generally high user of advice, but particularly on Cost Benefit (87.9 per cent) and Funding and Financing Issues (39.7 per cent).

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Figure 5.2: The Proportion of Projects on which JASPERS Support Occurred by Topic

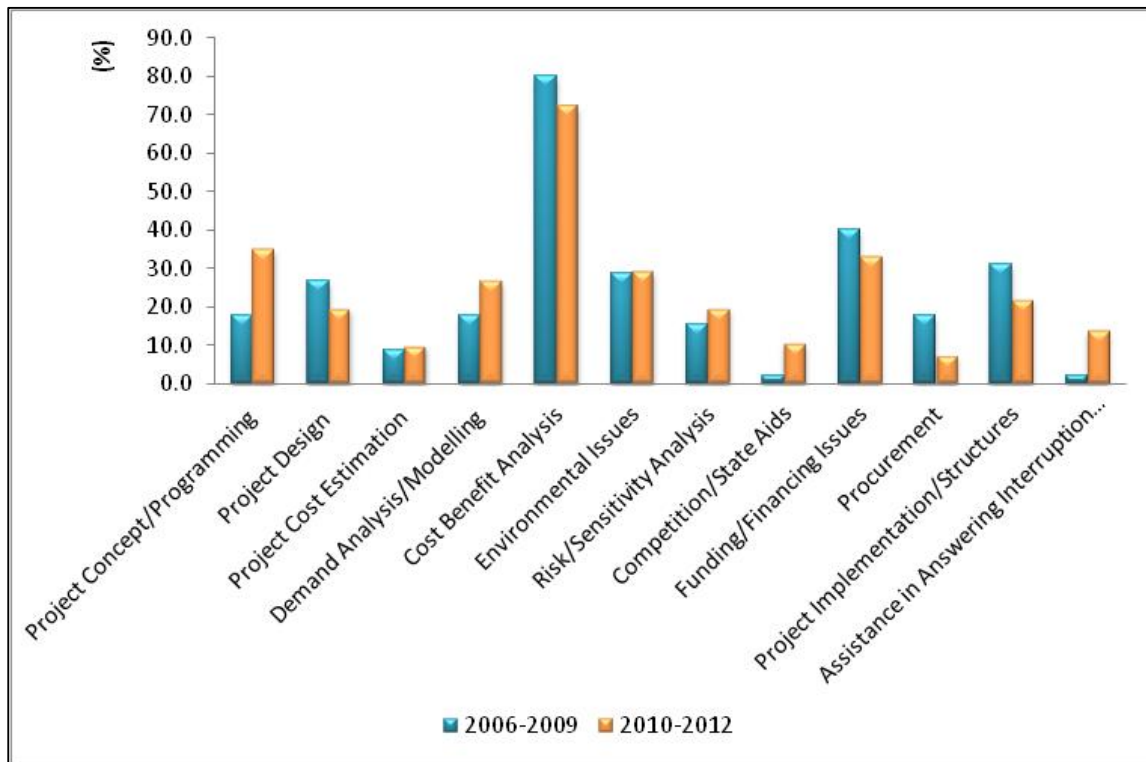


Source: AECOM

There was a tendency for the relative support on some topics to decline over time. Distinguishing between the DG for Regional Policy Decision periods 2006-2009 and 2010-2012, the latter period saw a decline in support relating to Project Design, Cost Benefit Analysis, Funding and Financing Issues, Procurement and Project Implementation and Structures Issues. In contrast, there was an increase in support in relation to Project Concept and Programming, Demand Analysis and Modelling, Risk and Sensitivity Analysis, and Competition and State Aids.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Figure 5.3: The Proportion of Projects on which JASPERS Support Occurred by Topic and Time Period



As was indicated in Section 4, the majority of major JASPERS assisted projects for which a the DG for Regional Policy Decision was made, were undertaken in Romania, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic. It is only for these Member States that analysis by topic could be regarded as representative of the underlying rate of occurrence. However, Table 5.3 presents the data for other Member States also, so that an overview can be obtained.

Some key findings to emerge from the Table are:

- The Czech Republic obtained support from JASPERS for a low proportion of projects across all topics. This reflects the finding from Section 5.3 viz. that the average number of topics per project was extremely low in respect of the Czech Republic;
- Project Concept and Programming: Romania (34.0 per cent) , Poland (28.1 per cent) and Hungary (30.4 per cent) were close to the average for all Member States of 30.4 per cent;
- Project Cost Estimation: Support on this topic was extremely low for the Czech Republic (zero per cent) and Romania (3.8 per cent) but Poland at 15.3 per cent was substantially above the average of 9.5 per cent for all Member States;
- Demand Analysis and Modelling: 40.6 per cent of Polish projects availed of JASPERS support on this topic, which was well above the average for all Member States of 24.4 per cent;
- Cost Benefit Analysis: Romania availed of JASPERS support on this topic for at an extremely high level of 92.6 per cent of all projects, compared to the average of 74.4 per cent;

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Table 5.3: Proportion of Projects availing of JASPERS Assistance by Member State and Topic

	Bulgaria (%) Projects	Czech Republic (%) Projects	Estonia (%) Projects	Latvia (%) Projects	Lithuania (%) Projects	Poland (%) Projects	Romania (%) Projects	Slovakia (%) Projects	Slovenia (%) Projects	Malta (%) Projects	Hungary (%) Projects	Total (%) Projects
Project Concept and Programming	11.1	9.1	75.0	33.3	100.0	28.1	34.0	66.7	37.5	0.0	30.4	30.4
Project Design	11.1	0.0	25.0	33.3	50.0	21.9	22.6	50.0	0.0	33.3	34.8	21.4
Project Cost Estimation	44.4	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	15.6	3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.7	9.5
Demand Analysis & Modelling	44.4	9.1	75.0	0.0	50.0	40.6	11.3	50.0	12.5	0.0	34.8	24.4
Cost Benefit Analysis	55.6	31.8	75.0	50.0	100.0	71.9	92.5	83.3	87.5	66.7	82.6	74.4
Environmental Issues	55.6	9.1	0.0	0.0	50.0	40.6	24.5	50.0	37.5	0.0	39.1	29.2
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	22.2	0.0	75.0	66.7	50.0	34.4	5.7	50.0	12.5	0.0	13.0	18.5
Competition and State Aids	0.0	13.6	0.0	0.0	100.0	12.5	7.5	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3
Funding and Financing Issues	44.4	9.1	25.0	50.0	50.0	65.6	37.7	50.0	0.0	0.0	17.4	35.1
Procurement	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0	12.5	15.1	16.7	0.0	33.3	8.7	10.1
Project Implementation & Structures	11.1	13.6	25.0	0.0	100.0	15.6	45.3	0.0	12.5	0.0	17.4	24.4
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0.0	4.5	0.0	33.3	0.0	3.1	20.8	33.3	0.0	33.3	0.0	10.7
No of Projects per Country	9	22	4	6	2	32	53	6	8	2	23	168

Source: AECOM

Capabilities on project:
Economics

- Environmental Issues: Poland (40.6 per cent and Hungary 39.1 per cent) were above average of 29.2 per cent on this topic;
- Risk and Sensitivity Analysis: Poland (34.4 per cent) was much above and Romania (5.7 per cent) was much below the average of 18.5 per cent.
- Competition and State Aids: This was the one topic on which the Czech Republic (at 13.6 per cent) was above the average of 8.3 per cent;
- Funding and Financing Issues: Poland at 65.6 per cent had very high levels of support on this topic;
- Project Implementation and Structures: Romania at 45.3 per cent of projects made well above average (24.4) use of support on this topic.
- The proportion of Romanian projects which sought assistance in answering interruptions queries (20.8 per cent) was significantly above the average (10.7 per cent)

5.4.3 Project Implementation Support

The analysis of completion notes carried out for this evaluation highlights that JASPERS support to projects goes beyond the stage of making an application to the DG for Regional Policy. In fact JASPERS assistance can, and does, continue right up to the point where procurement contracts are signed. On average 24.4 per cent of projects receive support from JASPERS in the areas of Project Implementation and Structures. The Romanian authorities make particularly intensive use of this support, with 45.3 per cent of Romanian projects receiving JASPERS support in this area. In addition 10.1 per cent of projects receive JASPERS assistance in the area of procurement. Romania is a relatively heavy user of this support, with 15.1 per cent of Romanian projects receiving JASPERS assistance with procurement. Other intensive users of this support include Latvia (16.7 per cent), Slovakia (16.7 per cent) and Malta (33.3 per cent).

5.5 Conclusions

The average JASPERS duration for major projects is 489 days, with Romania having an above average duration at 594 days. In general terms, the larger the capital costs of the project, the longer the JASPERS involvement (See Figure 5.1) There is evidence that the JASPERS Duration was longer for railway projects (543 days), than for roads (455 days) and water and wastewater projects (442 days) .

The scale of JASPERS support to projects was extensive. Overall, the average number of topics per project was 4.8, while the average number of meetings/visits was 5.3. The Czech Republic was notable for availing of relatively lower levels of JASPERS assistance, with an average of 2.9 topics per project and 2.7 meetings/site visits per project.

There is a disparity in the scale of JASPERS support required by different sectors. Solid Waste projects had relatively few topics assisted on by JASPERS, averaging 3.4 compared to the Knowledge Economy or Road sectors both of which sought advice on an average of 5.4 topics. The Knowledge Economy sector also appears to have required a greater level of JASPERS assistance in terms of the number of meetings attended by JASPERS, which averaged 8.1.

Over time it appears that there has been little change in the scale of JASPERS effort, however it is evident that larger projects require assistance in relation to a higher number of topics and the number of meetings attended by JASPERS is larger.

With regard to the scope of JASPERS supports, Cost Benefit Analysis was the topic on which JASPERS support was most frequently sought occurring in 74.4 per cent of all projects. This was followed by Funding and Financing Issues at 35.1 per cent of projects, Project Concept and Programming at 30.4 per cent, and Environmental Issues at 29.2 per cent.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The topics for which JASPERS Support was least required were Competition and State Aids at 8.3 per cent of projects, Project Cost Estimation at 9.5 per cent and Procurement at 10.1 per cent.

The Czech Republic required support for a low proportion of projects across all topics. With regard to the topics on which support was most frequently sought, advice on Cost Benefit Analysis was sought by Romania in respect of 92.6 per cent of all that Member State's projects. Poland availed of JASPERS support on Funding and Financing issues for 65.6 per cent of their projects. Hungary and Poland were above average in their use of support on Environmental Issues.

With regard to sectors, the Knowledge Economy sector had high levels of support in relation to Project Concept and Programming (57.1 per cent) and Competition and State Aids (also 57.1 per cent). Roads had high levels of support generally, but particularly in relation to Cost Benefit Analysis (85.3 per cent of projects), Environmental issues (61.8 per cent) and Demand Analysis and Modelling (50.0 per cent). Rail was an intensive user of support for Cost Benefit Analysis (66.7 per cent of projects), Environmental Issues (42.9 per cent) and Project Concept and Programming (42.9 per cent). Solid Waste projects were also intensive users of advice on Cost Benefit Analysis. The Water and Wastewater sector was a generally high user of advice, but particularly on Cost Benefit (87.9 per cent) and Funding and Financing Issues (39.7 per cent).

As might be expected, all of the JASPERS offices provided a high level of advice on Cost Benefit issues. The Bucharest office was particularly involved in providing advice on Project Implementation and Structures (39.7 per cent of projects) and Funding and Financing Issues (38.1 per cent of projects). For the Vienna office, the major advisory topics were Environmental Issues (28.8 per cent of projects) and Project Concept and Programming (27.1 per cent). With regard to the Warsaw office, the major involvement was with Funding and Financing Issues (35.1 per cent) and Project Concept and Programming (30.4 per cent).

There was a tendency for the relative support on some topics to decline over time. Distinguishing between the DG for Regional Policy Decision periods 2006-2009 and 2010-2012, the latter period saw a decline in support relating to Project Design, Cost Benefit Analysis, Funding and Financing Issues, Procurement and Project Implementation and Structures Issues. In contrast, there was an increase in support in relation to Project Concept and Programming, Demand Analysis and Modelling, Risk and Sensitivity Analysis, and Competition and State Aids. However there are early signs that the involvement of private sector partners in projects and the issue of projects that will receive revenue from users are increasingly significant issues for Member States. Member States signalled that future Knowledge Economy projects are likely to involve private sector partners. The treatment of revenues in projects to develop toll roads has already emerged as an issue for JASPERS assistance in some projects. JASPERS has been able to cover these emerging issues in its work.

Larger projects of greater than €150m tended to have greater need for support across a range of topics than smaller projects.

Section 6: Impact of JASPERS on Project Timing



Section 6: Impact of JASPERS on Project Timing

6.1 Introduction

A key element of the evaluation of JASPERS was to establish the impact of JASPERS on the timelines for the preparation and submission of major projects to the DG for Regional Policy for funding approval. Additionally, the terms of reference required analyses of the duration of JASPERS involvement with all assignments, including non-major projects and horizontal assignments. This section of the report first reviews the duration of JASPERS assistance for major and non-major projects and horizontal assignments. It then proceeds to evaluate the impact of JASPERS on the time taken for the DG for Regional Policy to decide on a major project application. This was analysed in the first instance for a set of projects for which DG for Regional Policy had reached decision.

6.2 The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major Projects

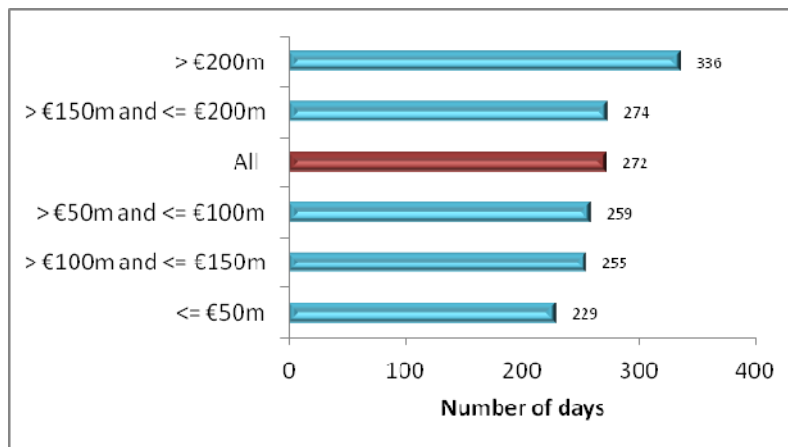
The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration relates to the time between the submission of a major project application to DG for Regional Policy and the funding decision. An analysis of Decision Durations for 168 major JASPERS-assisted projects revealed an average Duration of 272 days. On average 55% of this period was accounted for by the duration for which DG for Regional Policy was actively considering the application and the remainder occurred when the application process was interrupted. For Member States with large numbers of projects, the Decision Duration was 370 days for the Czech Republic, 313 days for Poland, 290 days for Hungary and 158 days for Romania. Thus, JASPERS assisted Romanian major projects progressed through the DG for Regional Policy decision process relatively quickly.

There is a broad relationship between project size and the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration. Projects, with costs in excess of €150m, experienced above average Decision Durations. Projects with costs less than €150m experienced below average Decision Durations. Projects with project costs of between €150 and €200m experienced DG for Regional Policy Decision Durations close to the average (See Figure 6.1).

Project size does not appear to be an influencing factor in terms of the split of the Decision Duration period into its active and interrupted component parts.

Railway sector major projects (422 days) had longer Decision Durations than Roads (307 days) or Water and Wastewater projects (220 days)

Figure 6.1: Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects: Average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration (Days) by Project Size



Capabilities on project:
Economics

6.3 Impact of JASPERS on the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration

The average Decision Duration for major projects assisted by JASPERS was 272 days. The equivalent Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects was found to be 386 days. The availability of JASPERS assistance appears to have reduced the Decision Duration, on average, by 114 days.

The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration is broken down into periods during which the DG is actively accessing the project application (the active Decision Duration); and periods when the applications are interrupted (the interrupted Decision Duration). The additional 114 days required by non-JASPERS assisted projects was split into 42 active Decision days and 74 interrupted days. Hence, non-assisted projects experienced proportionally more interruption days, relative to their JASPERS-assisted counterparts. Table 6.1 summarises these results.

Table 6.1: DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major Projects

	Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects* (a)	Major Non-JASPERS-Assisted Projects (b)	Difference (a – b)
DG Regional Policy Total Decision Duration	272	386	-114
DG Regional Policy Active Decision Duration	150	192	-42
DG Regional Policy Interruption Duration	120	194	-74

Source: AECOM *The 'DG REGIO Interruption Duration' and the 'DG REGIO Active Decision Duration' do not exactly total the 'DG REGIO Decision Duration' due to the fact that the split between active and interruption durations was not available for one major JASPERS-assisted project.

Table 6.2 provides a further breakdown by project sector, where the number of projects supports a valid analysis. This shows that while the Decision Duration varies from one sector to another, JASPERS had a beneficial impact on the Decision Duration across a number of sectors. This gives some insight into the relative complexity of different sectors, as reflected in the length of the timelines in question. As the bulk of non-assisted projects were Polish, a reliable estimate of the impact of JASPERS for this Member State was possible and revealed a reduction of 205 days.

Although the fact that the reduction in DG for Regional Policy Decision Durations for JASPERS-assisted projects held true for different project sectors, the fact that JASPERS-assisted and non-assisted project might differ in composition remained a cause for concern. In order to adjust the analysis above to take account of the simultaneous effect of key criteria on Decision Durations, a multivariate regression analysis was carried out. As part of the regression analysis, the simultaneous effect of Member State, project sector, project size, as well as JASPERS assistance on the DG for Regional Policy Decision Durations of all major projects was analysed. The regression results confirm the view that when account is taken for all possible influencing variables, that JASPERS assistance has the effect of reducing the Decision Durations by 86 days.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Table 6.2: Impact of JASPERS on the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major Projects by Sector

Sector	Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects (a)	Major Non-JASPERS-Assisted Projects (b)	Difference (a – b)
Roads	307	376	-69
Water and Wastewater	220	245	-25
Railways	422	527	-105
Urban Transport	190	421	-231
Knowledge Economy	337	484	-147

Source: AECOM

6.4 Evidence of Undecided Projects

The above analysis relates to projects for which a DG for Regional Policy decision had been made by end June 2011. However, this may tend to understate the Decision Durations for all projects, as projects that are currently undecided may eventually have very long Decision Durations. Table 3 provides a breakdown of all projects by whether they were JASPERS assisted or not and whether a decision has been made on them. Of the 337 projects considered, 255 were JASPERS assisted and 83 or one third of them were still to be decided. In contrast, for the 82 non-assisted projects, 42 or over half of them had yet to be decided. These data suggest that if cohorts of projects were followed to their ultimate decision date, then the relative impact of JASPERS would be found to be even greater. The estimated 86 days impact of JASPERS of the Decision Duration should therefore be regarded as an understatement.

Table 6.4: Analysis of Decided and Undecided Projects

Projects	Decided	Not Decided	Total
JASPERS Assisted	172	83	255
Non-JASPERS Assisted	40	42	82
Total	212	125	337

6.5 Evidence from Member States

When canvassed for their views, Member States cautioned against relying exclusively on the statistical analysis of timelines for the following reasons:

- The fact that JASPERS assisted projects might differ from unassisted projects in terms of their complexity: contradictory views were expressed by different Member States viz. that JASPERS assisted projects would tend to be both simpler and more complex.
- JASPERS advice was sometimes rejected by managing authorities or beneficiaries, so that the completed application forms for JASPERS assisted projects could be deficient through no fault of JASPERS;
- Advice on JASPERS assisted projects tended to spillover to unassisted projects and this would bias the estimated benefit of JASPERS downward;
- Projects in different sectors were more complex than others, so that there was a need to analyse the impact of JASPERS on a sector by sector basis, otherwise counterintuitive results in terms of Decision Durations would occur; and
- Projects that were not assisted by JASPERS could have acquired technical assistance from other sources – a factor that the statistical analysis did not encompass.

Most Member States accepted that overall JASPERS had had a beneficial effect on the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration. The fact that Member States availed of JASPERS advice in respect of 91 non-major projects, which were not submitted to the DG for Regional Policy underlines their positive view of the impact of JASPERS.

However, the authorities in the Czech Republic and Hungary took the view that JASPERS involvement created delays in the process of developing applications, so that the overall project planning duration was extended for JASPERS assisted projects.

In interpreting the views expressed, it should be noted that in the period under review that Hungary had no major projects which were not JASPERS assisted and the Czech Republic had only three. Thus, to some degree these views must be based on a general perception rather than evidence that JASPERS increased the planning duration. One factor here is that these and other Member States were concerned that the DG for Regional Policy often queried or interrupted on issues on which JASPERS had advised. This may have coloured the view of these two authorities on the impact of JASPERS on timelines. However, this is not evidence that JASPERS involvement led to an increase in the project planning period overall, as without JASPERS involvement the Decision Duration might have been further extended.

More importantly, as part of this Study ten case studies comparing JASPERS assisted and unassisted projects were undertaken. These enabled an analysis of the total project planning period for both sets of projects. Of the ten case studies, a direct comparison could be made for nine pairs of projects. For eight of these nine pairs, the Decision Duration for the JASPERS assisted project was shorter and in most cases considerably shorter.

It is therefore concluded that the evidence generally supports the view that JASPERS involvement had a significantly positive effect on the Decision Duration that was not offset by any negative impact on other elements of the project planning duration.

6.6 Improving the Impact of JASPERS on Timelines

6.6.1 The JASPERS Process

While it is clear that JASPERS had a significantly positive impact on project planning timelines, it is nevertheless also the case that this impact could have been more substantial in the past or could be made more substantial in the future.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

This could have occurred if:

- JASPERS had taken excessive time to formulate and deliver the advice to Member States; and or
- The quality of that advice was deficient, so that projects were interrupted by DG Regional Policy to a greater extent than was necessary.

The average duration of JASPERS assistance was 489 calendar days. It is difficult to judge whether this duration represents an excessive time for JASPERS to provide their input, as there are no relevant comparators. However, the feedback from Member States did not contain criticisms of JASPERS in terms of the duration of their input. JASPERS officials were regarded as co-operative, flexible, and having good communication skills. The quick response time of JASPERS and its willingness to undertake site visits and face to face consultations were regarded as particularly valuable.

6.6.2 The Project Planning and Approval System and Project Timelines.

The general view of the Member States is that JASPERS had contributed significantly to the development of comprehensive and mature applications for funding. As indicated above, the majority view is that this speeded up decision-making and, ultimately, absorption of funding. However, the Member States were of the view that the impact on timelines would have been further enhanced if the DG for Regional Policy had attributed greater weight to JASPERS inputs. An extreme version of this was expressed by some authorities viz. that once a Completion Note had been issued, JASPERS was effectively stating that the project application should be approved. The implication being that the DG for Regional Policy desk officers were merely duplicating work already done by JASPERS.

Our analysis identified topics, such as cost-benefit analysis, on which JASPERS provided advice. We then identified whether the project application was interrupted on that topic. The information gathered on each project was used to analyse the effect that JASPERS assistance on a particular aspect of project development had on the probability of that aspect of a project giving rise to an Interruption Letter from the DG for Regional Policy. For each topic a "JASPERS success rate" was calculated. This was the proportion of projects where JASPERS gave assistance on a topic, where that topic was not subsequently the subject of an Interruption Letter from the DG for Regional Policy. Of the eleven topics identified, JASPERS achieved a success rate over 70% in respect of seven of them and over 50% in respect of another three. This indicates that in a minority of cases, there was an apparent overlap in that the topic that JASPERS advised on was nevertheless the subject of an interruption

Examination of 20 projects that fell into this category revealed that there are a number of reasons why this had occurred, including failure of the Member State to heed JASPERS' advice. However, in more than half the cases reviewed, it is apparent that there was a conflict between the JASPERS advice and the views of the DG for Regional Policy.

While real differences of opinion undoubtedly occurred, in other cases it was clear that JASPERS had taken the view that they had addressed deficiencies in the application to the maximum extent possible. For example, the feasibility study for the project may have been conducted long before JASPERS involvement and while JASPERS may have been unhappy with the content, they may have felt that it was not practicable to recommence the feasibility study process without inordinate delays or that the issue raised did not cast doubt on the overall economic value of the project. In other instances, the EIA for the project may have taken place under national legislation and failed to comply with EU requirements. Again, without recommencing the project planning, it would not have been possible to rectify this situation. It should be remembered in this context that JASPERS client was always the Member State. In these circumstances, JASPERS would issue a Completion Note, often drawing DG for Regional Policy's attention to the issue.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

While DG for Regional Policy remains the deciding body and JASPERS works for the Member State, the above differences are inevitable. However, it may be possible to reduce the conflicts that occur on technical issues, if there is greater exchange of information between the DG for Regional Policy and JASPERS. Additionally, in some instances the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers have been providing pre application opinions to Member States to explore issue in advance of the formal application. This is a practice that could bring benefits from wider application. Finally, project preparation timelines are likely to be reduced if JASPERS has earlier involvement in projects. This would ensure that the project planning of is a high quality by the time the application stage is reached.

6.7 Conclusions

The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for major projects was 272 days. The shortest Decision Durations were experienced in Romania (158 days), which was 42 per cent below the average; Projects with project costs in excess of €150m experienced above average Decision Durations, while projects with projects costs below €150m experienced below average Decision Durations. Railway sector major projects (422 days) had longer Decision Durations than Roads (307 days) or Water and Wastewater projects (220 days).

With regard to non-major JASPERS-assisted projects, the average JASPERS duration was 594 days. Of the Member States, Romania experienced the longest JASPERS durations. The longest JASPERS duration by sector was experienced in the 'Railways' sector;

For JASPERS-assisted horizontal assignments, the average JASPERS duration was 388 days.

While the average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for JASPERS assisted major projects was 272 days, the equivalent duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects was found to be 386 days. The availability of JASPERS assistance appears to have reduced the DG REGIO Decision Duration, on average, by 114 days. The additional 114 days required by non-JASPERS assisted projects was split into 42 active Decision days and 74 interrupted days. Hence, non-assisted projects experienced proportionally more interruption days, relative to their JASPERS-assisted counterparts.

Although the fact that the reduction in the Decision Duration for major JASPERS assisted projects held true across project sectors is reassuring, a like-for-like comparison was undertaken and this reduced the impact of JASPERS assistance from 114 days to 86 days. However, further analysis indicated that JASPERS assisted projects are less likely to have a decision deferred for a long period so that the estimated 86 days impact of JASPERS on the Decision Duration should therefore be regarded as an understatement. This impact was not offset by any negative impact on the timelines for other elements of the project planning duration.

**Section 7: Impact of JASPERS on
the DG for Regional Policy
Decision Making Process**



Section 7: Impact of JASPERS on the DG for Regional Policy Decision Making Process

7.1 Introduction

A key issue in establishing the effectiveness of JASPERS is examination of the extent to which JASPERS supported resulted in a reduction in the extent to which DG for Regional Policy was forced to interrupt the project approval process. This Section of the Report evaluates this through establishing whether:

- A JASPERS assisted project was more or less likely to be the subject of an interruption by DG for Regional Policy; and
- Topics on which JASPERS provided advice were more or less likely to the cause of an interruption

7.2 Overall Interruption Rates for JASPERS assisted and non Assisted Projects

Over the period covered by the evaluation, the DG for Regional Policy had made a decision in relation to 208 major projects. Among these 208 projects, JASPERS provided assistance to 168 projects. Of these JASPERS assisted projects, 138 or 82 per cent were subsequently interrupted by the DG for Regional Policy. A similar trend is seen among the 40 major projects which did not receive any JASPERS assistance with approximately 82 per cent of these projects interrupted by the DG for Regional Policy also. Table 7.1 provides an overview of major projects for which a decision has been made.

Table 7.1: Interruption Rate for Decided Major Projects

	JASPERS Assisted	Non JASPERS Assisted	Total
DG for Regional Policy Interrupted	138* (82.1%)	33 (82.5%)	171 (82.2%)
Not DG for Regional Policy Interrupted	30 (17.9%)	7 (17.5%)	37 (17.8%)
Total	168 (100%)	40 (100%)	208 (100%)

Source: AECOM

*This refers to 137 projects from timelines which showed an interruption plus one unknown project from timelines but which showed an interruption from SFC database Interruption Letters.

The fact that the interruption rate for JASPERS assisted and non-assisted projects was similar does not mean that JASPERS had no effect. Most stakeholders in Member States indicated that they were more likely to seek JASPERS support for projects which were complex or novel. If this was the case, then the fact that JASPERS assisted projects matched the success rate of non-assisted projects would be an indication of a positive effect.

7.3 Impact of JASPERS on Interruption Topics

The project application process is interrupted by the DG for Regional Policy if there is even one significant issue in relation to the project planning. This means that a greater insight into the effectiveness of JASPERS would be gleaned from a comparison of the topics covered by JASPERS and interruption topics subsequently raised by the DG for Regional Policy were analysed.

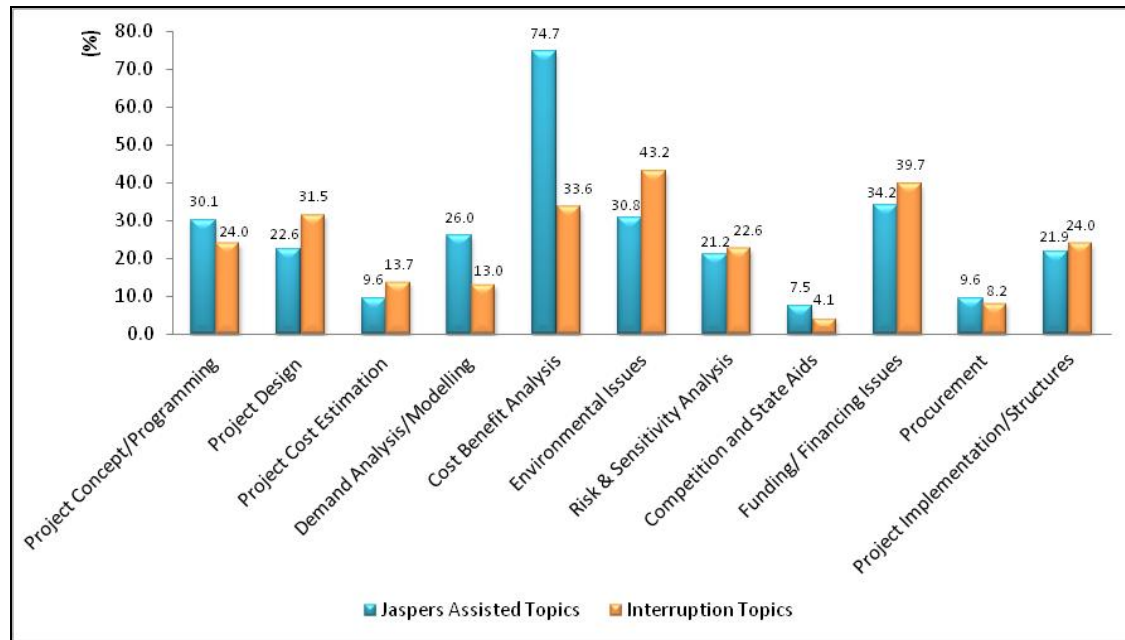
This was analysed based on 146 observations for which comparable data are available. Figure 7.1 illustrates the proportion of projects which received JASPERS assistance and the proportion of projects that were interrupted by the DG for Regional Policy across the various topics.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

As can be seen, a significantly higher proportion of projects received JASPERS assistance in relation to Cost Benefit Analysis (74.7 per cent) than were interrupted on the topic (33.6 per cent). Similar trends are also evident in Demand Analysis and Modelling where approximately 26 per cent of projects availed of JASPERS assistance compared to 13 per cent of projects interrupted on the topic. Project Concept and Programming, Competition and State Aid and Procurement also shows similar trends with smaller proportions of projects interrupted on these topics than received JASPERS assistance.

In contrast, significantly more projects were interrupted on Environmental Issues (43.2 per cent) than received JASPERS assistance on the topic (30.8 per cent). The proportion of projects interrupted by the DG for Regional Policy on Project Design (31.5 per cent) was also substantially higher than the proportions availing of JASPERS assistance (22.6 per cent) on this topic. Similar trends are evident in Funding and Financial Issues, Risk and Sensitivity Analysis and Project Implementation and Structures.

Figure 7.1: Comparison of the Distribution of JASPERS Assistance and the DG for Regional Policy Interruptions by Topic



Source: AECOM

*n=146

For each project, the extent of JASPERS’ support is recorded in the JASPERS’ Completion Note. This sets out a summary of the project, the objectives of the JASPERS’ input, the scope of the work, its timing, and a summary of the support and advice provided by JASPERS. Specific topics for advice can include any of the project planning phases or components. For example, there may be a specific request to advice on the development of the cost-benefit analysis or the preparation of procurement documents. As described above, AECOM have identified the topics on which Member States sought JASPERS assistance for each JASPERS-assisted major project. Similarly AECOM has identified and recorded the topics which were raised by the DG for Regional Policy in Interruption Letters for these projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Where advice on specific topics is required by a Member State, it is clear that these are topics in the development of the project in question that the Member State would find difficult to address satisfactorily without support from JASPERS. It follows also that if support were not available, then these issues would be more likely to be the subject of Interruption Letters than other issues that the Member State considers to be more tractable. If Member States are comfortable to deal with these more tractable topics without assistance from JASPERS, it is probable that they will deal with these issues in a satisfactory manner and they will not be subject of an interruption.

If JASPERS' support for a specific topic reduces the probability that this topic will be subject to a subsequent Interruption Letter, this would be a clear indication of JASPERS having a positive impact. This is difficult to gauge in practice, as the probability of interruption without JASPERS' support, for a specific case that has in fact received JASPERS support, cannot be known. However, one measure of success would be to compare the probabilities of interruption for JASPERS' supported and non-supported cases. So, for example, with regard to Funding and Financing issues, JASPERS may be asked to support Member States in relation to some projects, but not with other projects. Where they are not asked to support Member States on this topic, the probability of the topic arising in an interruption later would be relatively low a priori, as Member States do not see the topic as presenting difficulties in these cases. In this context, JASPERS support could be perceived as having an impact, if it reduced the probability of an interruption on this topic to the level pertaining to projects where their support was not sought.

The information compiled by AECOM has allowed it to calculate these probabilities. In particular it is possible to identify the number of projects where Member States sought JASPERS assistance on each of the potential topics. It is then possible to identify how many times this topic recurred in Interruption Letters for these projects. This information is summarised in Table 7.2 below.

Each line of this Table refers to one of the eleven substantive topics where a Member State could seek JASPERS assistance or which could be the subject of an Interruption Letter from the DG for Regional Policy. The second column of the table records the number of projects where a Member State sought the assistance of JASPERS on the topic in question. The third column of the Table records the number of these projects where the topic in question did not recur in an Interruption Letter from the DG for Regional Policy to the Member State. The fourth column records the result of dividing the figure in column three by the figure in column two to get a "JASPERS success rate", i.e. the probability of JASPERS assistance with a topic leading to that topic not causing concern for the DG for Regional Policy during the consideration of an application.

These success rates are all high. The lowest success rates are those for Project Design and Environmental Issues. In approximately half of the projects where a Member State sought the assistance of JASPERS on these topics during the development of a project, the DG for Regional Policy was concerned about the topics in question when it examined the application for funding and raised the issue in an Interruption Letter. For all other topics the success rate is over 70 per cent. The highest success rate is observed in the area of project cost estimation. In every project where a Member State sought the assistance of JASPERS with this issue, the DG for Regional Policy was not concerned about this issue when it examined the application and it did not arise in Interruption Letters.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Table 7.2 Distribution of Projects availing of JASPERS Assistance and Not DG for Regional Policy Interrupted by Topic

	No of Projects for which JASPERS Assisted on Topic	No of Projects Free from the DG for Regional Policy Interruption on Topic	JASPERS Success Rate on Topic (%)
Project Concept and Programming	44	34	77.3
Project Design	33	15	45.5
Project Cost Estimation	14	14	100.0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	38	34	89.5
Cost Benefit Analysis	109	76	69.7
Environmental Issues	45	24	53.3
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	31	26	83.9
Competition and State Aids	11	10	90.9
Funding and Financing Issues	50	28	56.0
Procurement	14	12	85.7
Project Implementation & Structures	32	23	71.9

Source: AECOM

n=146

As discussed above, if JASPERS' help on certain topics, in a project where a Member State has identified that these topics will be difficult, leads to the topic being no more likely to recur in an Interruption Letter than it would be in a project where the Member State did not identify a particular difficulty with the topic, then we have evidence of a positive impact from JASPERS assistance.

The information compiled by AECOM also allows us to calculate these "Member State Success Rates" i.e. the probability that a topic will not be raised in the Interruption Letter in a project where the Member State in question has not identified any difficulty with the topic and has dealt with it without the assistance of JASPERS. These Member State Success Rates are set out in Table 7.3 below: This analysis provides strong evidence of a positive JASPERS impact on the quality of project development, and hence on the ease with which a project application can be reviewed by the DG for Regional Policy.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Table 7.3: Proportion of Projects not availing of JASPERS Assistance and Not DG for Regional Policy Interrupted

	No of Projects for which JASPERS did not Assist on Topic	No of these Projects free from the DG for Regional Policy Interruption on Topic	Member State Success Rate on Topic (%)
Project Concept and Programming	102	77	75.5
Project Design	113	85	75.2
Project Cost Estimation	132	112	84.8
Demand Analysis & Modelling	108	93	86.1
Cost Benefit Analysis	37	21	56.8
Environmental Issues	101	59	58.4
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	115	87	75.7
Competition and State Aids	135	130	96.3
Funding and Financing Issues	96	60	62.5
Procurement	132	122	92.4
Project Implementation & Structures	114	88	77.2

Source: AECOM

n=146

In the case of five topics (Project Concept and Programming; Project Cost Estimation; Demand Analysis and Modelling; Cost Benefit Analysis and Risk & Sensitivity Analysis) the JASPERS “success rate” is equal to or greater than the Member State “success rate”. This means that where a Member State recognises that one of these topics is going to present difficulties in the development of a project, and obtains the assistance of JASPERS, this assistance means that the topic is no more likely to lead to a the DG for Regional Policy interruption than is the case in “normal” cases where a Member State does not see a need to seek the assistance of JASPERS.

In the case of a further five topics (Environmental Issues; Competition and State Aids; Funding and Financing Issues; Procurement and Project Implementation & Structures) the JASPERS “success rate” is not significantly below the Member State “success rate”. This means that where a Member State recognises that one of these topics is going to present difficulties in the development of a project, and obtains the assistance of JASPERS, this assistance reduces the risk that the topic will give rise to an Interruption Letter from the DG for Regional Policy to a similar level to that obtaining in “normal” cases where a Member State does not see a need to seek the assistance of JASPERS.

Only one topic, Project Design, demonstrates a JASPERS “success rate” significantly lower than the Member State “success rate” (45 per cent as opposed to 75 per cent). JASPERS’ relative lack of success in reducing the risk of interruptions from this topic in cases where Member States have recognised difficulties in developing the design of a project may reflect the fact that, in its initial years of operation, JASPERS was often involved in projects at a stage when design work was already largely completed.

7.4 Qualitative Review of JASPERS Topics and the DG for Regional Policy Interruptions

The above analysis indicates that where JASPERS provides advice in relation to a particular topic, the probability that this topic will not be subject of an Interruption Letter invariably exceeds 50 per cent, and in some cases much exceeds this level. However, there are a considerable number of instances in which JASPERS provides advice on a topic, but that topic is nevertheless subject of an Interruption. In order to more fully understand what is happening in these circumstances, the Completion Notes and Interruption Letters for 20 projects were examined in detail.³ The 20 projects were chosen from the projects that had the highest number of topics identified in an Interruption Letter, starting with projects that had the maximum of five interruption topics.

The following facts emerged from this more in-depth appraisal. In general terms, there were very few instances where, although the same topic came up, the interruption query was in respect of an aspect of a topic different to that that addressed by JASPERS: for example, where JASPERS vetted the cost-benefit calculation but did not advise on parameter values and the latter were of concern to the DG for Regional Policy.

The two projects which had interruptions on five topics were projects where JASPERS involvement came at a relatively late stage in the project planning process. In both cases, a final feasibility study for the project was already in place. This obviously limited the extent to which JASPERS could have altered the approach to project planning. For one of these projects, JASPERS was instrumental in having the feasibility study amended through commissioning further work from the external consultant that had drawn it up. However, there is evidence that the extent of the revisions was limited: for example no alternative do-something investment options were explored and this was criticised by the DG for Regional Policy. Given the circumstances and the pressure on the Member State to absorb the funding available to them, a fundamental revision may not have been acceptable to decision-makers in the Member State. There is some evidence also that JASPERS were not fully satisfied with the revamped feasibility study, but that it proceeded to be used as a basis for the application for funding;

There were other instances where JASPERS would have found it difficult to address fully the issues raised by the DG for Regional Policy. Issues relating to Project Concept and Programming and Project Design fall into this category, as these elements of project planning may have been substantially undertaken prior to JASPERS' involvement. With regard to Project Concept and Programming, the DG for Regional Policy was often concerned with how the project fitted into an overall strategy or master plan. In some cases, such a plan may not have been devised, or if it had, may not have been readily acceptable to the DG for Regional Policy. JASPERS' capacity to intervene in these circumstances would have been limited to either advising the Member State to devise such a plan or, where it was in place, to advise on how to better articulate the role of the project within the plan.

In a number of cases, it is clear that while JASPERS had provided advice on a number of topics, this advice was ignored by the Member State. For example, in respect of one project which was subject to interruptions in relation to three topics, JASPERS were concerned that the project concept had not been adequately developed, the cost-benefit analysis did not meet the required standard, and that the financial appraisal was not detailed enough. JASPERS noted in its Completion Note that the Member State did not address these concerns.

Despite these mitigating circumstances, in just over half of the projects studied, it is apparent that there was a conflict between the JASPERS advice and the view of the DG for Regional Policy. This arose in a number of circumstances:

- JASPERS were asked to vet the feasibility study and or the project application and the DG for Regional Policy identified an issue that was not explicitly considered by JASPERS;

³ It should be borne in mind that this analysis is limited by what was recorded in both the Completion Notes and Interruption Letters. In some instances at least, the full flavour of what occurred may not be discernible.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

- JASPERS explicitly advised on an issue, but the DG for Regional Policy subsequently took a different view of the issue from a technical viewpoint;
- JASPERS identified an issue, but considered that it was not of sufficient importance to render the project application invalid.

The Box below presents details of a project which exhibits some of these elements.

Box 7.1 Wastewater Collection and Treatment Project for the Tapio Region of Hungary

Wastewater Collection and Treatment Project for the Tapio Region of Hungary

Project

The project comprised the provision of sewage disposal in the Tapio Region of Hungary. It covers 5 agglomerations that have a total population of 79,935 inhabitants. Prior to the project implementation, sewage services are only provided in the two main cities where only 60% and 11% of the population are connected to the existing network

Under the proposed project, that had a total cost (excluding VAT) of € 106 million, some 79,004 inhabitants were to be connected to the sewer network. The main infrastructure to be provided comprised:

- 699 km of sewer network together with 81 km of regional (connecting) pipelines;
- 4 new wastewater treatment plants and extension of the existing treatment plant that served Nagykata; and
- A centralised composting plant to be located in Nagykata.

Role of JASPERS

When JASPERS started work in mid 2007, a draft feasibility report had already been prepared. JASPERS reviewed this and other material which went through several revisions before an application form was drafted. JASPERS reviewed draft application form, which was amended before being submitted in April 2010.

Interruption Topics

DG for Regional Policy raised issues in relation to Project Design, Cost Benefit Analysis, Environment Issues, and Project Implementation and Structures

The DG for Regional Policy raised a number of questions on the design of the project including:

- The use of several monitoring and control centres rather than a single, central monitoring and control centre;
- The size of vehicles used to collect sludge from individual septic tanks; and,
- The definition of the area to be covered by the system.

The Completion Note records detailed interaction with the Hungarian authorities on the design and scope of the project, so it appears that JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy differed on the appropriate design of this project, or the level of justification needed for the design chosen.

The Completion Note records advice from JASPERS to the Member State on the preparation of the cost benefit analysis. The first Interruption Letter asked the Member State to provide a copy of the cost benefit analysis. No further interruptions arose with respect to the cost benefit analysis. This indicates that the MS completed the cost benefit analysis to the standard required by the DG for Regional Policy with the assistance of JASPERS.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The DG for Regional Policy raised a number of specific environmental issues in its Interruption Letters. For example it was concerned that certain mitigation measures mentioned in the EIA reports had not been taken and asked to see copies of EIA screening reports. JASPERS was also concerned with the coverage of environmental issues when it reviewed the studies carried out for this project. In the completion note it states that Hungary had not been able to address its concerns, inter alia Hungary had not been able to produce documentation of EIA screening processes. This seems to be an instance of JASPERS raising a topic, a Member State being unable or unwilling to address the topic and it recurring when the project was examined by the DG for Regional Policy.

Project Implementation and Structures: the DG for Regional Policy was concerned that the entity established to own and operate this waste water system was not guaranteed to continue in existence with the mandate to maintain the whole system for the full appraisal period. From the Completion Note, it is apparent that JASPERS had done a lot of work with the Member State explaining the need for an entity to own and run the system on behalf of the numerous local authorities in question, and had a large input into the design of the implementation structures eventually proposed.

This is a case where JASPERS identified a substantial issue, and helped the Member State to address it almost completely with one small gap in either the system (or the way it was explained in the application form) which was picked up by the DG for Regional Policy. This represents significant assistance from JASPERS complemented by a "Quality Control" role from the DG for Regional Policy.

Overview

JASPERS was involved over a long period of time and had the opportunity to significantly influence the development of this project. However there were three instances where JASPERS provided input on a topic only for it to recur in the DG for Regional Policy Interruption Letters. In one case the DG for Regional Policy was not satisfied with the way project design was presented, despite extensive input from JASPERS, which indicates a difference in standards applied by the DG for Regional Policy and JASPERS. In the case of environmental concerns, JASPERS raised concerns which the Member State did not address and, unsurprisingly the topic recurred in the DG for Regional Policy Interruption Letters. The third apparent overlap merely represents a DG for Regional Policy review "tidying up" a minor element of a major topic where JASPERS had a substantial positive input.

In fact, there was only one topic, design, where the DG for Regional Policy raised a substantial interruption despite JASPERS being apparently satisfied after supporting the Member State in relation to this issue.

On examination, this project with a large number of apparent overlaps between JASPERS topics and the DG for Regional Policy topics indicates a significant positive impact by JASPERS.

There are a considerable number of instances in which JASPERS provides advice on a topic, but that topic is nevertheless subject of an Interruption. Examination of 20 projects that fell into this category revealed that there are a number of reasons why this had occurred, including failure of the Member State to heed JASPERS' advice. However, in more than half the cases reviewed, it is apparent that there was a conflict between the JASPERS advice and the views of the DG for Regional Policy.

AECOM's consultations with Commission stakeholders highlighted the key role of other Commission services in the assessment of applications. Decisions on the funding of Major projects are taken by the European Commission as a whole. The DG for Regional Policy involves other DGs, including those for Environment, Competition and Internal Market, in the decision making process. Many of the Interruption Letters issued by the DG for Regional Policy will arise from comments and observations from other DGs. The DG for Environmental Policy is particularly notable in

Capabilities on project:
Economics

this respect. It does not review applications to ensure that Member State legislation implements the relevant environmental Directives, or to ensure that proper procedures have been followed in the Member State in question. The DG for Environmental Policy uses the information in the application, and that obtained in response to Interruption Letters to carry out a full substantive review of the compliance of the project with EU environmental legislation. Greater awareness of this by JASPERS and Member States could improve the development of projects.

7.5 Conclusions

Of JASPERS-assisted major projects, 82% were subsequently interrupted by DG for Regional Policy. An identical proportion of non-JASPERS assisted major projects were interrupted. These are high rates and reflect the large range of topics that can precipitate an interruption. There is some evidence that JASPERS were called on to provide advice on the more technically difficult projects.

The extent to which JASPERS successfully provided advice on a topic that was not subsequently the topic raised in an interruption varied across the topics. Of the eleven topics identified, JASPERS achieved a success rate over 70% in respect of seven of them and over 50% in respect of another three. This indicates that in a minority of cases, there was an apparent overlap in that the topic that JASPERS advised on was nevertheless the subject of an interruption

Of a sample of 20 projects that fell into this overlap category, the reasons why this had occurred included:

- JASPERS were asked to vet the feasibility study and or the project application and DG for Regional Policy identified an issue that was not explicitly considered by JASPERS;
- JASPERS may have felt that it was not practicable to recommence the feasibility study process without inordinate delays or that the issue raised did not cast doubt on the overall economic value of the project; and
- JASPERS explicitly advised on an issue, but DG for Regional Policy subsequently took a different view of the issue from a technical viewpoint.

In more than half the cases reviewed, it is apparent that there was a conflict between the JASPERS advice and the views of the DG for Regional Policy. This raises the need to ensure that there is better co-ordination of views on technical issues between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy.

Section 8: Impact of JASPERS on Project Quality



Section 8: Impact of JASPERS on Project Quality

8.1 Introduction

The potential impacts of JASPERS on project quality can usefully be split into two types:

- Impacts on the quality of project development, i.e. the work done to investigate, appraise and make the case for the investment as documented in strategic plans, feasibility studies, applications for funding etc; and,
- Impacts on the quality of the investment that is eventually made with EU financial support.

These two are obviously closely related, but looking at them separately clarifies the role and impact of JASPERS. This report has provided evidence of JASPERS impact on both of these aspects of project quality. Each of these is considered in turn below.

8.2 Impact on the Quality of Project Development

Project development can be defined as the process of moving from preliminary identification of a potential investment project to the stage of being able to procure and implement the investment in question. It includes all of the work done to investigate, appraise and make the case for a potential investment. For the Major projects that receive JASPERS assistance the results of this development work include:

- Strategic plans that make the initial case for a set of investments in a given sector such as road transport, water treatment or waste disposal;
- Feasibility studies that investigate a particular need for investment in detail, develop a preferred solution and analyse this solution;
- The Environmental Impact Assessment carried out for proposed investments; and,
- The application for funding prepared for the proposed investment.

JASPERS assists Member States with this project development work. This assistance notably includes support to Member States in the presentation of projects to the DG for Regional Policy in application forms.

The preparation of these application forms is a key step in the development of Major projects. These applications set out the key features of a proposed project and the case for public investment in a standard form. All of the information and analysis needed to complete the application should be provided by the project development process. These application forms, and the response of the DG for Regional Policy to them, are valuable indicator of the quality of the project development work carried out.

Any flaws or omissions in the process of project development will lead to an application form that is incomplete or unclear. This in turn will give rise to Interruption Letters from the Commission to the Member State. The work done by a Member State to respond to an Interruption Letter will amount to completing the process of project development or correcting a flaw in the project development work carried out prior to the application.

If a proposed project meets a real need and will deliver public benefits, then provided a Member State carries out the development of the project completely and correctly and uses this work to complete an application for funding, there should be no need for the DG for Regional Policy to issue Interruption Letters. Conversely, if the development work for a project is flawed or incomplete it will not be possible to satisfactorily complete an application for funding, even if the underlying project has merit and should be funded. The DG for Regional Policy will have to issue Interruption Letters which will, in effect, direct the Member State to correct and complete the development work for the project in question.

There is a direct relationship between the quality of project development and the time taken by the DG for Regional Policy to consider applications for funding. Any action that increases the quality of project preparation by Member States will reduce the time taken by the Commission to reach funding decisions on Major projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

On this basis, the analysis of timelines carried out for this evaluation provides clear, objective evidence the JASPERS support with specific projects increases the quality of project development for these projects. The timeline analysis established that JASPERS assistance with a project reduced the time taken by the DG for Regional Policy to assess the application for funding for that project. This indicates that the application forms for JASPERS assisted projects are clearer and more complete than those for non-JASPERS projects. This in turn shows that the project development for these projects was carried out to a higher standard of quality than the project development for projects that did not receive JASPERS assistance.

The positive impact of JASPERS assistance on the quality of project development was confirmed and illustrated by the case studies completed for this evaluation. The case studies included several clear examples of JASPERS assistance with the preparation of applications speeding up the process of the DG for Regional Policy considering applications and deciding to fund the projects. The Czech railway case, Slovenian road case, Polish rail, Polish Road 2 and Polish Water and Wastewater 2 cases were notable in this respect. The case studies also illustrate the impact of JASPERS assistance on projects going beyond the projects in question, to have a positive impact on the development of projects that were not the subject of specific JASPERS assistance. The Czech rail case study is an example of this type of impact, and is summarised in the box below:

Box 8.1 Summary of Case Study 1: Czech Railways

This case study compared two major rail investments in the Czech Republic, one developed with JASPERS assistance and one without. The projects in question are:

- The JASPERS assisted electrification of the Zábřeh – Šumperk Railway (CCI 2009CZ161PR010); and,
- The non-assisted electrification of the Letohrad – Lichkov Railway (CCI 2008CZ161PR001).

JASPERS reviewed:

- The Feasibility Study and Cost Benefit calculation for this project;
- The application for funding to be submitted to the DG for Regional Policy;
- Annexes to Chapter F – Natura 2000 Sites Declaration, Screening Report, Non-Technical Summary, Building Permits; and,
- The Economic and Financial model underlying the Feasibility Study and application.

Following this review and discussion with the relevant authorities, JASPERS proposed:

- Some improvements in presentation of the project feasibility;
- Adjustment of some specific elements in Cost Benefit calculations; and,
- Focusing the technical description and clarifying EIA related issues in the Application Form.

The application for funding for the JASPERS assisted project was dealt with in 493 days by the Commission. The Commission needed 586 to consider the application for funding for the non-JASPERS project. It is clear from discussions with the Czech Republic authorities that there are a variety of factors which have affected the timescales on these projects, and that the apparent 93 day time saving from the use of JASPERS may understate the effect of JASPERS on the quality of funding applications and the speed with which they can be considered by the DG for Regional Policy.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

In particular:

- Although the two projects are broadly similar, the Czech Republic cautioned that they were not identical;
- The Czech Republic authorities have been receiving advice from both JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy in relation to preparation of Cost Benefit Analyses and Feasibility Studies for all Major rail projects. Therefore although the non-assisted project did not officially have JASPERS technical assistance, it is clear that advice received on other projects has been applied to the non-assisted project;
- JASPERS advice was not sought in relation to responding to Interruption Letters received on the JASPERS assisted project, therefore their input to the assisted project is limited solely to undertaking a screening of the pre-application documentation;
- The Beneficiary (the Czech Railway Infrastructure Authority “SZDC”) had a variety of projects which they were progressing in parallel, the time taken for SZDC to respond to the DG for Regional Policy and JASPERS comments, could be impacted by conflicting project priorities on resources;
- The Czech Republic authorities believe that the quantity of supporting documentation required and technical requirements has been increasing throughout the 2007-2013 OPP and therefore time required to produce the required information is increasing.

The case study illustrates how JASPERS can assist in enhancing the quality of submissions, with the Czech Republic authorities recognising the benefit of utilising JASPERS knowledge of how the DG for Regional Policy like information presented. The case study also highlights that the beneficiary’s technical capacity and understanding of the DG for Regional Policy requirements is increasing as they apply the knowledge learnt on one project to other projects which they are undertaking.

The case studies illustrate the complexity and usefulness of the assistance with project development delivered by JASPERS. The second Polish road case study demonstrates that even support for the preparation of applications forms can involve JASPERS in complex and sensitive areas such as the design and impact of new road pricing systems. In addition, the Polish knowledge economy case study shows how JASPERS is developing new techniques and guidance to address novel issues as new forms of project emerge.

The feedback received from Member States and the DG for Regional Policy in the programme of interviews and workshops carried out for this study confirmed the positive impact of JASPERS on the quality of project preparation.

The majority of Member State stakeholders agreed with the finding from the AECOM work on timelines, that JASPERS assistance with project development shortened the time taken by the DG for Regional Policy to examine an application for funding for the project in question. In fact, there was a consensus that JASPERS assistance could also reduce the time taken by a Member State to develop a project to the point where an application for funding could be made.

8.3 Potential Impacts on Project Quality

As well as improving the quality of project development by Member States, JASPERS has the potentially much more beneficial role of improving the quality of projects themselves. Any investment of the scale of a Major project represents a significant use of the resources of the Member State in question, and of the EU as a whole. If the

Capabilities on project:
Economics

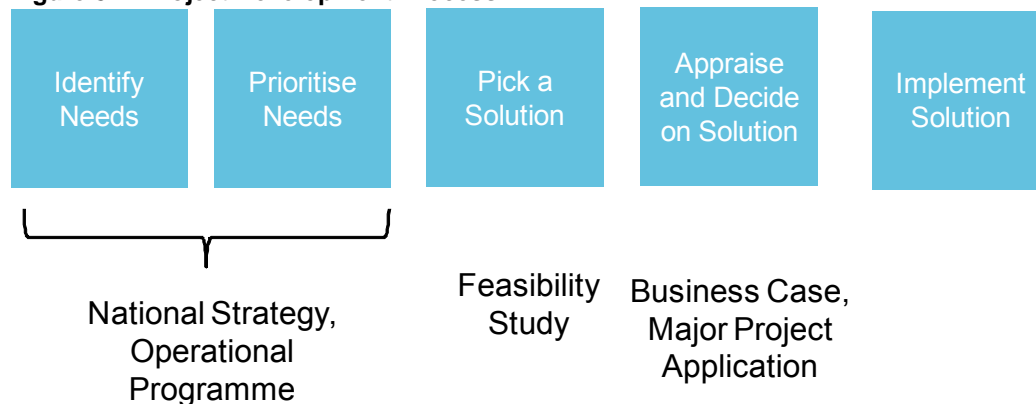
project is well chosen and addresses a significant need, or addresses a real opportunity, it will deliver significant net benefits and to contribute to the economic and social objectives of the Member State and the EU as a whole.

The objective of Member States and the EU as a whole must be to select and complete the set of projects that deliver the greatest amount of benefits in return for the resources available for investment. The relevant measure of quality for selecting and prioritising these projects by Member States and the DG for Regional Policy is their benefit to cost ratio. JASPERS can help optimise the use of public resources by working to ensure that the projects selected for implementation are those that deliver the largest benefits relative to their cost.

A key insight in this area is that early intervention in the development of a project has much greater potential to improve the quality of the project in question than intervention in the later stages of project development. However there is potential for even late interventions in project development to have indirect effects on project quality, possible on the quality of subsequent projects.

Section 3 of this report includes a generalised model of how projects are developed. Figure 8.1 below summarised the main features of this model.

Figure 8.1: Project Development Process



Source: AECOM

At different stages of this process there are different possibilities to maximise the benefit cost ratio of the investment projects that are eventually implemented. Taking each of the four stages in turn:

- **Identification of needs/prioritisation of needs.** This is the crucial stage of project development that has the largest influence on the benefits that will eventually be realised when individual projects are selected and implemented. The potential for a project to produce benefits comes from the extent and severity of the need it addresses. The first step in developing projects to the highest possible quality is to identify the most urgent needs that could be addressed with an appropriate investment. In fact, once these tasks of need identification and prioritisation are completed and an overall investment strategy has been determined the quality of the individual investment projects that make up the strategy is largely set. If a project is to deliver significant benefits it must be addressing a significant need. Conversely, no amount of development work can lead to a project that does not address a significant need delivering significant benefits.
- **Pick a Solution.** The detailed work of picking a solution to address an identified need will optimise the balance between costs and benefits from addressing the need in question with an investment project. Different approaches to addressing a need will have different specific benefits. For example different types

of public transport will provide different levels of quality of service to users and so generate different levels of benefit. (This does not take from the fact that the overall magnitude of benefits from a public transport project will be mainly determined by the underlying level of demand for public transport.) In addition, different approaches will have different levels of cost. The process of option generation and selection will ensure that the investment project proposed achieves the optimum balance of benefit of cost in addressing the need in question.

- **Appraise and decide on solution.** This stage of the development process is effectively a quality control on the preceding stages of project development. In itself it cannot increase the benefits or decrease the cost of a proposed investment project. Assuming that the earlier stages of project development have been completed correctly this stage needs to be completed as quickly as possible to ensure that the benefits of a project are not delayed unnecessarily.
- **Implement Solution.** Opportunities exist to optimise the quality of an investment project at this stage by increasing its benefits or reducing its costs. For example more detailed design work is often undertaken at this stage, and opportunities may be identified to increase the quality of the project, by improving its design or scaling it more appropriately. Skilful design and execution of a procurement strategy can also minimise the cost of a project.

This generalised picture of how projects are developed suggests that the best opportunities for JASPERS intervention to increase the quality of projects will arise if it assists at an early stage of project development, ideally when needs are being identified and prioritised. However there are a number of ways in which a later intervention to assist the development of a project can increase the quality of that project, or indirectly the quality of other projects. In particular later interventions can:

- Improve the detailed design work that can take place at the implementation stage of a project;
- Lead to a beneficiary revisiting the earlier stages of project development, in particular to it returning to the option selection stage and adopting a more cost effective approach to the project; or,
- Highlight issues that are taken up in the subsequent interaction between the beneficiary and the DG for Regional Policy.

8.4 Findings from Desk Based Research

Each year Member States agree Action Plans with JASPERS. These set out the assignments that JASPERS is to complete for the Member State in the year in question. AECOM reviewed these Action Plans for evidence of the impact of JASPERS on each Member State. This review confirmed that Member States seek JASPERS assistance at a late stage in the development of individual projects. A full 96 per cent of the assignments identified in Action Plans include a review of the application form to be submitted to the DG for Regional Policy. In fact, 70 per cent of these assignments were planned to only consist of a review of a draft application form. This concentration on the later stages of project development has persisted throughout the evaluation period. Table 8.1 below summarises the key results of this review.

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Table 8.1 Subject of JASPERS Assignments by Year

Subject of JASPERS Assignments (%)	2009	2010	2011	All Years
Review of Application Form only	70	66	77	70
Several topics including review of Application Form	26	31	20	26
	96	97	97	96
Topics other than review of Application Form	4	3	3	4
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: AECOM

8.5 Findings from Case Studies

The case studies prepared for this Evaluation also cast light on how JASPERS has had an impact on the quality of investment projects implemented by Member States. The Case Studies reflect the work of JASPERS over the evaluation period, and show JASPERS becoming involved with projects at a relatively late stage of development.

Significantly, the case studies show a recognition among Member States that late involvement of JASPERS may miss an opportunity to improve the quality of projects themselves, and moves to involve JASPERS earlier in the development of projects. For example the Slovenian road case study indicates a desire amongst the Slovenian authorities to involve JASPERS in project development at an earlier stage.

In a number of instances, there is evidence from the Case Studies that while JASPERS had a positive impact on the quality of the application for funding, it had little scope to influence project quality because strategic planning and identification of project prioritisation had taken place well before JASPERS involvement. This was to be expected as the planning process, which was described above, is a lengthy one and necessarily must commence several years before projects are subject to final appraisal.

Case Study 3 – Romanian Solid Waste Management is informative in that while the late involvement of JASPERS limited the impact of JASPERS on project quality generally, it demonstrates how some redesign was identified by JASPERS to be implemented at the detailed design stage of the project. It also highlights the role that good technical advice can play in determining project quality, although in this case it was provided before the JASPERS process commenced. Finally, the contribution that horizontal assignments can make to the quality of project planning and through that the quality of the projects themselves is highlighted.

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Box 8.2 Case Study 3: Romanian Solid Waste Management

This case study compared two solid waste projects in Romania. These were:

- The JASPERS assisted Integrated Waste Management System in Cluj County; and
- The non-assisted Integrated Waste Management System in Suceava County

The two projects are very comparable, as they address broadly the same problems, have a similar financial scale and involve broadly the same investment solutions.

JASPERS became involved in the Cluj project after the Feasibility Study had been completed. The JASPERS assignment was to review the Draft Applications to the DG for Regional Policy and the documents that supported that application.

The Romanian Evaluation Group for Major projects worked via a system of Correction Protocols. This involved the issuing of the Draft Application Form and background studies to the members of the Evaluation Group and the seeking of comments from them through a series of Correction Protocols. Eight such Protocols were issued for the Cluj Project and JASPERS were involved in six of these. JASPERS undertook four missions and meetings during the course of its involvement.

The impact of JASPERS on project quality depends in part on what would have occurred in the absence of JASPERS involvement. Consideration of a non-JASPERS assisted project helps to understand this counterfactual situation. In the absence of JASPERS assistance, it is clear that the Romanian authorities relied on a standardised planning process that was applied across all solid waste projects. This process had a number of strong aspects:

- A strong strategic planning framework at national and regional levels;
- County Master Plans at the pre-feasibility stage;
- The recruitment of external technical assistance to help monitor the Master Plans and project Feasibility Studies;
- The awarding of multiple Feasibility Studies to each Feasibility Study consultant, facilitating learning on the part of the consultant;
- The establishment of an Evaluation Group, inclusive of various stakeholders.

Project planning also benefited from the active involvement of the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officer.

JASPERS involvement came too late to have a substantial influence on the quality of the projects. Key design elements for the projects had been largely decided at the Master Plan stage and validated by the Feasibility Studies. The Romanian authorities did not seek JASPERS help on the case study project until after the completion of the Feasibility Study.

The Romanian authorities had separate technical assistance to help ensure the quality of these studies. This suggests that even earlier involvement of JASPERS might not have yielded substantial benefits in terms of project quality, but simply duplicated this assistance. Having said this, even with late involvement, JASPERS had the capacity to influence aspects of the detailed design of projects at

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the procurement stage. The case study provides an example of this in relation to the design of the Cluj landfill site, where JASPERS made recommendations to improve the design to be implemented at detailed design stage prior to procurement.

With regard to the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration, this amounted to three months (91 days) in respect of the JASPERS assisted Cluj project, but a little over two months (68 days) for the Suceava project. It should be noted that the Decision Duration for both the case study projects was well below that for the average of all solid waste JASPERS assisted major projects (215 days) and for non-JASPERS assisted major projects (219 days). Thus, while it took longer for the DG for Regional Policy to make a decision on the JASPERS supported case study project, this was in the context of very short decision periods for the case study projects by comparison with solid waste projects generally. In fact, the decision period for all Romanian solid waste projects, at 96 days, was well below that for all solid waste projects.

The strong project planning process is undoubtedly the major reason why the DG for Regional Policy decision period was found to be relatively short for Romanian solid waste projects generally, the case study projects being no exception. Other reasons for the short decision period include the very similar nature of solid waste management projects at the county level in Romania and the active role take by the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officer.

However, there is support for the view that JASPERS support contributed to short Decision Durations. In this context, the role of the horizontal assignments should be highlighted, particularly the provision of guidelines for Cost Benefit Analysis and completion of the Application Form for solid waste projects specifically. JASPERS undoubtedly reduced the probability of errors being made which could have delayed the decision process. It is noteworthy, in this regard, that neither of the applications in respect of the case study projects was interrupted and that while the non-JASPERS supported project was the subject of queries from the DG for Regional Policy, the JASPERS supported project was not.

The case studies provide some pointers to the future role of JASPERS. The Romanian authorities have indicated that, because the throughput of projects will slow in the future, it is not their intention to engage external consultants to monitor master planning and project planning. They anticipate that they will need the support of JASPERS in this role. Additionally, the contribution of JASPERS horizontal assignments suggests that this is an effective and efficient means of improving the quality of project planning and easing the application process.

8.6 Findings from Consultations and Workshops with Member States and JASPERS officials

From the above, it became apparent that the scope for JASPERS to improve project quality was very limited, as it has typically become involved in projects at a stage when specific projects have already been chosen for development by Member States and the design of each project is relatively fixed.

This was confirmed by the stakeholders from the Member States who indicated that given the lead time for major infrastructural projects, planning and development work for the majority of projects implemented in the current programming period would have to have been well underway by the time JASPERS was established. Member State stakeholders recognised the potential for early JASPERS assistance to improve the quality of projects, and saw potential for this type of assistance in the forthcoming programming period.

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However, Member State stakeholders indicated that JASPERS had a positive impact on project quality in at least some cases and these instances have delivered significant benefits. JASPERS had a positive impact on project quality as follows:

- JASPERS advice and intervention occasionally had a positive impact on the detailed design and implementation work that takes place after a project application has been made;
- JASPERS advice following a review of draft application material has occasionally led a Member State to revisit its option selection, and hence led to a better project design being selected;
- JASPERS may highlight shortcomings in project quality in its Completion Note on a project, and these issues are then taken up by the DG for Regional Policy. This leads either to an eventual improvement in the quality of the project or the postponement or withdrawal of a low quality project.

JASPERS was able to provide examples of projects where its intervention and advice led to a reduction in the cost of a project, or prevented a non-beneficial project from proceeding. These six examples, summarised below, indicate the scale of the benefit that can be realised from even a small number of interventions to improve the quality of projects.

- Warsaw Metro Line 2. JASPERS advised the beneficiary to retender the project and provided advice on tender design. New tender price was €400m less than original tender;
- Bratislava Rail Interconnection. Original proposal was for a heavy rail tunnel and underground rail station in city centre with a cost of approximately €1bn. JASPERS negative opinion and advice contributed to revised proposal for light rail approach.
- Hungary Regional Road 4. JASPERS review revealed environmental issues. Project proposal with a cost of €160m withdrawn.
- Slovakia D3 Road Svrcinovec – Skalite. JASPERS review highlighted low potential traffic and lack of relationship to an overall strategy. Project costing €660m suspended.
- Hungary South Buda Wastewater Plant. JASPERS review of option analysis revealed that this plant was not the least cost solution, leading to a cost saving of approximately €100m.
- Bulgaria Pernik Wastewater Plant. JASPERS review revealed a lower cost approach to wastewater treatment for a saving of some €94m.

8.7 Conclusions

JASPERS' primary focus during the evaluation period was to assist Member States with the development of Major projects. There is clear evidence that JASPERS assistance has led to significant and beneficial improvements in the development of projects by Member States. For reasons outside its control, or that of Member States, JASPERS had only limited opportunities to have a positive impact on the quality of projects themselves. However it demonstrated the capacity to make improvements to the quality of projects, particularly where it was possible for it to get involved at an early stage of project development. This capacity has been recognised by Member States, and a clear potential exists for JASPERS to have significant positive impacts on the quality of projects in future programming periods.

Section 9: Impact of JASPERS on Administrative Capacity

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9.1 Introduction

As well as improving the quality of individual projects, JASPERS assistance may have a positive impact on the administrative capacity of Member States. In this context, the term 'administrative capacity' is used to refer to knowledge of project planning and application processes, including relevant techniques. This Study evaluated the extent to which this occurred through analysis of the work of JASPERS and through feedback from the interviews and workshops with Member States. Before detailing the findings, this section of the Report considers the channels through which the work of JASPERS could influence administrative capacity. It goes on to consider each of these channels in turn. Finally, it draws together the conclusions and recommendations arising from this work on the impact of JASPERS on the administrative capacity of Member States.

9.2 Channels for Influencing Administrative Capacity

Essentially, the work of JASPERS comprises:

- Advice on the planning and application process for individual projects; and
- The undertaking of horizontal assignments that were not project specific.

With regard to project advisory work, JASPERS actions can lead to permanent increases in the administrative capacity of beneficiaries, intermediate and implementing bodies, managing authorities and the consulting sector in Member States. These improvements in administrative capacity can arise through Member State officials working with JASPERS on projects where JASPERS is providing assistance.

With regard to horizontal assignments, there is scope for JASPERS to increase administrative capacity through such activities as:

- Officials receiving training from JASPERS; and
- Officials using reference and guidance material produced by JASPERS.

9.3 Building Administrative Capacity through Project Advisory Work

A number of issues that arise if JASPERS is to build the administrative capacity of Member States through its assistance with individual projects were identified:

- Officials should ideally be involved in several projects with JASPERS to develop significant new skills and knowledge;
- In order for this increase in the capacity of an official to be of benefit to a Member State, the official must continue to work in project development;
- With respect to officials working in beneficiary organisations this will typically only happen if the beneficiary operates on a national scale and is responsible for the development of a large number of projects;
- This highlights that intermediate bodies have the potential to be a useful repository of sector specific knowledge and capacity if they are appropriately involved in project development. Similarly, Managing Authorities can be a useful repository of knowledge and capacity on cross-sectoral issues; and
- Ideally, managing authorities should have processes in place to ensure that the acquired knowledge is shared.

One of the factors that need to be recognised is that many Member States had relatively few projects under development in the period reviewed by this Study. The data presented in Section 4 of this study shows that only five Member States had more than 20 Major and non-Major projects assisted by JASPERS. Moreover, for latter Member States their small number of projects was distributed across a range of sectors. It was inevitable then that

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beneficiaries in those Member States have relatively little interaction with JASPERS and officials in beneficiary organisations may have had limited subsequent involvement in further project planning activities.

Thus, the potential for increasing capacities among beneficiaries may be limited. It may be further limited by the planning procedures adopted by Member States. For example, the Romanian authorities centralised the planning of projects in the environmental sector, so that beneficiaries had relatively little contact with JASPERS. This was partly in recognition that officials at local level did not have the requisite skills to engage in project planning and that the development of projects would be speeded up by a more centralised approach. This highlights in turn a relevant aspect of environment sector projects: viz that they are geographically based and are often the responsibility of relatively small local authority units that will not be subsequently engaged in similar projects of an environmental nature for a number of years.

The potential for project advisory work to impact on the capacity of beneficiaries is enhanced where those beneficiaries are in one of the larger Member States and the beneficiary is responsible for a number of projects or indeed a programme. This occurs in the transport sector where the beneficiary is a national roads administration or a national railway company. The Czech rail case study illustrates the impact of JASPERS assistance on projects going beyond the projects in question, to have a positive impact on projects that were not the subject of specific JASPERS assistance. The railway authorities indicated that the assistance given on aspects of project development, for example compiling cost benefit calculations for proposed rail investments, for specific projects was being used by the Czech railway company in developing all of its projects.

The second Polish road case study demonstrated that even support for the preparation of applications forms can involve JASPERS in complex and sensitive areas such as the design and impact of new road pricing systems. This type of knowledge was of general use to the Polish management authorities and beneficiary, and constituted a useful addition to their administrative capacity.

One specific initiative which facilitated cross-project learning was the adoption of a “model project” approach in several countries that had large numbers of projects seeking funding. Under this approach, JASPERS assistance was sought for a particular project and the knowledge gained was then applied to subsequent projects. This process was facilitated where a number of virtually identical projects were being brought forward e.g. county level solid waste projects. In one case, this approach was further enhanced by the appointment of the same external consultant to more than one feasibility study.

There is more evidence that project advisory work impacted on the capacity of managing authorities and relevant government Ministries. The Member States acknowledged that transfer of technical knowledge had occurred through project related JASPERS assistance. In particular, the focus on advice at the application stage had led to a much greater understanding of both EU legislation, the requirements the funding eligibility appraisal process, cost-benefit techniques, and EIA procedures. An increase in the knowledge base among beneficiaries and sectoral managing authorities as a result of JASPERS assistance was widely noted

However, transfer of knowledge in relation to overall project planning was seen to have been restricted by the involvement of JASPERS at a stage when the feasibility study had typically been completed.

9.4 Building Administrative Capacity through Horizontal Assignments

Horizontal assignments are non project specific and have the potential to help build administrative capacity. However, as was noted before, capacity building is not a formal objective of JASPERS. As a result there was no concerted effort to build capacity through this mechanism.

However, JASPERS carried 87 horizontal assignments in the period under review. in response to requests from Member States. Activities undertaken included:

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- Informal contacts between Member States and JASPERS staff;
- Transfer of knowledge to officials developing assisted projects;
- Training courses organised for groups of Member State officials;
- Preparation of manuals, including manuals on cost benefit analysis and energy markets.

Thus, these assignments had the potential to build capacity. However, they were largely undertaken in two Member States – Romania and Poland.

The Member State authorities highlighted the role of horizontal assignments as a vehicle for knowledge transfer. Horizontal activities such as the development of guidance documentation and training were highly valued. Some Member States in turn took specific steps to disseminate JASPERS acquired knowledge to the wider project planning community nationally e.g. through training activities and nationally specific guidance documents.

In general terms, Member States believed that increased international transfer of knowledge was possible and that current initiatives to develop this aspect of learning should be promoted.

It is clear that horizontal assignments could be focussed on developing administrative capacity and that greater dissemination both nationally and internationally would pay dividends.

9.5 Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

It has been noted above that where Member States bring forward relatively few projects, the scope for transfer of knowledge is limited. In half of the Member States, the lack of JASPERS staff with local language skills was cited as a factor, particularly with respect to transfer of knowledge to beneficiaries, where knowledge of English is not as prevalent.

Staff turnover was seen as a barrier to knowledge transfer from JASPERS among a minority of Member States. There was a general view that this issue was of greater importance in the past, but that the problem had diminished of late. It was also the view of a number of Member States that where individual stakeholders lost staff, it was often to other actors in the project planning community, so that acquired skills were not lost to the overall system.

9.6 Conclusions

The work of JASPERS comprises advice on the planning and application process for individual project and the undertaking of horizontal assignments that were not project specific. Both of these have the potential to increase administrative capacity among stakeholders in the Member States. With regard to project advisory work, it needs to be recognised that many Member States had relatively few projects under development in the period reviewed by this Study. It was inevitable then that beneficiaries in those Member States would have relatively little interaction with JASPERS and officials in beneficiary organisations may have had limited subsequent involvement in further project planning activities.

The potential for project advisory work to impact on the capacity of beneficiaries is enhanced where those beneficiaries are in one of the larger Member States and the beneficiary is responsible for a number of projects or indeed a programme. This occurs in the transport sector where the beneficiary is a national roads administration or a national railway company.

There is more evidence that project advisory work impacted on the capacity of managing authorities and relevant government Ministries. The Member States acknowledged that transfer of technical knowledge had occurred through project related JASPERS assistance.

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The Member State authorities highlighted the role of horizontal assignments as a vehicle for knowledge transfer. It is clear that horizontal assignments could be focussed on developing administrative capacity and that greater dissemination both nationally and internationally would pay dividends.

Ultimately JASPERS actions to develop the administrative capacity of Member States will contribute to a situation where these Member States can “graduate” from the status of needing outside help with project development and capacity building.

Section 10: JASPERS: Structures and Performance

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10.1 Introduction

This Section of the Report comments on the structures in place through which JASPERS services are delivered, reviews the quality of the services provided as perceived by both the Member States and the DG for Regional Policy and considers the overall value for money of the JASPERS initiative.

10.2 Structures

10.2.1 Key Features

JASPERS is a technical assistance facility implemented in partnership between the EIB and the DG for Regional Policy. JASPERS is a separate structure within the EIB. It was set up to offer advice on programming, project preparation and project appraisal to twelve new Member States. The focus of its advisory activities is on major projects.

It has a regional structure with offices in Warsaw, Vienna and Bucharest, as well as a head office in Luxembourg. It is overseen by a Steering Committee which undertakes annual reviews of JASPERS operations. Its working language is English.

There is no obligation on the part of the Member States to use JASPERS, so that it is a demand driven process. Action Plans setting out JASPERS activities are agreed with the Member States on an annual basis. Completion Notes are issued when assignments are complete. While JASPERS advises Member States on their project applications, the decision to provide grant assistance remains with the European Commission.

JASPERS provides technical advice largely on a sectoral basis. That is, sectoral experts are recruited to the regional offices, rather than having generalist who focus on particular Member States.

It is important to note that JASPERS, like all new initiatives or institutions, is evolving over time as experience with the initial working arrangements is obtained.

10.2.2 Review

In most respects, the JASPERS structures are working well. The separation of JASPERS from other EIB activities has facilitated the necessary focus on the task at hand, while retaining access to the wider EIB skill base. The focus on major projects is justified in terms of the potential impact on absorption of funds and quality of projects.

The regional structure is valued by Member States as it increases their accessibility to advisory services, in a situation where separate offices in each Member State would not be justified. It facilitates more informal contacts between officials in Member States and JASPERS, which is beneficial in terms getting rapid advice on issues. The sectoral approach adopted by JASPERS is complementary to the approach used by the DG for Regional Policy, which is based on Member State desks. This means that the project planning and appraisal system as a whole benefits from both sectoral knowledge and knowledge of Member State legislation, institutions and process. It also facilitates a higher level of technical expertise than would a more generalist approach.

During consultations, some Member States expressed concerns about the use of English exclusively as a working language and indicated a preference for JASPERS to recruit experts with the language of the Member State. While it is clear that where possible experts with non-English language capabilities should be recruited, the priority for JASPERS as a technical assistance facility is to ensure that they acquire experts with the best skills and experience. This approach should not be compromised for the sake of language capability.

The terms of reference of this study restricted it to an examination of JASPERS outputs and impacts as measured by timelines and feedback from external stakeholders. Consideration of the internal processes of JASPERS, in particular its internal quality controls, its own corporate identity, standards and values is outside the scope of this review.

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An alternative approach to the provision of advice through JASPERS would be to support Member States in the recruitment of consultants to perform the same tasks. In considering whether the JASPERS structures are efficient and effective, it is worth reflecting on how JASPERS might add value in contrast with the approach of using consultants.

The JASPERS approach brings benefits in terms of:

- A reduction in transaction costs associated with recruiting advice;
- Continuity and integration of advisory services; and
- A closer working relationship with the DG for Regional Policy.

In addition JASPERS has taken on a wider role, and offered greater continuity to Member States and the DG for Regional Policy than would have been possible were it simply another consultancy firm.

JASPERS works at the request of Member States and views the Managing Authorities as their client. This approach was necessary at the outset to ensure that Managing Authorities trusted JASPERS and availed of their services. Over time, there has been an evolution to a more tripartite arrangement, with JASPERS sharing more information with the DG for Regional Policy and informal contacts between all parties. It is our view that this now needs to be formalised with the development of a protocol to elaborate on the working arrangements between the three parties. Such a protocol should cover not only the way in which the three parties interact in relation to the processing of individual projects, but also how the DG for Regional Policy accesses JASPERS advice in respect of programming.

Another aspect of the demand driven nature of the current structures is that JASPERS does not have a strategic approach to delivering its services in Member States. We are of the view that there is room for JASPERS to lend a more strategic focus to its work. This would involve periodic assessments by JASPERS of the weaknesses and strengths of the programme and project planning processes in each Member State, the identification of ways in which JASPERS could help improve these processes, and initiatives to encourage Members States to avail of such assistance

JASPERS has been slow to provide an integrated approach to the delivery of services. In particular, there have been few initiatives to ensure that learning and guidance is transferred across Members States. The JASPERS Steering Committee in June 2011 endorsed the establishment of a Networking Platform (NP). The NP has the objective of:

- Consolidating JASPERS horizontal activities where relevant for several Member States and sectors;
- Disseminating JASPERS guidance, horizontal studies and acquired knowledge;
- Providing a framework for networking and collaboration, and enable exchange of information, experience and best practices among JASPERS Stakeholders;
- Exploiting synergies to support effective JASPERS capacity building activities; and,
- Complementing other JASPERS priorities.

The NP is in start-up phase as of 2012 and has commenced a set of pilot activities including the development of guidance and workshops on technical issues. A new JASPERS community web portal is currently being developed to be up and running by end 2012. We support the development of the NP and see it as having a substantial contribution to make in the context of 2014-2020 programming period.

10.3 Quality of JASPERS Services

JASPERS implemented a process of obtaining feedback from the project beneficiaries and the DG for Regional Policy desk officers.

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10.3.1 Feedback from Project Beneficiaries and Managing Authorities

Project Beneficiaries were asked to rate the success of JASPERS assistance in terms of:

- Achievement of objectives; both original objectives and additional objectives that arose during the assignment.
- JASPERS inputs into project preparation; including structure and scoping, technical feasibility, economics & financial analysis, procurement and implementation arrangements, environmental impact analysis (EIA), and drafting of the application.
- JASPERS inputs to Horizontal Tasks.
- The responsiveness of the JASPERS team.
- The coordination between JASPERS and respective national authorities.

Beneficiaries were also asked whether they would use JASPERS again and if they would recommend others to use them. They were also given the opportunity to make suggestions for future improvements to JASPERS assistance. Table 10.1 below shows a summary of the feedback from the Beneficiaries of JASPERS-assisted projects. Any unfilled entries on feedback forms were discounted so that the percentages in the table show the relative proportions of aggregate scores in each category.

Table 10.1 JASPERS Performance: Feedback from Beneficiaries

Feedback Forms	97 Responses				
	Highly Successful (%)	Successful (%)	Partially Successful (%)	Failure (%)	Total (%)
Original objectives of JASPERS action	64.9	28.7	6.4	0.0	100.0
Additional objectives arising during assignment	40.6	53.1	6.3	0.0	100.0
Structure & Scoping	60.6	31.0	8.5	0.0	100.0
Technical feasibility	52.1	38.4	8.2	1.4	100.0
Economic & financial analysis	67.6	23.0	8.1	1.4	100.0
Procurement & implementation arrangements	48.8	46.5	4.7	0.0	100.0
EIA	53.6	41.1	1.8	3.6	100.0
Drafting of the application	57.9	38.6	1.8	1.8	100.0
JASPERS input to Horizontal Tasks	60.8	33.3	5.9	0.0	100.0
Responsiveness of team	65.5	28.7	4.6	1.1	100.0
Coordination	61.4	34.1	4.5	0.0	100.0

Source: JASPERS Feedback Forms

As Table 10.1 shows, the overall opinion of JASPERS assistance among beneficiaries is overwhelmingly positive. Scores of HS or S make up for 90% or more of the aggregate score in each of the feedback categories. The overall achievement of objectives by JASPERS was rated as 'Highly Successful' in 64.9% of responses, and as 'Successful' in 28.7%, indicating that even within the positive responses, the majority of beneficiaries rate the JASPERS assistance with the maximum score. Similar results exist for most of the other categories, with the

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exception of the ratings for procurement & implementation arrangements, which were almost evenly split between HS and S.

A frequent comment or issue raised by the beneficiaries is that they would like faster response times and quicker information flows from the JASPERS teams assisting on their projects in relation to questions from the beneficiaries and to verification of documents. Another common issue was a desire from the beneficiaries for more local knowledge and expertise among the JASPERS teams, to make projects design and implementation more tailored to the specific circumstances of the beneficiary; and for project assistance to be carried out in the local language, to save from wasting time translating project documents. Finally, a common methodology for R&D related project assistance was mentioned, and some calls were made for checklists to be generated at the commencement of JASPERS assistance, outlining the work to be performed during the course of the assistance.

Face to face consultations with managing authorities and beneficiaries in Member States, revealed, almost without exception, a similar very positive view of the quality of the advice offered by JASPERS and the personnel involved. JASPERS officials are regarded as co-operative, flexible, and having good communication skills. The quick response time of JASPERS and its willingness to undertake site visits and face to face consultations were regarded as particularly valuable.

At the same time, it is recognised by several Member States that the quality of JASPERS advice was somewhat deficient in the early stages of the JASPERS initiative. In this regard, problems with the quality of advice on environmental matters were cited on a number of occasions, although progress was seen to have been made in this area too. Another issue cited was the difficulty of providing high quality advice, in some circumstances, in the absence of a full understanding of national legislative frameworks

10.3.2 Feedback from DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers

At the end of each JASPERS assignment, JASPERS sends an evaluation form to the relevant desk officers in the DG for Regional Policy. These forms ask the Desk Officers to give:

- A general assessment of JASPERS activity; which covers the quality and adequacy of JASPERS progress meetings relating to the project/sector, quality and usefulness of any JASPERS horizontal activities, the responsiveness of the JASPERS team, and the coordination with the DG for Regional Policy and
- An assessment of JASPERS inputs to the project; covering the achievement of JASPERS objectives, the usefulness of the JASPERS completion note in the DG for Regional Policy project appraisal process, the impact of JASPERS involvement on improving the project quality, impact of JASPERS activities on the project approval timing, and the responsiveness of JASPERS to questions/issues identified or raised by the DG for Regional Policy.

Table 10.2 below shows a summary of the feedback reports from the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers responsible for each project that received JASPERS assistance. The percentages in the cells for each category are relative percentages, excluding any responses from the count if they contained an 'N/A' rating.

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Table 10.2 JASPERS Performance: Feedback from DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers

Feedback Forms	44 Responses				
	Highly Successful (%)	Successful (%)	Partially Successful (%)	Failure (%)	Total (%)
General Assessment of JASPERS Activity					
Quality and adequacy of JASPERS progress meetings	17.1	71.4	11.4	0.0	100.0
Quality and adequacy of JASPERS horizontal activities	26.7	63.3	6.7	3.3	100.0
Responsiveness of JASPERS team	59.5	35.7	4.8	0.0	100.0
Coordination with DG REGIO	57.5	37.5	2.5	2.5	100.0
Assessment of JASPERS inputs to the project					
Achievement of JASPERS objectives	17.5	57.5	25.0	0.0	100.0
Usefulness of JASPERS completion note	45.5	34.1	15.9	4.5	100.0
Impact of JASPERS involvement on project quality	24.4	51.2	24.4	0.0	100.0
Impact of JASPERS activities on the project approval	28.6%	35.7	31.0	4.8	100.0
Responsiveness of JASPERS to questions/issues	62.2	29.7	8.1	0.0	100.0

As can be seen from Table 10.2, the overall feedback from the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers is strongly positive. In many categories, the ratings of HS and S make up for 90%+ of the responses received. The ratio of Highly Successful to Successful ratings is less consistent in the DG for Regional Policy survey, with some categories featuring higher counts of HS ratings, some with higher counts of S ratings, and some with nearly even splits.

One fact worth noting is that the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers' feedback for the first section of the form, 'General Assessment of JASPERS Activity', was strongly positive, with combined scores of HS and S accounting for 90% of feedback in three of the categories, and 88.5% in the other.

In contrast to this, the scores in the second section of the feedback form, 'Assessment of JASPERS inputs to the project', were less consistent. In some categories, the positive responses only account for 75%, and in one case 64%, of the responses received. These lower ratings are generally explained by greater numbers of 'PS' ratings rather than high numbers of 'F' ratings.

The four categories with significant proportions of PS or F ratings were:

- Achievement of JASPERS objectives (25% Partially Successful)
- Usefulness of JASPERS completion note in the REGIO project appraisal process (15.9% Partially Successful)
- Impact of JASPERS involvement on improving the project quality (24.4% Partially Successful)

Capabilities on project:
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- Impact of JASPERS activities on the project approval timing (31% Partially Successful)

Comments were infrequent and arose largely when the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers perceived a problem with JASPERS performance. The comments attached to these lower ratings illustrate a range of different issues, which in their opinions have hindered the success of JASPERS assistance. Some of these issues can be unique to the country, or even to the project in question. Some are explicitly criticisms of JASPERS assistance, while others are issues outside of JASPERS control which nevertheless restrained the JASPERS assistance from being completely successful. Examples of these issues are: limited achievement of objectives due to ex-post nature of JASPERS assistance, inconsistencies between the economic and financial CBAs, feasibility studies and CBA requiring further improvements, limited potential for impact due to lack of readiness for prompt reaction at national level, and a number of unique local issues.

On some occasions the DG for Regional Policy comments explain that the lack of success is attributable to factors beyond the scope of JASPERS, such as a weak project application document being submitted despite the official JASPERS opinion that the application form was not mature enough and would require improvements. Other DG for Regional Policy desk officers acknowledge that cooperation with the beneficiary in question may have been particularly difficult, or that the beneficiaries may not have provided answers to direct questions.

10.4 Overall Value for Money of the JASPERS Initiative

This evaluation has indicated that JASPERS has succeeded in reducing the time take for projects to be approved and has thus speeded up the absorption of funding and the consequent implementation of projects.

By the end of 2011 JASPERS had provided assistance to Member States for 541 projects which had reached the stage of being approved for funding by the European Commission. It was providing assistance to a further 351 projects which were at various earlier stages of development. The total value of the projects which had received JASPERS assistance was almost €64bn. By the end of 2011 JASPERS had 89 staff, and it had annual running costs of €32m.

As described above there is clear evidence that JASPERS assistance speeded the process of the DG for Regional Policy reaching funding Decisions on applications for funding for Major projects. The scale of these projects and the benefits that they can bring to Member States are such that bringing forward the implementation of these projects produces significant benefits for Member States. AECOM has estimated the scale of these benefits to be approximately €66m, even if one assumes that projects only deliver net benefits equivalent to 10 per cent of their cost. The calculation of this estimate is set out in Table 10.3 below:

Table 10.3: Value of Advancing Project Implementation

A	Gross Cost of Major investments implemented with JASPERS assistance		€64bn
B	Present value of this cost (say 75%)	A*75%	€48bn
C	Benefit cost ratio of approved projects		1.1
D	Net benefits of approved projects	B * (1-C)	€4.8bn
E	Average time saving in implementation		3 months
F	Discount rate		5.5%
G	Increase in benefits due to time saving	D*(E/12)*F	€66m

As explained above, JASPERS has had very limited opportunities to improve the quality of projects themselves due to the nature of the support it gives to Member States. However, where opportunities have arisen JASPERS advice has led to significant savings for projects and decisions to delay or withdraw projects that would not deliver benefits. These benefits, which were detailed in Section 9 of this Report, are large compared to the costs of JASPERS.

JASPERS employs a team of highly qualified staff. Its method of operating, which ensures its support is delivered as close as possible to users, imposes high costs on it, as it maintains offices in Bucharest, Luxembourg, Vienna and Warsaw and an outpost in Sofia. Its staff members are also required to undertake extensive travel to deliver assistance to Member State officials in person. As a result its average costs per staff member are higher than those of agencies of a similar size and above those of the European Investment Bank. Table 10.4 sets out a comparison of JASPERS costs with those of the EIB and some EU funded agencies.

This comparison shows that JASPERS costs per staff member are closest to those of the EIB, reflecting the high level of qualifications and experience of JASPERS staff and market rates for employing such staff. JASPERS average costs per staff member actually exceed those of the EIB reflecting the fact that it is a relatively small organisation that requires an extensive office network and requires its staff to undertake a great deal of travel to deliver assistance to Member State officials. These costs are comparable to the daily rates that a major consultancy might charge for financial or technical staff with a similar level of skill and experience.

On the basis of a comparison with other bodies and agencies, JASPERS costs appear reasonable given the nature of the tasks it performs and the staff needed to carry out this work.

Capabilities on project:
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Table 10.4: Comparators for JASPERS Operating Costs

Agency	Total Operating Cost	Number of Staff	Operating Cost/Staff Member	Cost/Staff Member/day ⁴
	€m		€ '000	€
JASPERS	32	89	359	1,436
European Investment Bank	486	1,948	249	996
European Maritime Safety Organisation	48	237	201	804
European Aviation Safety Authority	105	630	166	664
Eurofound	20	113	180	720

Source: 2011 Annual Reports and AECOM

10.5 Conclusions

JASPERS structures are working well. The separation of JASPERS from other EIB activities has facilitated the necessary focus on the task at hand, while retaining access to the wider EIB skill base. The focus on major projects is justified in terms of the potential impact on absorption of funds and quality of projects. The sectoral approach adopted by JASPERS is complementary to the approach used by the DG for Regional Policy, which is based on Member State desks.

The priority for JASPERS as a technical assistance facility is to ensure that they acquire experts with the best skills and experience. This approach should not be compromised for the sake of language capability.

Over time, there has been an evolution to a tripartite arrangement, with JASPERS sharing more information with the DG for Regional Policy and informal contacts between all parties. It is our view that this now needs to be formalised with the development of a protocol to elaborate on the working arrangements between the three parties.

There is room for JASPERS to lend a more strategic focus to its work. This would involve periodic assessments by JASPERS of the weaknesses and strengths of the programme and project planning processes in each Member State, the identification of ways in which JASPERS could help improve these processes, and initiatives to encourage Members States to avail of such assistance.

JASPERS has been slow to provide an integrated approach to the delivery of services. In particular, there have been few initiatives to ensure that learning and guidance is transferred across Members States. In this context, the establishment of a Networking Platform by JASPERS is to be welcomed.

Project beneficiaries, managing authorities and DG for Regional Policy desk officers have a positive view of JASPERS performance, although there were concerns that the advice was somewhat deficient in the early stages of

⁴ Assuming 250 working days per year

Capabilities on project:
Economics

the JASPERS initiative. In this regard, problems with the quality of advice on environmental matters were cited on a number of occasions. The concerns of DG for Regional Policy desk officers with regard to some technical issues reinforces the view that more interaction between the desk officers and JASPERS officials to reach an agreed approach on a range of technical issues would be valuable.

On the basis of a comparison with other bodies and agencies, JASPERS costs appear reasonable given the nature of the tasks it performs and the staff needed to carry out this work.

Section 11: Findings and Recommendations



Section 11: Findings and Recommendations

11.1 Introduction

This Section of the Final Report draws together the principal findings of this Evaluation and the recommendations that arise for JASPERS.

11.2 Findings

11.2.1 JASPERS Resources and Outputs

Since its inception in 2006, JASPERS staff numbers have grown from 16 to 89. The largest increase was 40 additional staff between 2006 and 2007, when JASPERS was still in a building-up phase, though the number of staff has increased every year since. JASPERS annual budget increased from €11.6m in 2006 to €38.2 m in 2011. During the period 2006-2011 as a whole JASPERS expenditure totalled some €167m.

The total investment value of JASPERS-supported projects from 2006 to 2011 was almost €64bn. Of these, project with a value of approximately €30bn had been approved by the Commission by the end of the evaluation period.

The total annual assignments being undertaken by JASPERS rose from 98 in 2006 to 493 in 2011, while annual completed assignments increased from 3 to 98 over the same period.

11.2.2 Use of JASPERS

In the period since the Inception of JASPERS in 2005 up to end June 2011, the twelve new Member States submitted 313 major projects to the DG for Regional Policy for funding. Of these, 231 or 74% were Jaspers assisted.

- Seven Member States – Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Slovakia used JASPERS for all their major project applications.
- Poland and Estonia were the only two Member States with low levels of use of JASPERS: approximately 50% of major projects in these two Member States were JASPERS assisted.
- There were 82 non-assisted major projects of which 62 or 76% were in Poland
- JASPERS provided assistance for 91 non-major projects, of which Romania was responsible for 26, followed by Poland with 19.
- JASPERS undertook 87 horizontal assignments in the period, of which 29 or one-third were in Romania.

11.2.3 Duration of JASPERS Assistance

The average duration of JASPERS involvement in the planning of major projects was 489 elapsed days. In general terms, the larger the capital costs of the project, the longer the JASPERS involvement. There is evidence that the JASPERS Duration was longer for railway projects, urban transport projects and energy and knowledge economy projects and lower for water and wastewater projects.

For non-Major projects the average duration of JASPERS involvement was 594 days. Again the duration tended to be longer for rail projects and shorter water and wastewater projects. The average JASPERS duration for horizontal assignments was 388 days.

11.2.4 Scale and Scope of JASPERS Assistance with Major Projects

The scale of JASPERS support to major projects was extensive. Overall, the average number of topics per major project on which JASPERS provided advice was 4.8, while the average number of meetings/visits was 5.3. The Czech Republic was notable for availing of relatively lower levels of JASPERS assistance, with an average of 2.9 topics per project and 2.7 meetings/site visits per project.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

There is a disparity in the scale of JASPERS support required by different sectors. Solid Waste projects had relatively few topics assisted on by JASPERS, averaging 3.4 compared to the Knowledge Economy or Road sectors both of which sought advice on an average of 5.4 topics. The Knowledge Economy also appears to have required a greater level of JASPERS assistance in terms of the number of meetings attended by JASPERS, which averaged 8.1.

Over time, it appears that there has been little change in the scale of JASPERS effort, however it is evident that larger projects require assistance in relation to a higher number of topics and the number of meetings attended by JASPERS is larger.

With regard to the scope of JASPERS Supports, Cost Benefit Analysis was the topic on which JASPERS support was most frequently sought occurring in 74.4 per cent of all projects. This was followed by Funding and Financing Issues at 35.1 per cent of projects, Project Concept and Programming at 30.4 per cent, and Environmental Issues at 29.2 per cent. Larger projects of greater than €150m tended to have greater need for support across a range of topics than smaller projects.

The topics for which JASPERS Support was least required were Competition and State Aids at 8.3 per cent of projects, Project Cost Estimation at 9.5 per cent and Procurement at 10.1 per cent.

There was a tendency for the relative support on some topics to decline over time. Distinguishing between the DG for Regional Policy Decision periods 2006-2009 and 2010-2012, the latter period saw a decline in support relating to Project Design, Cost Benefit Analysis, Funding and Financing Issues, Procurement and Project Implementation and Structures Issues. In contrast, there was an increase in support in relation to Project Concept and Programming, Demand Analysis and Modelling, Risk and Sensitivity Analysis, and Competition and State Aids.

11.2.5 Impact of JASPERS on the Timelines for Major Projects

The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration relates to the time between the submission of a major project application to DG for Regional Policy and the funding decision. An analysis of Decision Durations for major JASPERS-assisted projects revealed an average Duration of 272 days. The equivalent Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects was found to be 386 days. The availability of JASPERS assistance appears to have reduced the Decision Duration, on average, by 114 days.

The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration is broken down into periods during which the DG is actively accessing the project application (the active Decision Duration); and periods when the applications are interrupted (the interrupted Decision Duration). The additional 114 days required by non-JASPERS assisted projects was split into 42 active Decision days and 74 interrupted days. Hence, non-assisted projects experienced proportionally more interruption days, relative to their JASPERS-assisted counterparts.

Across all sectors, for which there was comparison data (namely 'Roads'; Water and Wastewater'; 'Railways'; 'Urban Transport'; and 'Knowledge Economy'), the average Decision Durations for JASPERS-assisted Major projects were shorter than for non-assisted projects. The largest variation between Decision Durations was in respect of the Urban Transport sector, where the Decision Duration for non-assisted projects exceeded that of assisted projects by 231 days. The shortest variation was experienced in the Water and Wastewater sector, where the Decision Duration for non-assisted projects exceeded that of assisted projects by 25 days.

Although, the fact that the reduction in the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration held true for different project types is reassuring, nonetheless the fact that JASPERS-assisted and non-assisted projects might differ in composition remained a cause for concern. Analysis was conducted to ensure a like for like comparison and this reduced the impact of JASPERS assistance from 114 days to 86 days.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The fact that a disproportionate number of the projects not yet decided by the end of the Evaluation period were non-JASPERS, suggests that these findings will understate the eventual impact of JASPERS on Decision Duration.

The case studies and discussions with stakeholders indicate that this positive effect on Decision Durations was not offset by any negative effect on the time taken by Member States to prepare applications.

11.2.6 Impact of JASPERS on the DG for Regional Policy Decision Making Process

Of JASPERS-assisted major projects, 82% were subsequently interrupted by the DG for Regional Policy. An identical proportion of non-JASPERS assisted major projects were interrupted. These are high rates and reflect the large range of topics that can precipitate an interruption. There is some evidence that JASPERS were called on to provide advice on the more technically difficult projects.

The extent to which JASPERS successfully provided advice on a topic that was not subsequently the topic raised in an interruption varied across the topics. Of the eleven topics identified, JASPER achieved a success rate over 70% in respect of seven of them and over 50% in respect of another three. This indicates that in at least some cases, there was an apparent overlap in that the topic that JASPERS advised on was nevertheless the subject of an interruption

Of a sample of 20 projects that fell into this overlap category, the reasons why this had occurred included:

- JASPERS were asked to vet the feasibility study and or the project application and DG for Regional Policy identified an issue that was not explicitly considered by JASPERS;
- JASPERS may have felt that it was not practicable to recommence the feasibility study process without inordinate delays or that the issue raised did not cast doubt on the overall economic value of the project; and,
- JASPERS explicitly advised on an issue, but DG for Regional Policy subsequently took a different view of the issue from a technical viewpoint.

In more than half the cases reviewed, it is apparent that there was a conflict between the JASPERS advice and the views of the DG for Regional Policy. This raises the need to ensure that there is better co-ordination of views on technical issues between JASPERS and DG for Regional Policy.

11.2.7 Impact of JASPERS on Project Quality

JASPERS had an impact on the quality of project development as well as on the underlying quality of projects themselves. The evidence from timelines, case studies and consultations with Member States all confirmed its positive impact on the quality of project development by Member States.

It was clear that in the vast majority of cases JASPERS is involved in projects at a late stage of development. JASPERS is usually involved at the stage where a project is being appraised and a decision is made by a sanctioning authority on whether to proceed with the project. In some cases, JASPERS was involved when the project was completed, and the Member State in question was retrospectively seeking funding from the Commission. This resulted from the timing of JASPERS establishment relative to the lead time required to develop a Major project for implementation in the current programming period.

The scope for JASPERS to improve project quality itself was therefore limited, as it has typically become involved in projects at a stage when specific projects have already been chosen for development by Member States and the design of each project is relatively fixed.

However, JASPERS has had a positive impact on project quality in at least some cases and these instances have delivered significant benefits. In at least some projects JASPERS did get involved at an early stage of project development and was able to contribute to project quality. In some other cases, JASPERS advice at a late stage of

Capabilities on project:
Economics

project development led to a Member State revisiting the earlier stages of development and securing improvements in project quality. Other positive impacts on project quality were secured as follows:

- JASPERS advice and intervention occasionally had a positive impact on the detailed design and implementation work that takes place after a project application has been made;
- JASPERS advice following a review of draft application material has occasionally led a Member State to revisit its option selection, and hence led to a better project design being selected;
- JASPERS may highlight shortcomings in project quality in its Completion Note on a project, and these issues are then taken up by the DG for Regional Policy. This leads either to an eventual improvement in the quality of the project or the postponement or withdrawal of a low quality project.

JASPERS was able to provide examples of projects where its intervention and advice led to a reduction in the cost of a project, or prevented a non-beneficial project from proceeding. These examples indicate the scale of the benefit that can be realised from even a small number of interventions to improve the quality of projects.

AECOM also reviewed a sample of major project applications where funding had not yet been approved by the Commission. This review identified applications where JASPERS had raised concerns about the quality of the project in its Completion Note, and this had been picked up in Interruption Letters from the Commission, with the result that the projects were deferred until the issues had been dealt with.

11.2.8 Impact of JASPERS on Administrative Capacity

Both JASPERS work on individual projects and its horizontal assignments have the potential to increase administrative capacity among stakeholders in the Member States. Member States acknowledged that transfer of technical knowledge had occurred through project related JASPERS assistance. The focus on advice at the application stage had led to a much greater understanding of both EU legislation, the requirements the funding eligibility appraisal process, cost-benefit techniques, and EIA procedures.

The potential for assistance with individual projects to build administrative capacity is limited in Member States with relatively few projects under development. Beneficiaries in such Member States would have relatively little interaction with JASPERS and officials in beneficiary organisations may have had limited subsequent involvement in further project planning activities.

Conversely, the potential for project advisory work to impact on the capacity of beneficiaries is enhanced where those beneficiaries are in one of the larger Member States and the beneficiary is responsible for a number of projects or indeed a programme.

Managing Authorities, government Ministries and intermediate bodies can act as a useful repository of knowledge gained through JASPERS assistance with individual projects.

Horizontal assignments have a major role to play in developing administrative capacity. Greater dissemination of the results of horizontal assignments both nationally and internationally would pay dividends.

11.2.9 JASPERS Structures and Performance

JASPERS structures are working well. The separation of JASPERS from other EIB activities has facilitated the necessary focus on the task at hand, while retaining access to the wider EIB skill base. The focus on major projects is justified in terms of the potential impact on absorption of funds and quality of projects. The sectoral approach adopted by JASPERS is complementary to the approach used by the DG for Regional Policy, which is based on Member State desks.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The priority for JASPERS as a technical assistance facility is to ensure that they acquire experts with the best skills and experience. This approach should not be compromised for the sake of language capability.

On the basis of a comparison with other bodies and agencies, JASPERS costs appear reasonable given the nature of the tasks it performs and the staff needed to carry out this work.

Over time, there has been an evolution to a tripartite arrangement, with JASPERS sharing more information with the DG for Regional Policy and informal contacts between all parties. It is our view that this now needs to be formalised with the development of a protocol to elaborate on the working arrangements between the three parties.

Project beneficiaries, managing authorities and DG for Regional Policy desk officers have a positive view of JASPERS performance, although there were concerns that the advice was somewhat deficient in the early stages of the JASPERS initiative. In this regard, problems with the quality of advice on environmental matters were cited on a number of occasions. The concerns of DG for Regional Policy desk officers with regard to some technical issues reinforce the view that more interaction between the desk officers and JASPERS officials to reach an agreed approach on a range of technical issues would be valuable.

11.3 Recommendations

11.3.1 Overview

The JASPERS initiative has proved to be of substantial value to Member States in the development of projects and applications for funding. It is recommended that JASPERS continue to operate, as there continues to be strong demand for its services among Member States.

At the time of writing, it is understood that JASPERS future role may be changed. The recommendations which follow are based on JASPERS continuing to function as a source of advice to Member States on project planning.

Our prime recommendation for change is that JASPERS should seek to influence project selection and design in the Member States to the greatest extent possible. This would involve a shift away from advising on the project application form to an involvement in project planning in its totality and, where possible, in strategy development.

Our second major recommendation is that JASPERS should have an explicit objective of developing the project planning capacity of the Member States and there should be an increased focus in its work on this objective.

JASPERS was set up to work on behalf of the Member States, but its involvement in project planning was not made mandatory. This meant that JASPERS responded to requests for support from Member States and had to earn their trust. The way it interacted with DG for Regional Policy at the level of project planning and applications for funding had also to be developed over time.

The JASPERS initiative has now matured and it is recommended that JASPERS should adopt a more strategic approach to its work and that working arrangements between JASPERS, the DG for Regional Policy and the Member States should be more formalised.

11.3.2A Strategic Approach

JASPERS will be wholly successful when the Member States no longer have need of its services and can “graduate” to developing investment projects without assistance. It is recognised that some Member States may have stronger project planning institutions and capabilities than others and that the evolution of JASPERS involvement will differ from one Member State to the other. It is also recognised that if JASPERS is to adopt the additional objective of capacity building and to change its focus, it will have to reallocate its resources. To address these issues, it is recommended that JASPERS operate via Strategic Plans of, say, three years duration. These plans would be informed by an assessment of the areas of project planning where individual Member States have most need of JASPERS assistance. Member States will remain ultimately responsible for their own project planning

Capabilities on project:
Economics

and development, and strategy development by JASPERS will not reduce in any way this responsibility and power of Member States. However by developing its own assessment of priorities JASPERS will be able to engage with and advise Member States more effectively. The existence of such Strategic Plans would create pressure for Member States to adapt their use of JASPERS and to further develop their own project planning capacities.

These Strategies will have to be tailored to the needs and strengths of each Member State so must be developed based on JASPERS knowledge from working with Member States. It is not possible to make generalised recommendations at this stage. For example it might seem plausible to state that JASPERS should not give advice on non-Major projects. However in practice a specific future non-Major project could be the ideal opportunity to develop a key piece of capacity in the Member State in question.

The effort to be put into assistance with Major projects will be only one element of these strategies for JASPERS engagement with Member States. In practice it is often difficult to predict how many Major projects will be developed by a Member State, and the timetable for their development. These strategies will have to set ceilings or targets for the total number of Major projects where JASPERS will be able to assist.

11.3.3 More Formalised Working Arrangements

We believe that the concerns expressed by some Member States about the duplication of work by JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy are overdone. In our view, these are largely based on a misunderstanding of the respective roles of the two institutions. They demonstrate, nevertheless, that there is a need for greater clarity about how the project application and decision-making processes is expected to work. The fact that differences between the DG for Regional Policy and JASPERS on technical issues occur from time to time suggests that increased contact between the two entities to agree common interpretations would be valuable. Finally, project applications are referred to other Directorates General for comment, most notably the DG for Environmental Policy. The whole application process would benefit from a better understanding on the part of all the stakeholders of the precise approach taken by DG for Environmental Policy. It is recommended that a protocol be established that outlines the roles of respective stakeholders and establishes mechanisms to ensure that there is a common understanding of both the application rules and technical projects planning issues to the maximum extent possible.

This protocol would cover the areas of work where there can be a three way relationship between the Member State in question, JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy. Clarifying the roles of the three actors, and in particular that of JASPERS, would increase its ability to function effectively by enhancing its legitimacy and authority. It would also make JASPERS more accountable by further clarifying what is expected of it. The protocol would have to cover such areas as:

- Establishing a process for JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy to identify areas where they have a different interpretation of technical issues, and to arrive at a common position on these;
- Clarifying the respective roles of JASPERS, Member States and the DG for Regional Policy in the development of sectoral strategies. Specific recommendations for this area are set out in Section 11.3.5 below;
- Clarifying the respective roles of JASPERS, Member State and the DG for Regional Policy in the development of specific projects. This relationship has evolved over the current programming period. Sufficient experience now exists to develop a protocol covering such questions as:
 - The extent to which JASPERS can develop an opinion of a project and communicate that opinion directly to the DG for Regional Policy; and,

Capabilities on project:
Economics

- The status of Completion Notes and their intended audience. There is a need to clarify the purpose and primary audience of Completion Notes. If they are primarily advice from JASPERS to the Member State they could, in principle, be issued at any state of project development at the request of the Member State. A Completion Note primarily intended for a Member State could highlight areas where JASPERS regards project development as incomplete or flawed and set out JASPERS recommendations for completing and correcting the project development, e.g. amending a cost benefit calculation or carrying out an appropriate environmental assessment. If the primary audience is the DG for Regional Policy, the note would normally be issued when a Member State has completed its project development work. The emphasis of the Note would be different. For example, rather than pointing out that a cost benefit calculation had been carried out incorrectly and advising a Member State on how to correct the error, JASPERS might estimate the maximum effect of an error on the results of a cost benefit calculation and reach a judgement as to whether such a change in the result would materially affect the assessment of the project in question. Both approaches are potentially very useful for all parties, however there is a need to clarify which should be applied in practice.
- Communications between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy once an application for funding has been made. For example it can be useful for a DG for Regional Policy desk officer to contact JASPERS to discuss issues raised in a Completion Note. If this is to take place, all parties must be clear that this is a standard procedure. Similarly it could be useful to formalise the practice of sending JASPERS a copy of any Interruption Letters, and to make it clear that JASPERS can assist in preparing responses to Interruption Letters.

11.3.4 Impacting on the Design Stage of Projects

It has been concluded that JASPERS would have a greater impact on project quality if it is involved in project planning at an earlier stage. There are indications from some Member States that this is already happening. At the same time, it is recognised that JASPERS does not have the resources to be engaged in all aspects of the process. It is considered that the optimum use of JASPERS resources would be in advising on the terms of reference for project feasibility studies and on the assessment of these studies prior to their finalisation. This focus should be written in to the JASPERS Strategy Plan.

11.3.5 Sectoral Strategy Development

It is recognised that major investment decisions are made at the level of sectoral strategy plans and operational programmes. It would be highly desirable that JASPERS advice be available to Member States in the development of sectoral strategies. Again, there are instances of this occurring in some Member States, often through the support of the DG for Regional Policy desk officer. Final responsibility for strategic planning must stay with Member States, and JASPERS involvement would have to be advisory in nature, and take place at the invitation of Member States. However, given the benefits that would arise from greater involvement, it is recommended that JASPERS seek out this role and that DG for Regional Policy desk officers advocate for their inclusion. This process could feature in the protocol to which reference was made above.

11.3.6 Developing the Technical and Project Planning Capacities of Member States

It is clear that while project advisory work has positive benefits in terms of advancing the project planning capacities of Member States, there are barriers to significant progress if this pathway is relied on. This places the focus on horizontal assignments.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Horizontal Assignments have contributed to project quality by improving the capacity of Member States to select and develop high quality projects. However, JASPERS tends to carry out these assignments in response to Member State requests, rather than identifying opportunities to carry out these assignments. A more strategic approach is required, and it is recommended that, based on an analysis of Member States' project planning capacities, a programme of horizontal assignments should be put in place focusing on activities that would have the greatest impact on project planning and, ultimately, project quality.

Given resource constraints, the programme should contain activities that are cross Member States in impact, such as creating generic handbooks and other guidance material for all Member States based on the work already done in individual horizontal projects.

Successful transfer of knowledge requires action by Member States as well as JASPERS. It is recommended that DG for Regional Policy consider how it can incentivise Member States to put structures in place to ensure that this happens. A first step in this process could be for the Managing Authorities to equip themselves to act as repositories and "clearing houses" for knowledge from individual projects.

11.3.7 Improving Knowledge Transfer from JASPERS Assignments

The JASPERS Steering Committee in June 2011 endorsed the establishment of a Networking Platform to facilitate dissemination of guidance and the outputs of other horizontal assignments. The evidence of this evaluation confirms the need for and the importance of such an initiative.

JASPERS experience with individual projects has also been a source of technical knowledge and one which will become more important as JASPERS becomes more involved with project design stage. There is a need for JASPERS to put in place a system to highlight technical issues that have been addressed and resolved in individual projects where they are considered to be of more general relevance. The Networking Platform could be a means of disseminating this material.

Annexes



Annex 1 – Country Reports

1. BULGARIA

Summary

In Bulgaria, JASPERS was involved in 10 Major projects and 12 non-Major projects, as well as 8 Horizontal Assignments. Bulgaria did not submit any Major projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance, therefore its use of JASPERS on Major projects is 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Bulgarian Major projects in were: Rail (3), Urban Transport (3), Water & Wastewater (2), Roads (1), and Solid Waste (1). 3 projects were submitted for review in 2008, 4 in 2010, and 3 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Bulgarian non-Major projects were: Solid Waste (11), and Water & Wastewater (1). One project was submitted in 2006, 2 in 2007, 1 in 2008, and 8 in 2009.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (3), Urban Transport (1), Energy (1), and Other (3). One Horizontal Assignment was performed in 2007, 3 in 2008, and 4 in 2009.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Bulgaria was 934 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 594 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Bulgaria was 297 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Bulgaria was 955 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 567 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Bulgaria was 444 days compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Bulgaria had 9 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. The average number of topics per Interruption Letter for the Member States as a whole was 3.5. Bulgaria received Interruption Letters on 8 of the Major projects under review by DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Bulgarian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Bulgaria is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Bulgaria	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	11.1	37.5
Project Design	11.1	37.5
Project Cost Estimation	44.4	0.0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	44.4	0.0
Cost Benefit Analysis	55.6	75.0
Environmental Issues	55.6	50.0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	22.2	50.0
Competition & State Aids	0.0	0.0
Funding & Financing Issues	44.4	75.0
Procurement	0.0	0.0
Project Implementation & Structures	11.1	62.5
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0.0	-
No of Projects	9	8

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (56% of projects), Environmental Issues (56%), Project Cost Estimation (44%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (44%), and Funding & Financing Issues (44%). Less common topics were Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (22%), Project Concept & Programming (11%), Project Design (11%), and Project Implementation & Structures (11%). Topics that were not subject to JASPERS assistance were: Competition & State Aids, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Bulgaria were: Cost Benefit Analysis (75%), Funding & Financing Issues (75%), Project Implementation & Structures (63%), Environmental Issues (50%), and Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (50%). Less frequently raised topics were: Project Concept & Programming (38%) and Project Design (38%). Topics that were not raised in the sample of Interruption Letters were: Project Cost Estimation, Demand Analysis & Modelling, Competition & State Aids, and Procurement.

Bulgarian Involvement with JASPERS

Bulgaria made significant use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 10 major and 12 non-major projects as well as 8 horizontal assignments. All major projects brought forward by Bulgaria were JASPERS assisted. With regard to project related advice, the Bulgarian authorities sought JASPERS assistance very largely at the project application stage.

With regard to major projects, seven were in the transport sector and three in environment. For non-major projects, JASPERS assistance was most often sought for solid waste projects.

Testing Preliminary Findings

When presented with analysis on project timelines, the Bulgarian authorities indicated that a comparison of the time taken for JASPERS assisted and non-assisted projects could be misleading because of the “leakage” of JASPERS advice from one project to another. A very significant factor could be the fact that JASPERS advice is not taken. The Bulgarian authorities suggested that this could be the case in up to 25% of Bulgarian projects. It was noted by the

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Bulgarian authorities that such a comparison between JASPERS and non-JASPERS projects could not be made in respect of Bulgaria, as all major projects were JASPERS assisted.

It was also recognised that there had been delays in reaching the final project application stage. Primarily, these delays have occurred where the ultimate beneficiary lacked the capacity to support the progression of the project. The existence of institutional issues within Bulgaria was also cited as a factor.

Preliminary design stages have generally been undertaken by the beneficiaries with little JASPERS support, therefore impact of JASPERS on timing speeding up the early stages of project development has been limited.

Assistance with the reviewing projects and the project appraisal process was not thought to have significantly brought forward the timing of applications: in some cases, this stage has been extended because of delays in beneficiaries responding to comments from JASPERS. Where delays had occurred, there was an acceptance that they were necessary to ensure that the project applications were of sufficient quality.

When the JASPERS initiative commenced, the Bulgarian authorities had anticipated that the assistance given would reduce the DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration. Although some projects have benefitted with respect to timing, there have been a number of applications where, despite input from JASPERS throughout the appraisal process, additional issues have been raised by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption queries have sometimes contradicted advice from JASPERS and where this has occurred the timescales have actually increased. The managing authorities believed that the JASPERS review of projects should have served to limit the instances where interruption queries were issued.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian authorities had a very positive opinion of the quality of JASPERS support. Although there had been some areas where the authorities considered assistance from JASPERS had been stronger than others, overall the initiative was described as having a positive impact and was perceived to have met the expectations of the Bulgarian authorities.

The willingness of JASPERS to work co-operatively with the Bulgarian authorities was particularly noted. It was acknowledged that initially there were issues with communication and co-ordination between Bulgarian and JASPERS officials. These problems are now seen to be resolved and lines of communication were described as being 'very good'. The Bulgarian authorities indicated that the opening of a local JASPERS office in Sofia had played a significant role in improving the relationship between JASPERS officials and staff from the Member State and this had assisted in project development and wider support.

The Bulgarian authorities appreciate the continued support of JASPERS and wishes to continue to work with JASPERS as they develop and submit further Major projects to the DG for Regional Policy. The authorities consider JASPERS to be a reliable partner and have recently held a stakeholder meeting which endorsed the continued use of JASPERS.

It was noted that on occasion JASPERS were reluctant to advise on certain projects that were politically sensitive and that there was a need for Member States to be given early warning of such instances, so that they can plan to proceed without JASPERS support.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Bulgarian authorities considered that the greatest value of JASPERS support was in relation to the appraisal process and the preparation of project applications in general. JASPERS has greatly assisted Bulgaria to develop well prepared project applications. A further key area of assistance has been the input provided by JASPERS in developing templates to be used by beneficiaries in devising their applications. The provision of 'typical' responses

Capabilities on project:
Economics

to requirements set by the Commission has assisted with reducing the time taken to develop responses and enhanced the quality of the responses.

JASPERS has also provided support for non-Major projects, under the €50million threshold, in the Transport and Environment sectors. The authorities did not consider that the scale of the project was the primary reason for requesting or receiving support and has therefore approached JASPERS for projects that were complex or unusual. Overall, JASPERS was considered a 'reliable partner' for supporting the development of non-Major projects and in enhancing their performance.

There was an identified need to improve the procurement processes and Bulgaria sought assistance from JASPERS to improve these processes. In particular, there were issues relating to consistent delivery and quality of projects in the different municipalities. JASPERS has therefore been instrumental in developing a procurement strategy (including guidance on contracts) that provides the municipalities with the necessary capacity to improve reliability when implementing projects.

The most significant change in the approach to project planning of the Bulgarian authorities has been the requirement set by the European Commission to develop projects as part of a project management cycle. Since 2006, JASPERS has supported the evolution of administrative and institutional structures within Bulgaria through direct assistance in these areas. The Transport and Water sectors have seen the most significant reforms following guidance relating to the establishment of institutions for these sectors. This has facilitated improvements to the overall institutional structures and links between representatives and stakeholders.

The managing authorities also referred to support provided by JASPERS in assisting with co-ordinating administration across Operational Programmes and geographies (including cross-border issues). An example of this was in JASPERS attendance at tripartite meetings to discuss issues relating to the implementation and development of projects.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Bulgarian Authorities

The Bulgarian managing authorities acknowledge the contribution that JASPERS advice relating to projects has made to increasing the project planning knowledge base. This was particularly valuable in Bulgaria where knowledge of and adherence to formal project planning processes was somewhat lacking. JASPERS support was critical to ensuring that projects could meet the quality standards required by the European Commission. JASPERS was thought to have played a central role in developing key analyses, such as for cost benefit analysis.

A further example of knowledge transfer and capacity building identified related to Urban Transport Projects. Assistance from JASPERS was highlighted as being a significant factor in developing the necessary skills and experience in this sector.

The Bulgarian authorities indicated JASPERS has also assisted in developing knowledge and skills to support project development through horizontal assignments. Support was provided by JASPERS on a number of areas across the Operational Programmes, including training and development and research. These horizontal assignments, carried out throughout the support programme, were considered to have assisted with aspects of project planning where knowledge was less developed. As a result of the horizontal input from JASPERS, capacity within the Bulgarian Operational Programmes has been enhanced for the future.

The development of national guidelines for cost-benefit analysis was highlighted as an area where JASPERS assistance had been of particular value. Although it took a year to develop, it was emphasised that this has been 'very useful' and an area that would have been problematic without JASPERS support.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

However, the scope for a transfer of knowledge to the consulting industry in Bulgaria was suggested to be less significant, as predominantly the project planning undertaken in the transport and environment sectors was contained within the public sector.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The Bulgarian authorities suggested there was potential for improving the exchange of information including between Member States. A desire for greater dissemination of guidance was also identified. The Bulgarian authorities also referred to existing knowledge transfer, but hoped that proposals recently developed will provide greater structure and fluidity to facilitate a more consistent transfer of information. The Bulgarian authorities also suggested that earlier JASPERS involvement in developing horizontal support would increase the likelihood of quality improvements.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

When asked about potential barriers to the transfer of knowledge within the member state the Bulgarian authorities did not consider that there had been any significant issues that had inhibited knowledge gain. The rate of staff turnover in the Managing Authority, Intermediate Authorities and the beneficiaries was not thought to have impacted upon knowledge transfer. Language was not considered an issue.

Bulgarian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Directorate highlighted that the Bulgarian Government seek to co-operate with JASPERS at the earliest opportunity. Operational programmes and project beneficiaries were seen to benefit from the sustained support provided both in terms of project development and also through horizontal and structural support.

In Bulgaria, initial Project Feasibility and Preliminary Design has generally been undertaken by the beneficiaries, with JASPERS involvement increasing once the appraisal process had begun and through detailed design and project costing. The Bulgarian authorities considered that most appropriate point at which to involve JASPERS will always depend on the individual circumstances of a project and be subject to the decision of the Managing Authority. Early involvement was thought to benefit projects, as it increases opportunities for support and reduces the likelihood of errors occurring.

A successful example of an early involvement was in the field of Solid Waste where early JASPERS assistance, including participation on steering groups, greatly assisted with project development. The development of typical responses for project submissions was an area where earlier development would have been beneficial. It was, however, acknowledged that the timescales involved in producing these inputs reflected the scale of the analysis that was required.

The value of projects within the existing project pipeline is greater than the available resources. Therefore work is required to select the most suitable and progressed projects and develop these projects as applications. The managing authorities considered that JASPERS could assist with identifying projects across sectors to be taken forward as Major Projects for the next programming period.

The managing authorities anticipated that the Member States use of JASPERS was likely to evolve in the future to best reflect the changing requirements of the different sectors. For the next set of operational programmes, the Bulgarian authorities are seeking to refine its approach to strategy development including a reduction in the number of priorities across sectors and this would assist with developing more targeted objectives for the programmes. In order to address this need, the Bulgarian authorities require JASPERS assistance to carry out supporting analysis and research.

Overall, Bulgaria did not see the input from JASPERS decreasing. Instead, a more 'joined up' approach is desired that co-ordinates the intelligence gathering required to develop the operational programmes, support with selecting

Capabilities on project:
Economics

projects and the more conventional assistance with project development. In addition, the Bulgarian authorities saw a continued role for JASPERS in providing horizontal assistance to develop capacity and guidance to improve consistency. Although increased knowledge within the operational programmes should reduce the need for JASPERS support for established topic areas. Where new guidance or conditions are introduced by the Commission it is anticipated that there will be a continued need for support.

A further priority was the maintenance of a local JASPERS office in Sofia. Currently there are three members of staff based in the Sofia office including staff representing the Environment and Transport sectors. It was emphasised that once this arrangement had been put in place communication and co-ordination between the member state and JASPERS greatly improved. The need for a local presence was described as being significant, as it enabled JASPERS staff to better understand local issues. From the perspective of the Member State, it also demonstrated a greater commitment to issues in Bulgaria and enhanced the relationship with JASPERS officials.

The managing authorities emphasised that they consider JASPERS to be a very useful instrument for developing projects and for enabling timely implementation. Although there are elements of project development that Bulgaria will need less assistance with, the Directorate envisages that they will continue to seek JASPERS support on project planning and the application process. JASPERS support will continue to be particularly important for larger projects which have greater significance for the overall programme.

The delegates from Bulgaria acknowledged that they were considering broadening the areas in which they liaised with JASPERS including assistance with project phasing and input into strategic documents. Thus far, JASPERS has been reluctant to take a strong lead in strategic elements as they have avoided involvement in aspects of work that could be considered political, i.e. where a Member State such as Bulgaria has indicated that JASPERS involvement would not be considered appropriate. However, it was considered that support for Member States on strategic elements, in particular along corridors and across national barriers, is an area where additional support would be particularly beneficial, if political constraints are overcome.

Stakeholders in Bulgaria have also expressed a desire for greater involvement from JASPERS in the implementation of projects.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had a positive impact on projects application in Bulgaria. The support offered by JASPERS to Bulgarian beneficiaries has helped to increase the quality of project applications as well as decrease the time spent preparing the applications. JASPERS helped to build capacity in certain areas, such as among the different municipalities, through its project support and through the Horizontal Assignments it performed, such as developing national guidelines for cost benefit analysis.

JASPERS has typically been involved in Bulgaria projects at a relatively late stage of the project development process, usually once the appraisal process had begun. One example of a project where JASPERS was involved at an earlier stage in the Solid Waste sector has shown how earlier involvement can greatly assist with project development.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

2. CZECH REPUBLIC

Summary

In the Czech Republic, JASPERS was involved in 32 Major projects and 5 non-Major projects, as well as 3 Horizontal Assignments. In the same period, the Czech Republic also submitted 3 Major projects without JASPERS assistance. The Czech Republic's use of JASPERS on projects not including Horizontal Assignments is therefore 92.5%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Czech Major projects in were: Rail (9), Roads (9), Water & Wastewater (6), Knowledge Economy (6), Urban Transport (1), and Solid Waste (1). One project was first submitted for review in 2008, 10 in 2009, 18 in 2010, and 3 in 2011.

The only sector where the Czech Republic submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance was the Rail sector (3 projects). 2 projects were submitted to DG for Regional Policy in 2008 and one in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Romanian non-Major projects were: Water & Wastewater (3), Knowledge Economy (1), and Other (1). 3 projects were submitted in 2009 and 2 in 2010.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (1), Knowledge Economy (1), and Other (1). Two Horizontal Assignments were performed in the Czech Republic in 2008 and one in 2009.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in the Czech Republic was 716 days, of which JASPERS was involved in for 362 days on average. The average for the Member States as a whole was 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in the Czech Republic was 370 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 499 days in the Czech Republic, and 386 for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in the Czech Republic had an average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration 129 days shorter than the Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in the Czech Republic.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in the Czech Republic was 249 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 254 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in the Czech Republic was 415 days compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 the Czech Republic had 22 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Czech Major projects contained an average of 3.1 topics per letter, compared to an average of 3.5 for all the Member States. The Czech Republic received Interruption Letters on 20 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Czech projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Czech Republic	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	9.1	35.0
Project Design	0.0	20.0
Project Cost Estimation	0.0	35.0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	9.1	10.0
Cost Benefit Analysis	31.8	35.0
Environmental Issues	9.1	65.0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	0.0	5.0
Competition & State Aids	13.6	20.0
Funding and Financing Issues	9.1	40.0
Procurement	0.0	5.0
Project Implementation & Structures	13.6	25.0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	4.5	-
No of Projects	22	20

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (32% of projects), Competition & State Aids (14%), and Project Implementation & Structures (14%). Less common topics were: Project Concept & Programming (9%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (9%), Environmental Issues (9%), Funding & Financing Issues (9%), and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries. Topics that were not subject to JASPERS assistance were: Projects Design, Projects Cost Estimation, Risk Sensitivity & Analysis, and Procurement.

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters were: Environmental Issues (65%), Funding & Financing Issues (40%), Project Concept & Programming (35%), Project Cost Estimation (35%), and Cost Benefit Analysis (35%). Less frequently raised topics were: Project Implementation & Structures (25%), Projects Design (20%), Competition & State Aids (20%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (10%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (5%), and Procurement (5%).

Czech Involvement with JASPERS

The Czech Republic brought forward 35 Major projects during the evaluation period, 32 of these received JASPERS assistance. These projects were in the areas of Rail, Roads, Urban Transport, Solid Waste, Water & Wastewater and the Knowledge Economy. In addition the Czech Republic sought JASPERS assistance on 5 non-Major projects and JASPERS carried out 3 Horizontal Assignments for the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic's use of JASPERS appeared less intensive than that of other Member States. The average length of a JASPERS assignment for Czech was 362 days, compared to an average across all member States of 489 days. In addition, JASPERS assignments for the Czech Republic covered fewer topics than those for other Member States, an average of 2.9 topics per assignment compared 4.9 topics per assignment for the Member States as a group.

DG for Regional Policy took longer to decide on Czech applications than those from other Member States. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision period for the Czech Republic was 370 days compared to an overall average of 272 days. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for projects that had not received JASPERS assistance was significantly higher at 499 days.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Testing Preliminary Findings

Czech stakeholders were very strongly of the opinion that JASPERS did not speed up the process of obtaining DG for Regional Policy approval. In fact, there is a strong sense of frustration about this. Their perception of the application process was that JASPERS involvement in the preparation of an application and the provision of a Completion Note was supposed to reassure the DG for Regional Policy as to the quality of a project, and reduce the amount of examination that the DG for Regional Policy would have to carry out itself. From their point of view, this promised benefit of JASPERS involvement did not materialise. Instead the DG for Regional Policy would carry out a fresh examination of the application and issue Interruption Letters which contradicted the advice received from JASPERS.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in the Czech Republic

As described above, the Czech Republic is frustrated by what it sees as a failure by the DG for Regional Policy to give due credit for JASPERS “approval” of projects when it considers applications for funding.

However, it is acknowledged that the quality of presentation of the project application form has improved significantly since JASPERS have been involved. In addition, JASPERS has contributed to an increased understanding of EU requirements for transport modelling and cost benefit appraisal.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

It is worth noting the way in which the Czech Republic uses EU funding for Transport projects. The Czech Republic has a “State Fund of Transport Infrastructure”. Each year Parliament approves, “Investment Plans” prepared by the Ministry of Transport and allocates domestic revenues to this fund. The current process is for the Czech Republic to progress project development through to implementation with finance from the Fund. Retrospective applications for EU funding for major projects are then made to reclaim EU contributions to the projects. The EU co-financing received is then allocated to the “State Fund of Transport Infrastructure” for subsequent projects. As a result, applications for funding for Major projects often relate to projects that have commenced or are completed by the time the application is made. Typically, the project will have been completed by the time JASPERS involvement starts.

Stakeholders said that Czech authorities had not previously been familiar with Cost Benefit Analysis or with Feasibility Studies in the form expected by the DG for Regional Policy. A great deal had been learnt about these techniques from their interactions with JASPERS.

The Czech Authorities had not used Multi Criteria Assessment for project selection and prioritisation in their Operational Programmes and other strategies for infrastructure investment. JASPERS are providing assistance to include this technique in future planning, by providing technical support to the Czech authorities as they prepare a new transport Master plan.

The Czech authorities were not initially aware that JASPERS assistance was available when dealing with Interruption Letters. This has been corrected and the authorities are now receiving useful help in dealing with Commission Interruption Letters.

JASPERS is getting involved at an earlier stage with the development of some projects. They are starting to get involved in the Feasibility Study stage of projects. The Managing Authority singled out the example of the proposed Prague – Pilzen Rail project which incorporated a 20km long rail tunnel. JASPERS assisted the Managing Authority in explaining to the beneficiary that the project was not realistic, in terms of its fundability and its value for money from a cost benefit perspective. The project remains in the transport plan, but it is acknowledged that project planners need to look at alternative solutions.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Czech Authorities

In addition to its work on individual Major projects, JASPERS is advising the Czech Republic on Horizontal Assignments related to development of new National Transport Master Plan and National Guidelines for Cost Benefit analysis.

The Railway Administration pointed out that JASPERS organises seminars as part of its support to Feasibility Studies. These are attended by railway staff and their consultants.

JASPERS helped The Ministry of the Environment to develop a model for cost benefit assessment as a Horizontal Assignment. The Ministry holds seminars to train local authorities in the use of this model, and its use is obligatory when a local authority makes a bid for funding for a project to the Ministry. (Funding is allocated to environmental projects carried out by local authorities based on competitions where a range of local authorities bid for funding for a project in their area).

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

Regular meetings are held, between the Managing Authorities and Beneficiaries to coordinate the development of projects and exchange information.

The railway administration actively tries to capture knowledge from JASPERS-assisted projects for use on other projects. Every rail corridor has one project used as model project. JASPERS assistance is sought for this project and it is then used for all other projects in the corridor.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover at the Managing Authority or other parts of the administration was not believed to be a problem and was not felt to be a barrier to transfer of knowledge.

Both the Managing Authority and the final beneficiary raised the issue of the lack of Czech speakers in the JASPERS team. The requirement to communicate in English leads to a preference for communications with JASPERS to be undertaken in writing, rather than face to face meetings. This partly explains why fewer meetings are held with JASPERS on Czech Republic projects.

The requirement for communication to occur in English also places an administrative burden on the Czech Republic. It is felt that the appointment of a Czech speaker into the JASPERS team would assist in improving communication between JASPERS and Czech Republic and understanding of the role of JASPERS.

There were also concerns that at least some JASPERS staff were insufficiently familiar with Czech legislation and local conditions, and that shortages of resource in JASPERS can lead to delays in the development of projects.

Czech Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The main issue with JASPERS for the Czech authorities is the relationship between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy and the role of both parties in the Project Approval process. It had been believed by the Czech authorities that a JASPERS Completion Note would be sufficient for the DG for Regional Policy to approve a project; this has not proved to be the case, with a perceived tendency for the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers to raise Interruption Letters which contradict the advice which has been provided by JASPERS.

Member States are being advised to increasingly make use of JASPERS assistance for both projects and Horizontal Assignments by the DG for Regional Policy, which the Czech Republic are doing. However, the concern is that this will just continue to increase the workload for Member States, with little impact on project timelines unless the DG for Regional Policy take notice of the Completion Notes produced by JASPERS.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Although the rail administration is happy to involve JASPERS in individual projects as early as the Feasibility Study, it maintains that strategic planning (in other words the selection and prioritisation of potential projects) must remain the responsibility of Member State authorities. The Transport Ministry is open to JASPERS advice and input on strategies, but not to obligatory input or decision making by JASPERS. They point out that the main reason that JASPERS was not involved in strategic planning for the current programming period was that the bulk of this planning took place before JASPERS was even in existence. The Environmental Managing Authority was open to receiving JASPERS assistance with strategic planning on a strictly voluntary basis. It pointed out that for such assistance to be relevant for the next programming period starting in 2013 it would have to start very soon.

Concerns were expressed that it had become effectively compulsory to involve JASPERS in individual projects over the course of the programming period. There was a fear that offering JASPERS help with strategic planning could change into a situation where JASPERS involvement in strategic planning became compulsory.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had limited scope for improving the quality of projects in the Czech Republic, due to the fact that most Czech projects are already complete or under construction by the time the Czech government is submitting the project for funding. JASPERS' role in the Czech Republic has therefore mostly been assisting with the project application.

There was some scope for capacity building as the Czech Beneficiaries had been unfamiliar with Cost Benefit Analysis and Feasibility Studies prior to their interactions with JASPERS, and JASPERS is providing assistance to include Multi Criteria Assessment in future planning alongside other Horizontal Assignments.

JASPERS is showing signs of earlier involvement in project development however; an example from the Rail sector demonstrates how JASPERS helped the Beneficiary identify an unfeasible rail tunnel project early in the process.

Despite Czech frustration with DG for Regional Policy Interruptions on JASPER-assisted Major projects, the average Decision Duration for assisted projects was 129 days shorter than the average Decision Duration for non-assisted projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

3. ESTONIA

Summary

In Estonia, JASPERS was involved in 6 Major projects and 2 non-Major projects, as well as 4 Horizontal Assignments. In the same period, Estonia also submitted 6 Major projects without JASPERS assistance. Estonia's use of JASPERS is therefore 57.1%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Estonian Major projects in were: Roads (4), and Knowledge Economy (2). 3 projects were first submitted for review in 2009, 1 in 2010, and 1 in 2011.

The most common sectors where Estonia submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance were: Solid Waste (3), Urban Transport (2), and Rail (1). All 4 projects were submitted to the DG for Regional Policy in 2009.

The sectors where JASPERS assisted Estonian non-Major projects were: Rail (1) and Roads (1). One project was submitted in 2008, and one in 2009.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (2), Roads (1), and Other (1). One Horizontal Assignment was performed in 2007, 2 in 2008, and 1 in 2009.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Estonian Major projects was 760 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 404 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS assisted projects in Estonia was 264 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 195 days compared to the average 386 days for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Estonia had an average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration 69 days longer than the Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in Estonia.

The average JASPERS duration for non-Major projects in Estonia was 290 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 594.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Estonia was 185 days, compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011, Estonia had 4 Major projects that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Estonia received Interruption Letters on 2 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below show the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Estonian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Estonia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Estonia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	75	0
Project Design	25	0
Project Cost Estimation	0	0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	75	0
Cost Benefit Analysis	75	0
Environmental Issues	0	50
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	75	0
Competition & State Aids	0	0
Funding & Financing Issues	25	50
Procurement	0	0
Project Implementation & Structures	25	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	
No of Projects	4	2

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Concept & Programming (3 out of 4 projects), Demand Analysis & Modelling (3 out of 4), Cost Benefit Analysis (3 out of 4), and Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (3 out of 4). Less common topics were: Project Design (1 out of 4), Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 4), and Projects Implementation & Structures (1 out of 4). Topics that were not subject to JASPERS assistance were: Projects Cost Estimation, Environmental Issues, Competition & State Aids, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The only topics raised in Interruption Letters to Estonia were: Environmental Issues (1 out of 2) and Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 2).

Estonian Involvement with JASPERS

Estonia brought forward 12 major projects during the evaluation period (up to the end of June 2011). Of these, six received JASPERS assistance. In addition, Estonia sought JASPERS assistance on two non-major projects. JASPERS carried out four Horizontal Assignments for Estonia.

Testing Preliminary Findings

The DG for Regional Policy took an average of 195 days to decide on the applications from Estonia that had not received JASPERS assistance, compared to an average of 264 days for JASPERS assisted applications. The number of projects concerned was not large enough for the First Intermediate Report to reach conclusions on the impact of JASPERS on Estonian projects. However, it is worth noting that the bulk of the JASPERS-assisted projects were in the Road and Knowledge Economy sectors, while the bulk of the non-assisted projects were in the Environmental sector. This means that it is not possible to directly compare the two durations.

However, Estonian stakeholders were certain that JASPERS assistance leads to applications being approved by the DG for Regional Policy more quickly than they would have been in the absence of such assistance. They were surprised by the observation that average approval times for JASPERS assisted projects were actually longer than those for non-assisted projects. They agreed with the hypothesis that this must be due to the different sectors represented in the two sets of projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Estonia

The Ministry of Economic Policy were very positive about JASPERS. Their initial assessment was that they could not think of anything negative to say about JASPERS. Further discussions identified some minor issues in relation to:

- The timing of JASPERS assistance;
- The resources JASPERS had available for Estonia; and,
- The need to deal with JASPERS in English.

JASPERS were considered to have too many projects to deal with but they always delivered. Their use did generate work for the managing authority but this was acceptable, given the considered benefit of enhanced applications, more successful applications and 'quality stamp' from JASPERS.

JASPERS was considered good in communicating with the beneficiaries. There were comments that they did not link as well with the Managing Authorities who felt left out of the discussions at times. This was particularly towards the end of the application process, where managing authority involvement was needed and knowledge needed to be built up quickly.

JASPERS representatives were not always available, due to their workload. In general, however, there was good cooperation.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The standard approach to JASPERS assistance in Estonia was to arrange for them to review a draft application form and its supporting documents and to hold informal discussions with the DG for Regional Policy prior to ensure that as many issues as possible were dealt with in advance of a formal application. The key lessons learnt from JASPERS have related to the presentation of projects to the Commission. JASPERS assistance has improved the presentation of applications and given the Estonian authorities an insight into what the Commission looks for in an application, and into which parts of draft applications that should be developed more before being submitted to the Commission. Estonian stakeholders accepted that this limited the possibility of JASPERS improving the quality of projects. JASPERS was asked for help earlier in the project development process in two particularly complex projects: a tunnel in Tallinn and a major hospital project. The Ministry of Economic Policy is confident that enough knowledge and experience has now been gained for beneficiaries of transport projects to make at least some applications without JASPERS assistance.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS staff to the Estonian Authorities

The Road Administration acts on a national basis and so is involved in all projects in its sector. Environmental projects are split between a number of beneficiaries including municipalities and water supply companies.

The Ministry of the Environment acts as an Intermediate Authority for environmental projects, and an "Environmental Investment Centre" has been established as an Implementing Body. If an Implementing Body learns something from the involvement of JASPERS, it is expected to use this new knowledge to improve the guidance that it provides to beneficiaries.

The capture of knowledge by consultants involved in JASPERS assisted projects is also considered a key method of transferring knowledge and expertise to Estonia.

The provision of training workshops by JASPERS was well received by the Ministry of Economic Policy for transportation projects. However, Estonia had to request these sessions. The workshops were considered to be good, and built on the high standard and expertise of the roads industry in the country. A major reason for

Capabilities on project:
Economics

commissioning these was the use of technical language in cost benefit assessments and to ensure that beneficiaries and consultants were all using the right technical terms.

A similar exercise was completed for the environmental sector on cost benefit analysis. The use of Horizontal Assignments was very useful for the environmental sector, due to the open competition for funding that was in place. This promoted good practice/knowledge sharing without being unfair to any of the participants in the competitive process to select projects.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

As described above, projects learn from each other in Estonia through beneficiaries being responsible for several projects, and through the guidance given by Implementing Bodies.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

No such barriers were identified by the stakeholders. In particular they specified that staff turnover was not an issue in Estonia in this respect.

Estonian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

Transportation beneficiaries are now considered good enough to submit most applications to the DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS support. This will change the use of JASPERS by the Estonian managing authorities in the future.

As noted above, in Estonia JASPERS is typically used to review a draft application and supporting documents for a project that is, necessarily, at an advanced stage of development. In discussions the Estonian authorities were open to the idea of involving JASPERS earlier in the process of project development, and could see that this increased the opportunity for JASPERS advice to improve the quality of a project. They were particularly receptive to receiving earlier help in non-transportation projects, where skills sets and experience levels are lower.

Estonia could see a role for JASPERS in helping to set the terms of reference for feasibility studies and helping to manage the relationship with the consultant carrying out the Study. They pointed out that if certain standards were required for terms of reference that these could also be set out by the Commission.

According to the Estonian authorities, areas of potential need in the future including public transport and ITS (smartcards etc). The sharing of best practice through presentations on such issues and inter-modal hubs will be needed. This again implies earlier involvement of JASPERS in needs identification and pre-feasibility study. The Ministry of Economic Policy noted that they are looking to broaden the range of beneficiaries in the future (2013+) and JASPERS could therefore have an increased knowledge transfer role in the next programming period.

The merits of involving JASPERS in the strategic planning of infrastructure, including identifying the needs that should be developed into projects, were discussed at the Warsaw workshop. The input from Estonia was that strategic planning was necessarily the responsibility of the Member State in question, and that they did not see a potential role for JASPERS in strategic planning of infrastructure.

The workshop also discussed the possibility of JASPERS identifying ways that each Member State could maximise the transfer and use of knowledge and technical capacity from JASPERS. This would include JASPERS suggesting horizontal and training assignments that it should carry out for the Member State. Estonia was open to the idea of receiving such suggestions from JASPERS, but emphasises that they should be suggestions rather than being in any way mandatory.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Conclusions

JASPERS has been well received in Estonia. The average durations for DG for Regional Policy decisions were actually shorter for non-assisted projects, yet this may be attributed to a small sample and different projects sectors for assisted and non-assisted projects. Estonian stakeholders were certain that JASPERS support was helping to accelerate the Decision Duration, and admitted surprise at the fact that non-assisted projects were actually approved more rapidly.

Estonian Managing Authorities noted the benefits of JASPERS assistance as being: the enhanced applications, more successful applications, and the 'quality stamp' of JASPERS.

JASPERS help to build capacity in Estonia through Horizontal Assignments and workshops, and through the function of the Ministry of the Environment and the "Environmental Investment Centre" as Implementing Bodies, which are key methods of transferring knowledge and expertise.

As the majority of JASPERS assistance has been at the projects application stage, there is acknowledged potential for further benefits from earlier involvement of JASPERS in project development.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

4. HUNGARY

Summary

In Hungary, JASPERS was involved in 31 Major Projects and 2 non-Major Projects, as well as 2 Horizontal Assignments. Hungary did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Hungary's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Hungarian Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (11), Urban Transport (7), Rail (5), Road (4), and Solid Waste (4). 15 projects were first submitted for review in 2008, 6 in 2009, 4 in 2010, and 3 in 2011.

The only sector where JASPERS assisted Hungarian non-Major projects was the Water & Wastewater sector, where there were 2 projects submitted in 2009.

The two sectors that JASPERS performed Horizontal Assignments in were Energy (1) and Other (1), and were both performed in 2007.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major Projects in Hungary was 653 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 411 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Hungary was 290 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Hungary was 586 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 355 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Hungary was 585 compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Hungary had 23 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Hungarian Major projects contained an average of 4.4 topics per letter, compared to an average of 3.5 for all the Member States. Romania received Interruption Letters on all 23 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Hungarian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Hungary	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	30.4	26.1
Project Design	34.8	47.8
Project Cost Estimation	8.7	13
Demand Analysis & Modelling	34.8	26.1
Cost Benefit Analysis	82.6	60.9
Environmental Issues	39.1	69.6
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	13	43.5
Competition & State Aids	0	4.3
Funding & Financing Issues	17.4	69.6
Procurement	8.7	26.1
Project Implementation & Structures	17.4	34.8
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	-
No of Projects	23	23

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (83%), Environmental Issues (39%), Project Design (35%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (35%), and Project Concept & Programming (30%). Less common topics were: Funding & Financing Issues (17%), Project Implementation & Structures (17%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (13%), Project Cost Estimation (9%), and Procurement (9%). Topics on which JASPERS assistance was not sought were Competition & State Aids and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Hungary were: Environmental Issues (70%), Funding & Financing Issues (70%), Cost Benefit Analysis (61%), Project Design (48%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (44%), and Project Implementation & Structures (35%). Less common topics were: Project Concept & Programming (26%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (26%), Procurement (26%), Project Cost Estimation (13%), and Competition & State Aids (4%).

Hungarian Involvement with JASPERS

Hungary made substantial use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 31 major and two non major projects as well as two Horizontal Assignments. All major projects brought forward by Hungary were JASPERS-assisted. With regard to project related advice, the Hungary authorities sought JASPERS assistance very largely at the project application stage. The Hungarian use of JASPERS for non-major projects was low relative to major projects.

With regard to major projects, 16 were in the transport sector and 15 in environment.

Testing Preliminary Findings

When presented with analysis on project timelines, the Hungarian authorities expressed the view that some Member States may have sought help from JASPERS for the more simple projects. This would mean that the reduced the DG for Regional Policy decision period for JASPERS supported projects would not reflect the impact of JASPERS. They were also of the view that involvement of JASPERS adds to the whole project planning timeline.

The Hungarian authorities also expressed surprise that there were any major projects that had not been supported by JASPERS. Their understanding was that all major projects had to be submitted to the JASPERS process.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Hungary

The Hungarian authorities were very positive about the value of JASPERS, particularly in respect of their impact on Hungary's project planning capacity. Also the flexibility and co-operative working spirit of JASPERS was much appreciated. The scope of JASPERS activities in Hungary has expanded over time, which is an indicator of approval. There is a clear intention to involve JASPERS even more in the next programming period, which is also a clear sign of satisfaction.

The Hungarian authorities also believed that a positive completion note would greatly speed-up the DG for Regional Policy decision process, but found themselves answering the same questions all over again. Also the DG for Regional Policy often employed their own experts: resulting in two sets of experts paid by the same body. This was a particularly difficult situation for beneficiaries to understand: beneficiaries could spend years working with JASPERS and then have to go through the same process with the DG for Regional Policy and or their experts. The Hungarian authorities are of the view that the capability of some desk officers to appraise projects needs to be upgraded.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Hungarian authorities took the view that the impact on project quality depended on the stage of the planning process at which JASPERS became involved. If only involved at a late stage, JASPERS has a big effect on project presentation, but the earlier they are embedded the more fundamental improvements they are able to make. It is rare that JASPERS involvement changes the project fundamentally. However, they have sometimes been able to involve JASPERS in the preparation of the brief for feasibility studies and this has proved very valuable.

JASPERS contribution to the project application process was particularly positive in terms of advice on CBA, modelling (traffic), cost estimation and particularly environmental assessments. Environmental issues were particularly problematic as Hungarian legislation was not aligned with EU requirements until 2011. JASPERS was invaluable in helping to interpret the EU environmental requirements.

According to the Hungarian authorities, JASPERS involvement in project planning at an earlier stage often had the effect of making the beneficiaries aware of the DG for Regional Policy in respect of the type and structure of project that would be accepted for funding. This meant that, sometimes, poor projects would be dropped at an early stage. The Hungarian authorities note that informal contacts with officials, on the part of JASPERS personnel, have proved a fruitful approach and are not usually recorded.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Hungarian Authorities

The Hungarian authorities were of the view that transfer of technical knowledge has occurred through the involvement of JASPERS in the project planning and application process. JASPERS role in project development has now changed to more of a quality controller, as Hungarian capacity to prepare project applications has increased. However, they still need a high quality check, or sometimes face new requirements (e.g. in state aid for a rolling stock procurement) and this is provided by JASPERS.

Initially, JASPERS assistance was required with 'normal' projects in transport and environment. More recently, JASPERS has been involved in more unusual projects (e.g. a cultural centre).

There were few Horizontal Assignments undertaken by JASPERS in Hungary. In particular, there were very few in the Environment sector, as Hungarian preference was for all learning to be done within the context of projects. This will change in the future and the Hungarian authorities wish to see the role of Horizontal Assignments expanded.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The fact that the Hungarian authorities have amalgamated their managing authorities into one institution - the National Development Agency - has facilitated cross project learning at one level. However, there is much room for improvement in this regard. When new projects come along, their proponents often have little knowledge of the project application process. Member States need to have a more pro-active approach to disseminating learning including that arising from JASPERS involvement.

The Hungarian authorities consider that it is a strength of JASPERS that they work across member states. Sometimes JASPERS form a very strong opinion based, for example, on benchmarking data that the Member State does not have access to. The Hungarian authorities would very much like to see a sharing of information, particularly on benchmark capital costs.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover has been an issue with respect to the environment sector, but not in transport. However, it was also commented that while the staff are lost to the managing authority, most leave to join another body within the system, whether at beneficiaries, intermediate authorities or consultants. So, the body of knowledge within the system is increasing.

The Hungarian authorities had mixed views on whether the need to work in English was an impediment. Interpreters, if used regularly, became very proficient in the technical as well as language aspects.

Hungarian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Hungarian authorities see the value of having JASPERS involved at the earliest possible stage of planning. Strategy is the responsibility of the Ministries, so it is not up to the National Development Agency whether JASPERS are involved. However, after years of trying, an inter agency committee has been formed to prepare the transport strategy and JASPERS are involved. However, the Hungarian authorities stressed that the development of strategies and establishment of priorities are ultimately a matter for the Member States.

The Hungarian authorities considered that there were dangers in pressurising JASPERS into a more pro-active role, e.g. in terms of identifying Member State needs. Currently, JASPERS is a demand driven process and the Member States "own" the initiative. If JASPERS is more proactive, then a doubt arises as to whom they are working for.

The next programming period is likely to have higher thresholds for Major projects, which will naturally take some projects out of the Major category. The Hungarian authorities are happy that they have capacity to deal with this increase in non-Major projects. There has been more and more involvement in horizontal programmes. In the next period there is a clear intention to involve them in strategy development.

There should be much greater emphasis on Horizontal Assignments and already the Hungarian authorities have identified the need for such assignments in the R&D sub-sector. The Hungarian authorities agreed that there was greater scope for JASPERS to transfer knowledge across Member States and mechanisms should be put in place to do this. Training was also important and JASPERS involvement in training should be enhanced.

There was also a view that the system must change so that the DG for Regional Policy take notice of the Completion Note, so that it speeds up approval, and eliminates repetition. However, the Hungarian authorities believe that the role of JASPERS should not be changed so that they become an arm of the DG, as this would fundamentally change the working relationship.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had a very positive reception in Hungary, in particular with regards to their impact on Hungary's project planning capacity. The scope of JASPERS activities on Hungary has increased over time, and there is clear

Capabilities on project:
Economics

indication that this trend will continue in the next programming period, indicating satisfaction on the part of the Member State.

The Hungarian authorities noted that the earlier the JASPERS was involved in project planning the greater its impact would be, in particular pointing out that poor projects would be dropped earlier as JASPERS assistance made the Beneficiaries more aware of the DG for Regional Policy and its requirements.

Through JASPERS involvement in project development a transfer of technical knowledge has occurred leading to an increase in Hungarian capacity to prepare project applications. This has meant a shift in role for JASPERS towards that of a quality controller. JASPERS knowledge of other Member States projects has assisted in project assessment, as the knowledge provides benchmark data which is useful for new projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

5. LATVIA

Summary

In Latvia, JASPERS was involved in 7 Major projects and 1 non-Major project, as well as 3 Horizontal Assignments. Latvia did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Latvia's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Latvian Major projects were: Roads (2), Urban Transport (2), Airports (1), Rail (1), and Other (1). 4 projects were first submitted for review in 2009, and 3 in 2010.

The only sector where JASPERS assisted a Latvian non-Major project was Urban Transport (1).

The sectors where JASPERS performed Horizontal Assignments were: Urban Transport (1), Water & Wastewater (1), and Other (1).

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPER-assisted Major projects in Latvia was 1020 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 493 days on average. The average planning duration for the Member States was 734 days and the average JASPERS duration was 489 days. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Latvia was 337 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Latvia was 554 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 362 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Latvia was 365 compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Latvia had 6 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by the DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Latvia received Interruption Letters on all 6 of the Major projects under review by DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Latvian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised and Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Latvia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Latvia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	33.3	66.7
Project Design	33.3	33.3
Project Cost Estimation	50	0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	0	50
Cost Benefit Analysis	50	33.3
Environmental Issues	0	50
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	66.7	0
Competition & State Aids	0	0
Funding & Financing Issues	50	66.7
Procurement	16.7	0
Project Implementation & Structures	0	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	33.3	-
No of Projects	6	6

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (4 out of 6), Project Cost & Estimation (3 out of 6), Cost Benefit Analysis (3 out of 6), and Funding & Financing Issues (3 out of 6). Less common topics were: Projects Concept & Programming (2 out of 6), Project Design (2 out of 6), Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (2 out of 6), and Procurement (1 out of 6). Topics on which JASPERS assistance was not sought were: Demand Analysis & Modelling, Environmental Issues, Competition & State Aids, and Project Implementation & Structures.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters to Latvia were: Project Concept & Programming (4 out of 6), Funding & Financing Issues (4 out of 6), Demand Analysis & Modelling (3 out of 6), Project Design (2 out of 6), and Cost Benefit Analysis (2 out of 6).

Latvian Involvement with JASPERS

Latvia is among the smaller Member States in terms of the scale of infrastructure investment. This is reflected in the number of Major projects developed by Latvia, and the extent of its use of JASPERS. During the evaluation period, Latvia made seven applications for funding for Major projects. All of these received JASPERS assistance. In addition, JASPERS completed three Horizontal Assignments for Latvia during the evaluation period.

Testing preliminary findings

As with Lithuania, there were only a very limited number of Major projects in Latvia that received JASPERS assistance and proceeded to a Commission Decision. Latvia did not develop any Major projects without JASPERS assistance. As a result, Tasks 1 and 2 did not lead to preliminary findings with respect to the impact of JASPERS in Latvia.

The average time taken for the DG for Regional Policy to reach a decision on an application from Latvia was 337 days compared to an average across all Member States of 272 days. Given the small sample of Latvian projects, no conclusions were drawn from this observation in the First Intermediate Report. In addition the Managing Authority explained that a long project timeline for Latvia may not be reflective of the capacity of the managing authority or of beneficiaries. Projects were regularly suspended as the funds for project preparation were limited as a result of the

Capabilities on project:
Economics

financial crisis that started in the second half of 2008. In addition, there is often a requirement for studies to be repeated from scratch when a significant timescale has passed. The Managing Authority also pointed out that Latvia has a high proportion of road projects which generally take longer to prepare.

The Managing Authority did not believe that JASPERS advice had an effect on the time taken for the DG for Regional Policy to reach a Decision on their applications for funding. In common with many other Member States, they felt that the DG for Regional Policy did not pay due attention to the work of JASPERS in its consideration of applications.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Latvia

The quality of JASPERS input was described as 'variable'. The Managing Authority has had some experiences in the past of particular experts where the quality of advice was deemed to be poor – leading to complications and delays following submission of completed application forms to the DG for Regional Policy. Following complaint, the Managing Authority found both JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy to be very responsive, and issues were resolved quickly. The quality of input is currently much improved. As a result, the Managing Authority sees input from Jaspers as now being 'very much positive'. The Managing Authority attributes some of this improvement to recent changes in the team of JASPERS experts dealing with Latvia. This team now includes experts with experience in Poland and appears to have stronger links with the DG for Regional Policy, giving it better insight into key issues in projects that might raise concerns for the DG for Regional Policy.

The Managing Authority felt that the involvement of JASPERS had not changed the time taken in project preparation. Nevertheless, there was agreement that the quality of projects submitted to the DG for Regional Policy was substantially improved. It was felt that although there has been some Horizontal Assignment activity, that this could be increased. Stakeholders believed that JASPERS assistance was reducing the time that the DG for Regional Policy took to consider applications for funding compared to a hypothetical situation without JASPERS assistance.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

A persistent issue for Latvia has been the need to place individual projects in the context of an overall strategy for a sector. JASPERS and the Commission have found at least some individual projects presented for assistance or approval do not seem to be part of an overall strategy for the sector in question. The best practice in the development of public investments is to develop a strategy for a sector, for example a national transport plan, before proceeding to identify and develop individual projects. The overall strategy will identify areas where the need for transport or environmental services are not being met, or will not be met in the future. On this basis, the strategy will identify, in broad terms, the infrastructure investments that are needed. Once this strategy process is complete the development of individual projects can proceed. Project development consists of identifying the economically optimal technical solution that addresses each of the needs identified in the strategy.

If an applicant finds it difficult to identify where a project fits into an overall strategy, this suggests that this sequence of decision making has not been followed. This creates a risk that, whatever the merits of the individual project in question, that there are other potential projects that have not been developed and which should be considered more urgent.

JASPERS has been emphasising the importance of strategic planning to the Latvian authorities. One way it has done this has been to decline or resist involvement in projects that are not part of an accepted National Development Plan or Master plan. This created a practical difficulty for the Managing Authority, as the preparation of such plans can be outside its control. The wider message that moving from strategic planning to the development of individual projects, is the best way to identify and develop projects may not yet be fully accepted by all stakeholders.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The Latvian authorities indicated that they have a significant pipeline of potential projects and that they intend to develop strategic plans that incorporate these projects in time for the next programming period. They indicated that they would make the strategic decisions about the form of these plans, and the projects to be included, themselves. However JASPERS advice might be sought on the presentation and justification of these strategic plans to the DG for Regional Policy.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Latvian Authorities

The Managing Authority plays very much an administrative/programming role in the preparation of projects for the DG for Regional Policy. Although responsible for requesting JASPERS assistance, the technical ability within a project rests within JASPERS, the beneficiary and the consultant on the project. The main line of communication is between JASPERS and the beneficiary. As such, the Managing Authority's involvement in the detail of projects is relatively hands-off, although the Managing Authority, JASPERS and the beneficiary do meet regularly to update on performance.

Overall, the lines of communication with JASPERS are well established, and beneficiaries have additional informal links with JASPERS to assist with various technical or procedural issues that may arise. The Latvian authorities have taken the view that the preparation of projects is very much the responsibility of the beneficiaries. Although they provide programming support, they do seek to delegate as much of the technical input to the beneficiaries as possible. The Managing Authority has chosen not to seek external Technical Assistance for its own administrative and programming work, but instead relies on JASPERS for support and assistance.

For the next programming period, the Managing Authority stated an intention to reduce its reliance on JASPERS for its work major projects that were deemed to be relatively uncomplicated.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

Many of the beneficiaries operate on a national, rather than local, scale. This makes it possible for the same beneficiary, and indeed the same staff, to work on more than one project with JASPERS assistance, and for knowledge gained on a JASPERS assisted project to be applied to other projects. Overall Latvian stakeholders find that there has been an increase in capacity in beneficiaries and the consultants that work for Beneficiaries.

In addition, the Managing Authority has prepared guidance documents and advice noted on specific areas where they have gained JASPERS advice. This has led to knowledge transfer into all those involved in project preparation.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover is not an issue that restricts capacity building. As noted above, the relatively small number of institutions dealing with projects helps with knowledge transfer.

Latvian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The experience to date has been to bring JASPERS into the project at CBA/Application preparation stage, rather than at the earlier Master Planning and Feasibility Study stages. There is recognition that the support brings greater added value when brought into the project earlier, although for many of the current projects the earlier tasks had already been completed at the time when JASPERS assistance became fully available. For the next programming period, there is an intention to seek advice earlier in the project planning process.

JASPERS currently has no involvement in the implementation stage of projects, or in the ex-post stages of projects. This is something that the Latvian authorities would like to see as a future role within JASPERS.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

In common with many other member States, Latvia is concerned that when the DG for Regional Policy considers applications, it often revisits issues that have already been examined fully by JASPERS. They suggest that this could be remedied through more contact between the DG for Regional Policy, JASPERS and Latvia, in advance of applications being made.

The Latvian authorities also made the following specific requests for future assistance from JASPERS:

- Provision of seminars, conferences, training on key issues that are relevant to project preparation – either by country or by sector;
- Provision of advice on the implementation of projects using PPP/Financial Instruments, in order to align the advice with current policy at EU level. This would be needed very early in a project. According to the Latvian authorities, JASPERS have refused this support on the basis of insufficient capacity in this area on the basis that this is an EIB task;
- Provision of advice on ICT evaluation and implementation; and,
- Continuity of JASPERS advice from project planning through to and including ex-post evaluation.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had a positive reception in Latvia. While there was the opinion that JASPERS had had no impact on the time taken for project preparation; there was an agreement among the Managing Authorities that the quality of projects submitted to the DG for Regional Policy had been substantially improved.

There has been good scope for improving Latvian project development capacity as many of the Beneficiaries operate on a national rather than a local scale, which means that they are involved in more than one project with JASPERS and have greater opportunity to absorb knowledge and apply it elsewhere.

JASPERS has mostly been involved in the project application stage, but there is acknowledgement in Latvia that JASPERS would have more scope to improve a project if it were involved in the project development at an earlier stage, and the Latvian authorities see JASPERS role expanding to include involvement at the earlier implementation and ex-post stages in the next programming period.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

6. LITHUANIA

Summary

In Lithuania, JASPERS was involved in 5 Major projects and 1 non-Major project, as well as 5 Horizontal Assignments. Lithuania did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Lithuania's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The main sectors that JASPERS assisted Lithuanian Major projects in were: Knowledge Economy (2), Urban Transport (1), Water & Wastewater (1), and Other (1). One project was submitted in 2009, 2 in 2010, and 2 in 2011.

The only sector where JASPERS assisted a Lithuanian non-Major project was Roads (1). This project was submitted in 2009.

The main sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Solid Waste (2), Energy (1), and Other (2). One project was submitted in 2008, 3 in 2009, and 1 in 2010.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Lithuania was 1039 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 594 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Lithuania was 405 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average JASPERS assistance duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Lithuania was 654 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole of 927 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Lithuania was 151 days, compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Lithuania had 2 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Lithuania received Interruption Letters for both of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Lithuanian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Lithuania is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Lithuania	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	100	0
Project Design	50	50
Project Cost Estimation	0	0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	50	50
Cost Benefit Analysis	100	50
Environmental Issues	50	0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	50	0
Competition & State Aids	100	0
Funding & Financing Issues	50	50
Procurement	0	0
Project Implementation & Structures	100	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	-
No of Projects	2	2

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Concept & Programming (2 out of 2 projects), Cost Benefit Analysis (2 out of 2), Competition & State Aids (2 out of 2), and Project Implementation & Structures (2 out of 2). Less common topics were: Project Design (1 out of 2), Demand Analysis & Modelling (1 out of 2), Environmental Issues (1 out of 2), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (1 out of 2), and Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 2). The topics where no JASPERS-assistance was sought were: Project Cost Estimation, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters to Lithuania were: Project Design (1 out of 2), Demand Analysis & Modelling (1 out of 2), Cost Benefit Analysis (1 out of 2), and Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 2).

Lithuanian Involvement with JASPERS

Lithuania, by virtue of its size, has relative low level of infrastructural investment compared to other Member States. This is reflected in the number of Major projects developed by Lithuania, and the extent of its use of JASPERS. During the evaluation period, Lithuania made six applications for funding for Major projects. All of these received JASPERS assistance. In addition, JASPERS completed five horizontal assignments for Lithuania during the evaluation period.

Testing Preliminary Findings

There were only a very limited number of Major projects in Lithuania that received JASPERS assistance and proceeded to a Commission Decision. Lithuania did not develop any Major projects without JASPERS assistance. As a result, Tasks 1 and 2 did not lead to preliminary findings with respect to the impact of JASPERS in Lithuania.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Lithuania

Lithuanian officials were appreciative of the support received from JASPERS. Their level of satisfaction indicated that they found that JASPERS had a positive impact for them.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Lithuanian managing authority explained that they expect two types of impact from JASPERS assistance: improvements in the quality and maturity of applications and a reduction in time taken for the Commission to approve applications for funding.

Their view was that JASPERS has made significant contributions to the quality and maturity of applications. This has been particularly useful in cases where the beneficiary had a great deal of technical expertise in the subject matter of the project but might not be familiar with the process of project development. The Lithuanian authorities referred in particular to the Major project to establish a National Centre for Physical and Technological Sciences

Lithuanian officials are also confident that JASPERS has had a positive impact on the time taken by the Commission to examine funding applications from Lithuania.

The Lithuanian authorities, in common with many Member States, did criticise what they regarded as a lack of consistency between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy. They regard a JASPERS Completion Note as being, at least in part, an assessment of the project in question on behalf of the Commission. They are surprised if the DG for Regional Policy raises an interruption based on an issue which they believe has been cleared by JASPERS. They referred to one project where JASPERS stated in its Completion Note that the project in question did not raise State Aid issues. When an application was made to the Commission, State Aid issues were raised in an Interruption Letter.

Lithuanian authorities quoted the example of a project establishing a National Centre for Physical and Technological Sciences. This project gained essential knowledge from JASPERS that enabled them to plan the project and make the case for it to the Commission.

The principal beneficiary in this project was Vilnius University, acting in partnership with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University and three state research institutes. The object of the project was to provide appropriate research facilities to Lithuanian scientists to allow research to be carried out to the highest standards, and to make it possible for promising new scientists to complete their training and make their career in Lithuania.

While the project could only be led by experts from the universities and research institutes, JASPERS was able to bring valuable insights into the areas of research that might have future commercial applications and to the process of placing a money value on the benefits of the project. In this case JASPERS intervention could have improved the underlying quality of the project, by refining the strategy for the new research centre, and also improved the presentation of the project to the Commission by assisting the beneficiary to express the impact of the project in the form of a cost benefit analysis.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Lithuanian Authorities

Lithuania made extensive use of Horizontal Assignment to capture relevant technical knowledge from JASPERS. JASPERS is currently carrying out a project for the Managing Authority for Environmental projects to develop a national water strategy to 2020. A similar Horizontal Assignment is being carried out in the field of transport. JASPERS was unable to fulfil all of Lithuania's requests for Horizontal Assignments due to limited resources, and the wide ranging nature of some of the requests.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The fact that there were a number of road projects has allowed the relevant authority to build up a certain expertise in this sector. They anticipate needing less assistance from JASPERS for road projects in future. Conversely, they have not yet been able to develop significant experience of developing environmental projects, and anticipate needing ongoing JASPERS assistance with individual environmental projects into the next programming period.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

The Lithuanian Operational Programmes only contain a total of 10 Major projects, spread over a wide variety of sectors. This makes it difficult for the Lithuanian authorities to build up capacity based on experience with individual projects.

Lithuanian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

One stakeholder stated that the Commission should “trust” JASPERS more as they are both EU institutions. This was a reference to the perception that the Commission reopens issues that have been “cleared” in a JASPERS Completion Note when it considers funding applications. This type of concern would be addressed by the current proposals that JASPERS take a more formal role in the approval of projects. Conversely other stakeholders maintained that JASPERS should be a source of help and support for Member States rather than assessing their projects. One official stated that Lithuania trusts its own institutions to identify good projects. In this analysis JASPERS priority is to assist Lithuania to make the best possible case for funding, and to act as a source of information on the project and on general conditions in Lithuania for the Commission.

It was clear from all stakeholders that Lithuania has involved JASPERS at an early stage in the development of at least some projects and has had positive results. JASPERS has also been involved successfully in the development of strategies and Operational Programmes. However, the Lithuanian stakeholders emphasised that any JASPERS involvement in developing strategies could only be purely advisory, for example informing them of best practices in developing strategies. Actual decision making as to which projects to include in an investment strategy, must be an exclusive competence of a Member State.

In discussing recommendations for the future role of JASPERS, Lithuanian officials made the very relevant point that any new tasks for JASPERS must be accompanied by the necessary resources and skills for JASPERS.

Conclusions

The Lithuanian Managing Authority were of the opinion that JASPERS has had a positive effect on the quality and maturity of projects, as well as a reduction in time taken by the Commission to examine the funding applications.

Lithuania’s extensive use of JASPERS for Horizontal Assignments to capture technical knowledge meant that there was broad scope for the transfer of knowledge. The potential for capacity building was more limited, as there were only a small number of Major projects in Lithuania, and these were spread over a number of sectors, so it was difficult for the Lithuanian Authorities to build capacity based on individual projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

7. POLAND

Summary

In Poland, JASPERS was involved in 56 Major projects and 19 non-Major projects, as well as 19 Horizontal activities. In the same period, Poland also submitted 62 Major projects without JASPERS Assignments. Poland's use of JASPERS on projects not including Horizontal Assignment is therefore 54.7%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Polish Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (16), Energy (9), Roads (9), Knowledge Economy (7), Rail (4) and Solid Waster (1). There were also 6 projects in the Other category. 13 projects were first submitted for review in 2009, 25 were submitted in 2010 and 18 were submitted in 2011.

The most common sectors where Poland submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance were: Roads (20), Knowledge Economy (11), Water & Wastewater (8) and Rail (3) and Other (12). There were also single projects in each of the Airports, Urban Transport and Solid Waste sectors. 8 projects were submitted to the DG for Regional Policy in 2008, 14 in 2009, 20 in 2010, and 11 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Polish non-Major projects were: Water & Wastewater (5), Solid Waste (4), Energy (3) and Other (4). Single projects in each of the Airports, Rail and Knowledge Economy Sectors were also submitted. One non-Major project was submitted in 2006, 3 in 2007, 5 in 2008, 6 in 2009 and 3 in 2010.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (5), Solid Waste (4), Energy (3) and Other (3). One Horizontal Assignment was performed in each of the Airports, Rail and Knowledge Economy sectors. Two Horizontal Assignments were performed in Poland in 2006, 3 in 2007, 5 in 2008, 6 in 2009, and 3 in 2010.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Poland was 769 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 476 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Poland was 313 days, compared to the average for the Members States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 518 days in Poland, and 386 for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Poland had an average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration 205 days shorter than the Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in Poland.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Poland was 879 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 542 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Poland was 365 days compared to the average of 386 days across all Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Poland had 32 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Polish Major projects contained an average of 2.8 topics per letter, compared to an average of 3.5 for all the Member States. Poland received Interruption Letters on 22 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Polish projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Poland	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	28.1	31.8
Project Design	21.9	50.0
Project Cost Estimation	15.6	13.6
Demand Analysis & Modelling	40.6	13.6
Cost Benefit Analysis	71.9	31.8
Environmental Issues	40.6	27.3
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	34.4	50.0
Competition & State Aids	12.5	4.5
Funding and Financing Issues	65.6	31.8
Procurement	12.5	9.1
Project Implementation & Structures	15.6	13.6
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	3.1	-
No. of Projects	32	22

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (72% of projects), Funding & Financing Issues (66%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (41%), Environmental Issues (40%) and Risk Sensitivity Analysis (34%). Less common topics were: Project Concept and Programming (28%), Project Design (22%), Project Cost Estimation (16%), Projects Implementation & Structures (16%), Competition & State Aids (13%), Procurement (13%) and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (3%).

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Poland were: Project Design (50% of projects), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (50%), Project Concept & Programming (32%), Cost Benefit Analysis (32%), Funding & Financing Issues (32%) and Environmental Issues (27%). Less frequently raised topics were: Project Cost Estimation (14%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (14%), Project Implementation & Structures (14%), Procurement (9%) and Competition & State Aids (5%).

Feedback

The Polish Managing Authority attributes the timing benefit observed to the DG for Regional Policy being more trusting of applications that have received JASPERS support, and this leading to faster Decision times. If JASPERS had sufficient resources, the Polish Managing Authority would involve it in most if not all Major projects. JASPERS is currently involved in approximately half of the major projects that have either been developed or are under development by the Polish authorities.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Poland

All of Polish stakeholders had a very positive general opinion of JASPERS. The key benefit of JASPERS was felt to be the support it gives to beneficiaries. It was emphasised Beneficiaries have other supports available, such as access to local consultants who can help with the process of obtaining construction permits. The need for JASPERS help varies by sector:

Capabilities on project:
Economics

- Roads: The consensus among the Polish stakeholders was that the road authority is now able to prepare projects and applications without JASPERS assistance.
- Rail: Conversely the rail beneficiary is still in need of JASPERS assistance with individual projects and this is expected to persist well into the next programming period.
- Waste: Waste projects are now being developed with private partners. This raises new issues for the Beneficiaries, other Polish authorities and indeed the Commission itself. Some form of advice and support from JASPERS will be needed in the future to deal with these issues.
- Knowledge Economy: These projects raise unique issues, particularly of State Aid. In some cases private firms can seek funding as part of these projects, in nearly all cases some private firms will benefit from the project. JASPERS has had early success helping the Polish authorities to develop these projects, as seen in Case Study 10. However it will have to continue to develop new skills and knowledge to deal with new issues emerging in these projects.

The Managing Authority made the point that the quality of JASPERS advice can vary from expert to expert.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Polish regard the key added value from JASPERS, as opposed to other source of technical help, as being its insight into the likely attitude and concerns of the Commission with respect to an application. Since the DG for Regional Policy does not have the resources to engage with the Polish authorities in the preparation of the numerous Major projects in its Operational Programmes, JASPERS advice is extremely useful. In theory if the DG for Regional Policy had sufficient resources to engage with the Polish authorities in the preparation of projects, there might not be a need for JASPERS, in the opinion of some Polish stakeholders.

There is a good level of knowledge about JASPERS in the Managing Authority, Intermediate Authorities and Implementing Bodies. Some beneficiaries may be less aware of JASPERS and the assistance it can offer. However, beneficiaries must make applications via an implementing body and intermediate authority, so JASPERS is brought to the attention of all relevant Beneficiaries where relevant.

As with other Member States, Polish stakeholders pointed out that for JASPERS to function effectively that it must have a successful working relationship with both Polish officials and with the Desk Officers dealing with Poland in the DG for Regional Policy. In order to achieve this, JASPERS must adapt its working methods and the assistance it offers to the capacities and priorities of the Member State, and of the relevant Desk Officers in the DG for Regional Policy. Polish stakeholders praised the way in which JASPERS had adapted itself to the needs of the Polish administration and of the DG for Regional Policy officials dealing with Poland.

Polish Beneficiaries, Implementing Bodies, Intermediate Authorities and the Managing Authority felt that JASPERS was particularly useful in assisting them in presenting projects effectively to the Commission. The Polish authorities felt able to identify potential projects, develop them and choose which ones should be implemented. Although JASPERS help with these aspects of project development could be useful, the key value of JASPERS for Poland was its insight into the Commissions priorities and the help it could give in presenting a project to the Commission in an application for funding.

Another area where JASPERS had brought new and useful knowledge and skills to the Polish administration is the development of projects in the area of the knowledge economy. Case Study 10 is an example of this. The two projects discussed in this case study involved public investment to establish new research institutes attached to Polish universities. JASPERS brought important insights to the Polish administration into the process of identifying the areas that these new institutes should target, in particular what areas would be likely to be of private firms in research and technology based industries. JASPERS supported the beneficiaries as they sought specialist consulting help to formulate a research strategy for these new institutes. As a result of this commercial focus it was

Capabilities on project:
Economics

possible to predict, and place a value on, the amount of commercially viable research that could be carried out by these new institutes. This in turn allowed a valuation of the benefits of these projects for the purposes of a funding application to the Commission.

A number of stakeholders pointed out that the work done by JASPERS, and hence the knowledge transferred from JASPERS to Poland, has changed over the programming period. JASPERS initial priority was explaining certain aspects of Polish regulatory procedures to the Commission so that it could properly assess funding applications from the Polish authorities. In particular, JASPERS helped the Commission to understand the significance of the various decisions taken by the Polish environmental authorities which was attached to an application for funding. The EIA Directive had been implemented in Poland in a way that led to a need for several separate impact assessments and permissions from environmental authorities for different parts of a single project. The Commission needed to understand the Polish system to ensure that it provided the same level of protection and safeguards as a single EIA of the project as a whole.

In the earlier part of the programming period, JASPERS advice on cost benefit analysis was especially valuable for beneficiaries and other Polish authorities. The various beneficiaries and public authorities had extensive prior experience in the development of investment projects on a purely domestic basis and for project part funded by the Instrument for Pre Accession States. However, cost benefit analysis had not played a large part in the development of these projects, so the Polish authorities started the programming period with a relatively limited knowledge of cost benefit analysis. The calculation of funding gaps had also presented problems early in the programming period, and JASPERS help had allowed the Polish authorities to develop the necessary skills in this area.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Polish Authorities

Polish officials had particular praise for fieldwork carried out by JASPERS staff. They had found that visits to specific projects by JASPERS staff were a particularly valuable source of additional technical knowledge. The technical knowledge transferred would go beyond the specific project that was the subject of the visit. For example designers would gain valuable insights into approaches in other Member States from the JASPERS staff, and this new knowledge could be very widely applicable. The Polish National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water management also believed that interactions between JASPERS staff and Polish design engineers promoted awareness of and adherence to international quality standards, and encouraged Polish engineers and project promoters to seek internationally recognised quality certifications. In general, interaction between JASPERS staff and Polish engineers, particularly as part of “field work” by JASPERS staff, promoted the adoption of best international practices by Polish engineers for all of their work.

Poland has had positive experiences with Horizontal Assignments as a way to build the knowledge base and capacity of the Polish public service. Examples of Horizontal Assignments included:

- JASPERS had developed a useful guide to cost benefit analysis, usually referred to as the “blue book”;
- A comprehensive “case study” of the Polish gas sector, predicting future use etc. This is being used as reference material by consultants preparing projects in the sector;
- A seminar for rail sector beneficiaries to pass on lessons from experience securing approval for road projects.

The Polish authorities had already identified a number of priority areas for future Horizontal Assignments, for example.

- Guidance on financial and economic analysis of projects that generate revenue, e.g. public transport services, water charges, waste charges; and, related to this,
- Treatment of projects that are to provide a “Service of General Economic Interest” (i.e. will be in receipt of an ongoing subsidy to allow them to provide a non profitable service that is considered socially necessary);

Capabilities on project:
Economics

- How to treat compensation for the Public Service Obligation in the financial and economic analysis. Address question of whether a private firm can be entrusted with a SGEI.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The two implementing bodies in Poland for the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme play a key role in ensuring that projects learn from each other. These bodies are:

- The Centre for European Transport Projects; and,
- The National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management.

The role of these bodies includes ensuring that useful knowledge gained from JASPERS support in one project is applied wherever it is relevant. For example, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management holds a general meeting with all beneficiaries twice a year. Significant points arising in each project and issues arising in competing application forms for each project are discussed by all beneficiaries. This process ensures that key learning and insights from one projects, including those gained from JASPERS assistance, are disseminated to all beneficiaries.

In the Polish Knowledge Economy sector JASPERS is undertaking a Horizontal Assignment involving the transfer of technical know-how and sharing this know-how within the community of Beneficiaries. This includes JASPERS meeting with groups of beneficiaries in order to share experiences and offer advice. This secures a sharing of knowledge between projects.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

In common with several other Member States, there was a broad consensus among Polish stakeholders that JASPERS working only in English acts as an impediment to the transfer of knowledge from JASPERS to the Polish authorities. This created difficulties when Polish officials or Polish consultants working on project development had to communicate with JASPERS in writing, rather than being able to have informal oral contacts in a common language.

Many stakeholders also found that some JASPERS staff did not have sufficient knowledge of Polish national laws and practices to ensure that their advice was practical in a Polish context. They were particularly concerned that JASPERS would propose solutions to issues that arose in a Polish project, based on successful experience in projects in other Member States. However these solutions might not be possible under the Polish legal system or might simply be incompatible with prevailing norms and practices in Poland. An example was given of Polish practices for the supervision of construction sites. In Polish practice, project supervisors are typically employees of the main construction contractor. In some other Member States the project supervisor is completely independent of the contractor, and the services of the project supervisor are obtained through a separate tendering process. In some projects JASPERS staff were concerned that construction and project supervision services were being procured through the same tendering process and would be provided by the same firm. These JASPERS staff would strongly recommend splitting the tender into two lots to procure a completely independent site supervisor. This recommendation was not necessary to ensure compliance with the relevant EU rules on site safety and supervision and would not be practical to implement in the Polish market.

The Managing Authority made the point that it takes responsibility for many aspects of preparing applications for EU funding, so much relevant knowledge about this aspect of project preparation is accumulated by the Managing Authority and applied to all major projects.

There was a consensus that prior to the current programming period that staff turnover was an issue for the Polish authorities. This used to cause a number of problems with the development of investment projects, including a loss of experience and knowledge as the personnel dealing with investments changed. The Polish authorities do not

Capabilities on project:
Economics

believe that staff turnover in Polish institutions is an issue in the current programming period. Turnover of staff is at a low level. Staff movements that do take place are often within institutions, so that knowledge gained by a public servant in one post can be used in another. The Managing Authority even suggested that staff turnover in the DG for Regional Policy now presents a greater problem for project development.

Polish Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

With respect to the current Operational Programme, the types of advice and assistance that Poland requires from JASPERS are evolving as the programming period progresses. Most major projects in the current Operational Programme have been prepared and are being assessed at a national level. Polish institutions now want help from JASPERS on procurement and project implementation. In particular, there is a need for JASPERS help on the complex procurement and implementation issues that arise in Knowledge Economy projects.

The Polish authorities also recognised the potential for JASPERS to give useful guidance on the preparation for the next funding period from 2014 on.

As described above the Polish authorities see that main role of JASPERS as being to assist in the presentation of projects, which have already reached an advanced stage of development, to the Commission. They expect JASPERS involvement in the preparation of applications to speed the process of obtaining Commission approval for these projects. They were disappointed that projects that had been, in their view, "approved" by JASPERS went on to be examined in detail by the Commission. In this context they welcomed proposals for JASPERS to play a more formal role in the approval of projects.

The Polish authorities felt that JASPERS sometimes interpreted its mandate in a narrow way and concentrated on reviewing applications at the expense of contributing to projects at an earlier stage of development. They valued the contributions that JASPERS was able to make to projects when they were at an early stage of development and wanted a clarification that this work formed part of JASPERS role.

For this funding period, the majority of JASPERS work had been on projects at a late stage of development. Typically the design work would be completed, and JASPERS would be involved in presenting the project to the Commission in an application for funding. The Polish authorities agreed that, in principle, this limited the scope for JASPERS to improve the quality of projects themselves, as opposed to improving the presentation of projects in applications. They pointed out that, due the long preparation period needed for any large infrastructure projects it was inevitable that many of the projects funded in the 2007-2013 period would have to have started development well in advance of the launch of JASPERS in 2007. They intended to involve JASPERS more in the early stage of project development for projects in the next funding period. The Polish Authorities also intended to involve JASPERS in the preparation of the Operational Programmes for the next programming period. The authorities emphasised that the selection of potential projects for inclusion in an Operational Programme must be an exclusive competence of a Member State, and that any involvement of JASPERS would have to be on a purely advisory basis. Nonetheless they expected that JASPERS advice would improve the selection of projects.

Conclusion

JASPERS has had a positive impact on project timing of Polish projects by assisting preparation and presentation of projects to the Commission. JASPERS has also developed the capacity of the Polish authorities to carry out this work. It has had less influence on project quality due to the stage at which it was involved. There have been encouraging results regarding improved project quality when JASPERS is involved early in the process, for example; the projects in the Knowledge Economy sector.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

8. ROMANIA

Summary

In Romania, JASPERS was involved in 56 Major projects and 26 non-Major projects, as well as 29 Horizontal Assignments. In the same period, Romania also submitted 10 Major projects without JASPERS assistance. Romania's use of JASPERS on projects not including Horizontal Assignments is therefore 89.1%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Romanian Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (28), Roads (10), Solid Waste (8), Energy (6), Rail (3), and Ports & Waterways (1). 4 projects were first submitted for review in 2007, 8 in 2008, 15 in 2009, 20 in 2010, and 9 in 2011.

The most common sectors where Romania submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance were: Water & Wastewater (7) and Solid Waste (3). 6 projects were submitted to the DG for Regional Policy in 2010 and 4 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Romanian non-Major projects were: Rail (12), Solid Waste (7), Energy (4), and Ports and Railways (3). 14 projects were submitted in 2007, 1 in 2008, 8 in 2009, and 3 in 2010.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Energy (9), Solid Waste (5), Water & Wastewater (5), the Knowledge Economy (1), and Other (9). 14 Horizontal Assignments were performed in Romania in 2007, 2 in 2008, 9 in 2009, and 4 in 2010.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Romania was 660 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 594 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Romania was 158 days, compared to the average for the Member states as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 90 days in Romania, and 386 for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Romania had an average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration 68 days longer than the Decision Duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in Romania.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Romania was 904 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 927 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Romania was 365 days compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Romania had 53 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by the DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Romanian Major projects contained an average of 3.3 topics per letter, compared to an average of 3.5 for all the Member States. Romania received Interruption Letters on 16 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Romanian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Romania	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	34.0	12.5
Project Design	22.6	50.0
Project Cost Estimation	3.8	18.8
Demand Analysis & Modelling	11.3	0.0
Cost Benefit Analysis	92.5	25.0
Environmental Issues	24.5	75.0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	5.7	18.8
Competition & State Aids	7.5	0.0
Funding & Financing Issues	37.7	56.3
Procurement	15.1	0.0
Project Implementation & Structures	45.3	68.8
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	20.8	-
No of Projects	53	16

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (93% of projects), Project Implementation & Structures (45%), Funding & Financing Issues (38%), Project Concept & Programming (34%), Environmental Issues (25%), and Project Design (23%). Less common topics were: Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (21%), Procurement (15%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (11%), Competition & State Aids (8%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (6%), and Project Cost Estimation (4%).

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Poland were: Environmental Issues (75%), Project Implementation & Structures (69%), Funding & Financing Issues (56%), and Project Design (50%). Less frequently raised topics were: Cost Benefit Analysis (25%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (19%), Project Cost Estimation (19%), and Project Concept & Programming (13%).

Romanian Involvement with JASPERS

Romania made extensive use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 56 Major and 26 non-Major projects as well as 29 horizontal assignments. Accordingly, Romania may be viewed as the major user of JASPERS within the Member States. Romania was by far the most frequent user of JASPERS for Horizontal Assignments, and accounts for over one third of such assignments. With regard to project related advice, the Romanian authorities sought JASPERS assistance very largely at the project application stage.

With regard to Major projects, 36 were in the environment sector and 10 in transport. For non-Major projects, JASPERS assistance was most often sought for knowledge economy projects.

Romania was notable in bringing forward 10 Major projects without JASPERS assistance.

Testing Preliminary Findings

When presented with analysis on project timelines, the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests emphasised the need to consider the longer-term involvement of JASPERS and time taken to develop projects which are not reflected in the DG for Regional Policy durations for Major Projects. It was highlighted that developing a project up to the stage of submitting an application can take a number of years and can be influenced by a wide range of factors that may cause delay. Specific issues relating to different sectors and the size of sample were also thought to influence timescales for Major Projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Romanian delegates highlighted that delays as a result of the DG for Regional Policy interruptions were still occurring, although AECOM analysis identified that the average durations for these interruptions fell by a third over the evaluation period. It was suggested that as well as receiving JASPERS support in responding to these interruptions, a further factor behind reductions in delays may have been that JASPERS support resulted in interruptions being less demanding. Less complex interruption queries were potentially greater in significance than reducing the number of interruptions.

In Romania, the average DG for Regional Policy duration for non-assisted projects was actually less than for JASPERS-assisted projects. Officials highlighted that there were three possible factors that may have influenced this occurrence:

- Due to the number of environmental projects, JASPERS did not have the capacity to assist with all projects; therefore, for half of the projects Romania's Ministry of Environment outsourced work to specialist consultants. JASPERS had played a role in these projects but as there was no Completion Note, this was not reflected in the analysis;
- Projects selected for JASPERS assistance were more likely to be challenging than non-assisted projects; and,
- At the start of the programme period the durations for projects were longer as the Romanian authorities and JASPERS developed capacity in new areas. As many of the environment projects have been similar, consultants working on non-assisted projects benefitted from this learning process.

For these reasons, the Romanian authorities considered that wider contextual factors should be acknowledged when discussing project timescales and that value could be gained from considering the whole lifespan of a project, rather than just the timescales relating to Commission.

Interruption Queries

The analysis of projects had shown that the number of interruptions had decreased over time, but that the subject of the queries did not necessarily relate to areas where JASPERS had assisted. However, and it was acknowledged by the Romanian authorities that it was a learning process for all of those involved. In particular, it was highlighted that there were a significant number of interruptions relating to environmental matters which resulted in Romanian Ministries commissioning their own reviews in this area.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Romania

The Romanian authorities had a generally a positive opinion of the quality of JASPERS support. However, there was a view that the quantity and quality of support in the JASPERS start up phase was deficient. This was due, in their opinion, to the fact that JASPERS were in a start up phase and to the large number of projects that the Romanian authorities had developed to application stage.

As JASPERS consolidated however, their view is that the quality of advice that they offered improved. It is now deemed "acceptable" particularly for transport and environment issues. JASPERS have outsourced expertise where they felt deficient. It was, however, acknowledged that issues relating to quality need to take into account the availability and quality of information provided by Member States.

In the next planning period 2013 to 2020, the emphasis will shift to energy and competitiveness, and there was concern that JASPERS strengths might not be aligned to these issues.

JASPERS support on environmental issues was a particular problem in the early stages of the Programme Period. It is considered that the ability of the Member State and JASPERS to respond to stringent environmental requirements depends on the capacity within the organisations respective environmental teams. The quality of advice from JASPERS on environmental issues has improved substantially in recent times.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

It was also felt there was a disconnect between the DG for Regional Policy and the DG Environment, who have provided detailed assessments of projects from an environmental viewpoint. It was considered that greater co-ordination and earlier recognition of the environmental requirements would assist Member States and JASPERS.

Representatives from Romania suggested for some topics or projects, JASPERS appeared to be less willing to provide support. The Romanian authorities considered that the ongoing relationship with JASPERS would benefit from a more open and flexible approach that takes into account the respective capacities of the Member States and also JASPERS. It was emphasised that it is vital that the Member States are made aware as soon as possible of the level of expertise and available support within JASPERS to avoid delays in the application process. Member States also suggested that they would rather have sustained and comprehensive support for a proportion of projects, and in areas where JASPERS has capacity, rather than a piecemeal approach across the full range of projects.

Romanian authorities suggested that where JASPERS is not able to fully address queries from Member States then beneficiaries should be provided with sufficient notice so that they can seek additional support. Overall it was considered that there was now perhaps more realistic expectations of the support available from JASPERS and that the Romanian Ministry of Environment saw JASPERS as one of a number of tools to assist project development.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The early view of the Romanian authorities was that JASPERS were the eyes and ears of the Commission, so there was not full trust. Also, because many projects were in an advanced stage of planning when JASPERS support commenced, the focus of that support was very much on the project application process. These factors limited the capacity of JASPERS to influence project quality.

JASPERS was regarded as having a particularly positive impact on project timing and absorption of funding. Projects under the Ministry for Environment and Forestry were subject to monthly meetings of an Evaluation Group to include Ministry officials, the feasibility study consultants and separate technical consultants appointed by the Ministry. JASPERS were usually involved and this process proved to be very successful, as problems with the project planning and the application form were ironed out prior to submission. Also the DG for Regional Policy official often did an informal review of the documentation before the application was submitted. Romania achieved very good project progress and approval rates in 2010 and 2011 as a result of these arrangements. The contribution of JASPERS to getting the application form right was particularly noted.

The Romanian authorities noted that the role of JASPERS is changing, with greater impacts on project quality. This is because of somewhat earlier involvement in project planning. The Romanian Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Business Environment provided a number of examples of energy projects where they believed that project quality had been improved by earlier JASPERS support. This JASPERS support related to:

- State Aid Issues – JASPERS has provided valuable expertise relating to State Aid for a broadband infrastructure project along with wider technical support. In addition, JASPERS assisted with developing submissions for eight large combustion plants.
- Research and Development - JASPERS provided extensive support on a research and development project for a new bridge. Technical assistance was provided throughout the application period and it is considered to have helped reduce the time taken to submit the application and reduced the number and difficulty of interruption queries. The process of JASPERS assistance was enhanced through early involvement.
- Discussions with Financial Institutions - JASPERS assisted the Ministry in discussions with the European Investment Bank and the World Investment Bank relating to funding absorption. Officials acknowledged that there was a lack of knowledge in this area within the Ministry and as such JASPERS assistance was invaluable.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Romanian Authorities

Given the relative late involvement of JASPERS in the project planning process, the potential for transfer of knowledge through project work was limited. Also that fact that the Ministry for Environment and Forestry appointed external consultants to provide technical advice obviously impact on JASPERS role.

However, both the Ministry for Environment and Forestry and the regional intermediate bodies made reference to the strong support role provided by JASPERS in the context of Horizontal Assignments. The work requested from JASPERS followed the Romanian Government Ordinance HG No.28 of 2008, which set out methodological rules for the elaboration and approval of technical and economic documentation for investment projects.

The Romanian authorities suggested there was potential for improving the exchange of information including between Member States. A desire for greater dissemination of guidance was also identified.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

It was considered that significant cross project learning had occurred, particularly in respect of environmental projects. This was due to a number of factors:

- The fact that many projects on the environment sector were identical, with Water & Wastewater and Solid Waste projects being developed for almost all Romanian counties;
- The recruitment of external technical expertise in addition to JASPERS to manage feasibility studies; and
- The awarding of multiple feasibility studies to each feasibility study consultant, facilitating learning on the part of the consultant.

With respect to the JASPERS involvement, as this was confine largely to the project application process, it was largely knowledge in this area that was transferred.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover is not a huge issue for Romanian officials centrally, more so in intermediate bodies. The fact that beneficiaries were not included in the project planning process (except to review documents) is a barrier to transfer of knowledge to them. It should be understood that the decision not to involve them relates to the fact that local authorities were disparate and not large enough to engage in planning.

There was a process of setting up water companies to achieve the required scale and giving one local authority a lead role in planning solid waste projects.

Language barriers were not regarded as significant, as much of the planning was organised centrally where English speaking capability was readily available. This could change, if beneficiaries became more central to the process.

Romanian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Romanian authorities were of the view that the new programming period offered opportunities to extend the scope of JASPERS involvement in relation to project planning. Indeed, this was already happening through involvement of JASPERS in advising on strategic plans and programmes and on the terms of reference for feasibility studies. With regard to strategies and programmes, it was emphasised that these were ultimately a matter for decision by the Member States.

The Romanian authorities indicated that they would not be acquiring external technical assistance in addition to JASPERS for the future. Thus, they would be more reliant on JASPERS. However, it was suggested that based upon the experience gained from the initial programme period, Romania's Ministry of Environment will not seek to use JASPERS on every project. JASPERS should therefore focus less on individual projects and instead seek to

Capabilities on project:
Economics

provide high-level horizontal expertise to be used by beneficiaries and consultants. Provision of templates and guidance would provide greater scope for beneficiaries to complete applications with greater independence.

The Romanian authorities suggested that overall the interaction between JASPERS and Member States could be strengthened through clearer definition of roles and responsibilities, lines of communication and requirements for information. Prompter feedback is considered desirable as although there are existing forms, a more direct and flexible approach would support changing circumstances, such as changes in JASPERS personnel, and enable Member States to respond earlier. Where new staff are recruited by JASPERS, early contact with Member States would enable the JASPERS officials to gain familiarity with local conditions and improve working relationships. Improved channels of communication between JASPERS appointed consultants and Member States would also help address current barriers when providing feedback.

Officials suggested that a degree of flexibility was required for timescales to account for delays caused by JASPERS. Preference was therefore given to setting timescales for delivery internally. There was also a further request for earlier acknowledgement from JASPERS where they lacked the capacity or resources to assist Member States.

It was considered that the scope for JASPERS to influence organisational structures would be more limited as there are significant political factors and established structures that would need to be considered.

It was suggested that JASPERS could play a more proactive role in training to ensure that training and guidance is in place to provide beneficiaries with the necessary skills to address issues before they arise. Existing examples of forward planning included an action relating to training in this year's Romanian environment Action Plan. An ex-ante agreement is also in place for the Member State covering EIA training.

The Romanian authorities acknowledged that JASPERS does not have the resources to provide training on all areas, especially if provided with additional responsibilities elsewhere. Resources should therefore be concentrated on areas where there is greatest benefit, with particular value gained from transferring technical knowledge and providing expertise in areas which are less developed (e.g. new technologies, climate change adaptation and renewable energy sources).

Conclusions

Romanian opinion of JASPERS has been generally positive in nature. In particular, improvements in the quality of JASPERS advice were highlighted. JASPERS was regarded as having a particularly positive impact on project timing and absorption of funding, and on improving the standard of the application form.

In Romania, JASPERS was typically involved in the project planning process at a relatively late stage, which left little room for the transfer of knowledge through project work. JASPERS did play a strong support, however, through the use Horizontal Assignments, and produced a set of methodological rules for the elaboration and approval of technical and economic documentation for investment projects.

While JASPERS-assisted Major projects actually had longer DG for Regional Policy Decision Durations than non-assisted projects, three possible factors may explain this result. Firstly, JASPERS was partially involved in some environmental projects but, lacking the capacity for complete assistance, did not produce a Completion Note for the project; secondly, projects selected for JASPERS were more likely to be challenging than non-assisted projects; and thirdly, project duration were longer at the start of the programme period as JASPERS and the Romanian authorities built capacity.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

9. SLOVAKIA

Summary

In Slovakia, JASPERS was involved in 16 Major projects and 5 non-Major projects, as well as 2 Horizontal Assignments. Slovakia did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Slovakia's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Slovakian Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (7), Rail (5), and Road (4). Two projects were first submitted for review in 2008, 3 in 2009, 6 in 2010, and 5 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Slovakian non-Major projects were: Rail (2), Water & Wastewater (2), and Roads (1). 4 projects were submitted in 2008, and 1 in 2009.

The main sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (1) and Other (1).

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Slovakia was 913 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 574 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovakia was 494 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovakia was 587 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 409 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Slovakia was 1031 days, compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Slovakia had 6 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by the DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Slovakia received Interruption Letters on 5 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Slovakian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Slovakia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Slovakia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	66.7	80
Project Design	50	60
Project Cost Estimation	0	60
Demand Analysis & Modelling	50	40
Cost Benefit Analysis	83.3	100
Environmental Issues	50	80
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	50	60
Competition & State Aids	16.7	0
Funding & Financing Issues	50	40
Procurement	16.7	0
Project Implementation & Structures	0	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	33.3	-
No of Projects	6	5

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (5 out of 6 projects), Project Concept & Programming (4 out of 6), Project Design (3 out of 6), Demand Analysis & Modelling (3 out of 6), Environmental (3 out of 6), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (3 out of 6), and Funding & Financing Issues (3 out of 6). Less common topics were Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (2 out of 6), Competition & State Aids (1 out of 6), and Procurement (1 out of 6). The topics where no JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Cost Estimation, and Project Implementation & Structures.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters were: Cost Benefit Analysis (5 out of 5 projects), Project Concept & Programming (4 out of 5), Environmental Issues (4 out of 5), Projects Design (3 out of 5), Project Cost Estimation (3 out of 5), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (3 out of 5), Demand Analysis & Modelling (2 out of 5), and Funding & Financing Issues (2 out of 5).

Slovakian Involvement with JASPERS

Slovakia made moderate use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 16 major and five non-Major projects as well as two Horizontal Assignments. All Major projects brought forward by Slovakia were JASPERS-assisted. With regard to Major project related advice, the Slovakian authorities sought JASPERS assistance largely at the project application stage only.

Of the 16 major projects, nine were in the transport sector and seven in environment.

Testing Preliminary Findings

The Slovakian authorities found it difficult to prove that JASPERS had reduced the time taken to approve projects, as they as they did not have a comparable set of projects to benchmark against. However, their view was that benefits in terms of reduced timelines had probably arisen.

In the view of the Slovakian authorities, a major source of delay was a failure of JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy to co-ordinate. The DG for Regional Policy often interrupted the process on issues that JASPERS had already approved.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Slovakia

Overall the Slovakian authorities are very happy with the support received from JASPERS. The co-operative and open dialogue that has occurred between organisations has led to faster project development and submissions to the DG for Regional Policy.

There is a view that JASPERS officials have been helpful. JASPERS staff has responded promptly to queries for the Slovakian authorities. Personal visits from JASPERS staff were highlighted as being positive aspects of the assistance and there was thought to be a good relationship between Slovakian staff and JASPERS staff.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

JASPERS support has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of projects. JASPERS input has been particularly useful for specific issues where there is less knowledge and experience within Slovakia or for new issues such as those relating to air quality.

The Slovakian authorities indicated that there have been instances where JASPERS involvement has led to changes to the scope or design of projects. It was suggested that early involvement is more likely to influence the design of projects and is more beneficial to projects as it reduces the likelihood of having to modify the design at a later date.

JASPERS has provided input on cost estimation although the extent of support has varied by project. The provision of benchmarks by JASPERS was valued. However, it was also acknowledged that it can be difficult to compare projects.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Slovakian Authorities

JASPERS has provided significant and consistent levels of support and advice throughout the programme. This has occurred through assistance that has led to improved Major project submissions and development of knowledge and skills within Slovakia. The Slovakian authorities considered that overall the input from JASPERS has been of great value to project development and increased capacity amongst Slovakian staff.

An example of an area where JASPERS support has proved invaluable is in relation to cost-benefit analysis. The complexities of the DG for Regional Policy requirements and limited experience within Slovakia had resulted in weaker responses in this area. JASPERS provided horizontal support including the development of a cost-benefit manual to guide future submissions. Although the timescales for developing the manual were significant it would have taken longer if the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Public Works undertook this task independently. It was considered that the technical input from JASPERS had resulted in guidance that has led to significant improvements in quality, reduced timescales and increased capacity in this area.

Horizontal support has been ongoing throughout the programme period and was described as being "very useful". JASPERS has provided information to the managing authority which can then be disseminated amongst project staff. Of particular value has been assistance with feasibility studies (non project specific) and other research used to inform project development. Assistance with developing capacity in Environmental Impact Assessments was cited as an example of where transport projects have benefitted.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The Slovakian authorities suggested that possibly of greatest value was JASPERS ability to share knowledge from other member states. Experience from other countries has been utilised by the Ministry of Transport to enhance the planning of their projects.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

The Slovakian authorities indicated that language barriers have made communication more difficult. Staff mobility is also a problem. Lack of knowledge of national legislation, and particularly environmental legislation, has hindered the possibility of transfer of knowledge in that area.

Slovakian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Slovakian authorities indicate that they will continue to use JASPERS in the same manner as they have in the past. Slovakia was uncertain as to whether they would reduce the amount of assistance they sought: although they have developed capacity in some areas, if there are new issues or revisions to the DG for Regional Policy' requirements, then additional support may be sought.

The Slovakian authorities reiterated that currently support provided by JASPERS is productive as JASPERS are able to promptly respond to queries. If there is a widening of JASPERS brief, it is essential that there is sufficient capacity within JASPERS to provide the same level of support.

The Slovakian authorities suggested that closer co-ordination between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy would reduce uncertainty and delay and that JASPERS should have a more prominent role in setting eligibility and approval criteria. If JASPERS led the development of the application forms, this would decrease the number of instances where suggestions made by JASPERS were overruled by the DG for Regional Policy.

The Slovakian authorities believe that there are practical obstacles to early involvement, such as stage of planning process and political opposition. Within these constraints, they are seeking to involve JASPERS at earlier stages. Already, they have involved JASPERS in strategy development e.g. in development of a national waste strategy.

The Slovakian authorities will continue to need JASPERS support for project applications. Having said that, they would like to see JASPERS involve in more Horizontal Assignments, such as in training.

Procurement was identified as being an area where further assistance from JASPERS would be advantageous.

Conclusions

The Slovakian authorities report being very happy with the support received from JASPERS, in particular with the prompt responses from JASPERS to queries, and with the improved project quality that resulted from JASPERS involvement. Quite often JASPERS was able to help in specific issues where there was less knowledge and experience within Slovakia. On some occasions there have been instances where JASPERS involvement has led to change to the scope or design of the project, suggesting that earlier JASPERS involvement can lead to increased potential for project improvement by JASPERS. The Slovakian authorities believe that there are practical obstacles to early JASPERS involvement however, such as stage of planning process and political opposition.

The consistent and significant levels of support from JASPERS to Slovakia has resulted in the development of knowledge and skills in the Member State, with the Slovakian authorities reporting that JASPERS has been of great value to project development and has increased capacity among Slovakian staff. JASPERS also performed Horizontal Assignments to transfer knowledge such as Cost Benefit Analysis and Feasibility Studies which are considered to have "very useful" in increasing capacity. The Slovakian authorities also suggested that JASPERS' ability to share knowledge from other Member States was of great value.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

10. SLOVENIA

Summary

In Slovenia, JASPERS was involved in 8 Major projects and 10 non-Major projects, as well as 2 Horizontal Assignments. In the same time period, Slovenia also submitted one Major project without JASPERS assistance. Slovenia's use of JASPERS is therefore 94.7%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Slovenian Major projects in were: Roads (3), Water & Wastewater (2), Rail (1), Solid Waste (1), and Knowledge Economy (1). One project was first submitted for review in 2007, 1 in 2008, 3 in 2009, 2 in 2010, and 1 in 2011.

The only sector in which Slovenia submitted a project to the DG for Regional Policy for review without JASPERS assistance was Roads (1). This project was submitted in 2008.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Slovenian non-Major projects were: Water & Wastewater (6), Roads (2), Airports (1), and Solid Waste (1). One project was submitted in 2006, 3 in 2007, 4 in 2008, and 2 in 2009.

The main sector for JASPERS Horizontal Assignments in was Other (2). One of these projects was submitted in 2007, and the other in 2008.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Slovenia was 658 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 297 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovenia was 336 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration for the single non-JASPERS-assisted Major project was 423 days in Slovenia, and the average across the Member States was 386 days. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Slovenia had an average DG for Regional Policy Decision Duration 87 days shorter than the Decision Duration for the non-JASPERS-assisted project in Slovenia.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovenia was 415 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 396 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Slovenia was 365 days compared to the average of 388 days across the Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Slovenia had 8 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Slovenia received Interruption Letters on 7 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy. It is important to note here that the sample size for Slovenia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Slovenia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	37.5	28.6
Project Design	0	42.9
Project Cost Estimation	0	14.3
Demand Analysis & Modelling	12.5	14.3
Cost Benefit Analysis	87.5	42.9
Environmental Issues	37.5	57.1
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	12.5	14.3
Competition & State Aids	0	0
Funding & Financing Issues	0	57.1
Procurement	0	42.9
Project Implementation & Structures	12.5	28.6
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	-
No of Projects	8	7

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (6 out of 8 projects), Project Concept & Programming (3 out of 8), and Environmental Issues (3 out of 8). Less common topics were: Demand Analysis & Modelling (1 out of 8), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (1 out of 8), and Project Implementation & Structures (1 out of 8). The topics for which no JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Design, Project Cost Estimation, Competition & State Aids, Funding & Financing Issues, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters were: Environmental Issues (4 out of 7), Project Design (3 out of 7), Cost Benefit Analysis (3 out of 7), and Procurement (3 out of 7). Less common topics were Project Concept & Programming (2 out of 7), Project Implementation & Structures (2 out of 7), Project Cost Estimation (1 out of 7), Demand analysis & Modelling (1 out of 7), and Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (1 out of 7).

Slovenian Involvement with JASPERS

Slovenia made moderate use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for eight major and ten non major projects as well as two horizontal assignments. Only one major project brought forward by Slovenia was unassisted by JASPERS. With regard to major project related advice, the Slovenian authorities sought JASPERS assistance at the project application stage only.

Of the major projects, four were in the transport sector, three in environment and one in the Knowledge Economy.

Testing Preliminary Findings

With regard to the impact of JASPERS on timelines, the Slovenian authorities drew attention to their experience on the Silvnica – Drazenci motorway project. JASPERS support was sought for the Beltinci – Lendava motorway project, but not for the Silvnica – Drazenci section. At the time, Slovenia considered that JASPERS support was not required for the Silvnica – Drazenci motorway as their view was that sufficient knowledge had been gained from the Beltinci – Lendava project. In reality, Silvnica – Drazenci took longer to reach the approval stage than expected – this mainly resulted from technical issues raised following an independent check of the application form (the review

Capabilities on project:
Economics

was undertaken by a private consultancy, commissioned by the DG for Regional Policy). The response time to the DG for Regional Policy queries was also longer than for the JASPERS-assisted project.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Slovenia

The focus of JASPERS support for Major projects has been on the preparation of application form. The Slovenian authorities' view of JASPERS assistance is very positive. Slovenia has benefited from the quality of the technical advice provided and the level of service in terms of response time to queries is regarded as very good.

Experience from previous projects where JASPERS raised issues relating to feasibility reports in the process of reviewing the application forms has prompted Slovenia to seek to extend the role of JASPERS. In terms of individual projects, addressing issues relating to feasibility is clearly challenging at the application form stage, so it is considered to be beneficial to involve JASPERS earlier. It is now considered that the best time to involve JASPERS is at the feasibility stage of a project. Slovenia is now issuing feasibility reports to JASPERS for projects prior to the submission of the application form. The advice provided by JASPERS in relation to scheme feasibility has also been found to be valuable and informative.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

Given the focus of JASPERS on the latter stages of the project development process, the Slovenian authorities consider the scope for influencing the quality of projects was limited.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Slovenian Authorities

The Slovenian authorities drew attention to Horizontal Assignments as a conduit through which technical knowledge was transferred from JASPERS. Reference was made to a workshop held in Slovenia on cost benefit analysis, which included presentations from JASPERS staff. Knowledge was also transferred through the production of Slovenian guidelines for non-Major projects, which, it is anticipated, will improve future project development and delivery.

It was also noted that while Slovenia will continue to use JASPERS support for all major projects, it is anticipated that the level of support required will reduce following knowledge transfer and the build up of internal capacity. It was stressed that the technical requirements and expectations in terms of quality have increased markedly since 2007. If this change had not arisen it is likely that JASPERS assistance would no longer be required.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

The Slovenian authorities note that language barriers can present a problem. Only one member of JASPERS staff dealing with Slovenia is Slovenian. Procedures that are specific to Slovenia are also a barrier to involving JASPERS earlier in the project development process.

Staff turnover was not seen to be a barrier to knowledge transfer.

Slovenian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

As identified above, JASPERS input is regarded by the Slovenian authorities as valuable, in terms of reviewing feasibility studies and supporting the development of application forms. However, it is considered that issues relating to the scope and design of individual projects should be dealt with by the Member State. Slovenia would like to receive continued in-depth support from JASPERS in the analysis and presentation of projects for approval and funding.

At a more strategic level, Slovenia is intending to involve JASPERS in the preparation of the Operational Programmes (in a reviewing capacity) for the next programming period - this was not undertaken for the period 2007-13. It is anticipated that the comments received will relate more to the quality of the document itself rather

Capabilities on project:
Economics

than challenging the inclusion of individual projects. Slovenia intends to continue to prepare the national programmes independently of JASPERS.

Conclusions

The Slovenian Authorities' view of JASPERS has been very positive. JASPERS has been mostly involved at the project application stage and is seen to have improved the quality of the projects application. The Slovenian authorities acknowledge that JASPERS' scope to influence the project quality was limited by the late stage of its involvement, and is working towards including approaching JASPERS for advice earlier in the development process.

The transfer of knowledge and skills was achieved through Horizontal Assignments and workshops performed by JASPERS on topics such as cost benefit analysis. The production of guidelines for Slovenian non-Major projects is anticipated to improve future project development and delivery through the transfer of knowledge. Slovenia anticipates its usage of JASPERS to decrease as it builds up internal capacity through interaction with JASPERS.

1. Bulgaria

Summary

In Bulgaria, JASPERS was involved in 10 Major projects and 12 non-Major projects, as well as 8 Horizontal Assignments. Bulgaria did not submit any Major projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance, therefore its use of JASPERS on Major projects is 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Bulgarian Major projects in were: Rail (3), Urban Transport (3), Water & Wastewater (2), Roads (1), and Solid Waste (1). 3 projects were submitted for review in 2008, 4 in 2010, and 3 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Bulgarian non-Major projects were: Solid Waste (11), and Water & Wastewater (1). One project was submitted in 2006, 2 in 2007, 1 in 2008, and 8 in 2009.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (3), Urban Transport (1), Energy (1), and Other (3). One Horizontal Assignment was performed in 2007, 3 in 2008, and 4 in 2009.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Bulgaria was 934 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 594 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Bulgaria was 297 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Bulgaria was 955 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 567 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Bulgaria was 444 days compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Bulgaria had 9 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. The average number of topics per Interruption Letter for the Member States as a whole was 3.5. Bulgaria received Interruption Letters on 8 of the Major projects under review by DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Bulgarian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Bulgaria is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Bulgaria	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	11.1	37.5
Project Design	11.1	37.5
Project Cost Estimation	44.4	0.0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	44.4	0.0
Cost Benefit Analysis	55.6	75.0
Environmental Issues	55.6	50.0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	22.2	50.0
Competition & State Aids	0.0	0.0
Funding & Financing Issues	44.4	75.0
Procurement	0.0	0.0
Project Implementation & Structures	11.1	62.5
Assistance in Answering Interruption	0.0	-

Queries		
No of Projects	9	8

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (56% of projects), Environmental Issues (56%), Project Cost Estimation (44%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (44%), and Funding & Financing Issues (44%). Less common topics were Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (22%), Project Concept & Programming (11%), Project Design (11%), and Project Implementation & Structures (11%). Topics that were not subject to JASPERS assistance were: Competition & State Aids, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Bulgaria were: Cost Benefit Analysis (75%), Funding & Financing Issues (75%), Project Implementation & Structures (63%), Environmental Issues (50%), and Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (50%). Less frequently raised topics were: Project Concept & Programming (38%) and Project Design (38%). Topics that were not raised in the sample of Interruption Letters were: Project Cost Estimation, Demand Analysis & Modelling, Competition & State Aids, and Procurement.

Bulgarian Involvement with JASPERS

Bulgaria made significant use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 10 major and 12 non-major projects as well as 8 horizontal assignments. All major projects brought forward by Bulgaria were JASPERS assisted. With regard to project related advice, the Bulgarian authorities sought JASPERS assistance very largely at the project application stage.

With regard to major projects, seven were in the transport sector and three in environment. For non-major projects, JASPERS assistance was most often sought for solid waste projects.

Testing Preliminary Findings

When presented with analysis on project timelines, the Bulgarian authorities indicated that a comparison of the time taken for JASPERS assisted and non-assisted projects could be misleading because of the “leakage” of JASPERS advice from one project to another. A very significant factor could be the fact that JASPERS advice is not taken. The Bulgarian authorities suggested that this could be the case in up to 25% of Bulgarian projects. It was noted by the Bulgarian authorities that such a comparison between JASPERS and non-JASPERS projects could not be made in respect of Bulgaria, as all major projects were JASPERS assisted.

It was also recognised that there had been delays in reaching the final project application stage. Primarily, these delays have occurred where the ultimate beneficiary lacked the capacity to support the progression of the project. The existence of institutional issues within Bulgaria was also cited as a factor.

Preliminary design stages have generally been undertaken by the beneficiaries with little JASPERS support, therefore impact of JASPERS on timing speeding up the early stages of project development has been limited.

Assistance with the reviewing projects and the project appraisal process was not thought to have significantly brought forward the timing of applications: in some cases, this stage has been extended because of delays in beneficiaries responding to comments from JASPERS. Where delays had occurred, there was an acceptance that they were necessary to ensure that the project applications were of sufficient quality.

When the JASPERS initiative commenced, the Bulgarian authorities had anticipated that the assistance given would reduce the DG for Regional Policy decision duration. Although some projects have benefitted with respect to timing, there have been a number of applications where, despite input from JASPERS throughout the appraisal process, additional issues have been raised by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption queries have sometimes contradicted advice from JASPERS and where this has occurred the timescales have actually increased.

The managing authorities believed that the JASPERS review of projects should have served to limit the instances where interruption queries were issued.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian authorities had a very positive opinion of the quality of JASPERS support. Although there had been some areas where the authorities considered assistance from JASPERS had been stronger than others, overall the initiative was described as having a positive impact and was perceived to have met the expectations of the Bulgarian authorities.

The willingness of JASPERS to work co-operatively with the Bulgarian authorities was particularly noted. It was acknowledged that initially there were issues with communication and co-ordination between Bulgarian and JASPERS officials. These problems are now seen to be resolved and lines of communication were described as being 'very good'. The Bulgarian authorities indicated that the opening of a local JASPERS office in Sofia had played a significant role in improving the relationship between JASPERS officials and staff from the Member State and this had assisted in project development and wider support.

The Bulgarian authorities appreciate the continued support of JASPERS and wishes to continue to work with JASPERS as they develop and submit further Major projects to the DG for Regional Policy. The authorities consider JASPERS to be a reliable partner and have recently held a stakeholder meeting which endorsed the continued use of JASPERS.

It was noted that on occasion JASPERS were reluctant to advise on certain projects that were politically sensitive and that there was a need for Member States to be given early warning of such instances, so that they can plan to proceed without JASPERS support.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Bulgarian authorities considered that the greatest value of JASPERS support was in relation to the appraisal process and the preparation of project applications in general. JASPERS has greatly assisted Bulgaria to develop well prepared project applications. A further key area of assistance has been the input provided by JASPERS in developing templates to be used by beneficiaries in devising their applications. The provision of 'typical' responses to requirements set by the Commission has assisted with reducing the time taken to develop responses and enhanced the quality of the responses.

JASPERS has also provided support for non-Major projects, under the €50million threshold, in the Transport and Environment sectors. The authorities did not consider that the scale of the project was the primary reason for requesting or receiving support and has therefore approached JASPERS for projects that were complex or unusual. Overall, JASPERS was considered a 'reliable partner' for supporting the development of non-Major projects and in enhancing their performance.

There was an identified need to improve the procurement processes and Bulgaria sought assistance from JASPERS to improve these processes. In particular, there were issues relating to consistent delivery and quality of projects in the different municipalities. JASPERS has therefore been instrumental in developing a procurement strategy (including guidance on contracts) that provides the municipalities with the necessary capacity to improve reliability when implementing projects.

The most significant change in the approach to project planning of the Bulgarian authorities has been the requirement set by the European Commission to develop projects as part of a project management cycle. Since 2006, JASPERS has supported the evolution of administrative and institutional structures within Bulgaria through direct assistance in these areas. The Transport and Water sectors have seen the most significant reforms following guidance relating to the establishment of institutions for these sectors. This has facilitated improvements to the overall institutional structures and links between representatives and stakeholders.

The managing authorities also referred to support provided by JASPERS in assisting with co-ordinating administration across Operational Programmes and geographies (including cross-

border issues). An example of this was in JASPERS attendance at tripartite meetings to discuss issues relating to the implementation and development of projects.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Bulgarian Authorities

The Bulgarian managing authorities acknowledge the contribution that JASPERS advice relating to projects has made to increasing the project planning knowledge base. This was particularly valuable in Bulgaria where knowledge of and adherence to formal project planning processes was somewhat lacking. JASPERS support was critical to ensuring that projects could meet the quality standards required by the European Commission. JASPERS was thought to have played a central role in developing key analyses, such as for cost benefit analysis.

A further example of knowledge transfer and capacity building identified related to Urban Transport Projects. Assistance from JASPERS was highlighted as being a significant factor in developing the necessary skills and experience in this sector.

The Bulgarian authorities indicated JASPERS has also assisted in developing knowledge and skills to support project development through horizontal assignments. Support was provided by JASPERS on a number of areas across the Operational Programmes, including training and development and research. These horizontal assignments, carried out throughout the support programme, were considered to have assisted with aspects of project planning where knowledge was less developed. As a result of the horizontal input from JASPERS, capacity within the Bulgarian Operational Programmes has been enhanced for the future.

The development of national guidelines for cost-benefit analysis was highlighted as an area where JASPERS assistance had been of particular value. Although it took a year to develop, it was emphasised that this has been 'very useful' and an area that would have been problematic without JASPERS support.

However, the scope for a transfer of knowledge to the consulting industry in Bulgaria was suggested to be less significant, as predominantly the project planning undertaken in the transport and environment sectors was contained within the public sector.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The Bulgarian authorities suggested there was potential for improving the exchange of information including between Member States. A desire for greater dissemination of guidance was also identified. The Bulgarian authorities also referred to existing knowledge transfer, but hoped that proposals recently developed will provide greater structure and fluidity to facilitate a more consistent transfer of information. The Bulgarian authorities also suggested that earlier JASPERS involvement in developing horizontal support would increase the likelihood of quality improvements.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

When asked about potential barriers to the transfer of knowledge within the member state the Bulgarian authorities did not consider that there had been any significant issues that had inhibited knowledge gain. The rate of staff turnover in the Managing Authority, Intermediate Authorities and the beneficiaries was not thought to have impacted upon knowledge transfer. Language was not considered an issue.

Bulgarian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Directorate highlighted that the Bulgarian Government seek to co-operate with JASPERS at the earliest opportunity. Operational programmes and project beneficiaries were seen to benefit from the sustained support provided both in terms of project development and also through horizontal and structural support.

In Bulgaria, initial Project Feasibility and Preliminary Design has generally been undertaken by the beneficiaries, with JASPERS involvement increasing once the appraisal process had begun and through detailed design and project costing. The Bulgarian authorities considered that most appropriate point at which to involve JASPERS will always depend on the individual

circumstances of a project and be subject to the decision of the Managing Authority. Early involvement was thought to benefit projects, as it increases opportunities for support and reduces the likelihood of errors occurring.

A successful example of an early involvement was in the field of Solid Waste where early JASPERS assistance, including participation on steering groups, greatly assisted with project development. The development of typical responses for project submissions was an area where earlier development would have been beneficial. It was, however, acknowledged that the timescales involved in producing these inputs reflected the scale of the analysis that was required.

The value of projects within the existing project pipeline is greater than the available resources. Therefore work is required to select the most suitable and progressed projects and develop these projects as applications. The managing authorities considered that JASPERS could assist with identifying projects across sectors to be taken forward as Major Projects for the next programming period.

The managing authorities anticipated that the Member States use of JASPERS was likely to evolve in the future to best reflect the changing requirements of the different sectors. For the next set of operational programmes, the Bulgarian authorities are seeking to refine its approach to strategy development including a reduction in the number of priorities across sectors and this would assist with developing more targeted objectives for the programmes. In order to address this need, the Bulgarian authorities require JASPERS assistance to carry out supporting analysis and research.

Overall, Bulgaria did not see the input from JASPERS decreasing. Instead, a more 'joined up' approach is desired that co-ordinates the intelligence gathering required to develop the operational programmes, support with selecting projects and the more conventional assistance with project development. In addition, the Bulgarian authorities saw a continued role for JASPERS in providing horizontal assistance to develop capacity and guidance to improve consistency. Although increased knowledge within the operational programmes should reduce the need for JASPERS support for established topic areas. Where new guidance or conditions are introduced by the Commission it is anticipated that there will be a continued need for support.

A further priority was the maintenance of a local JASPERS office in Sofia. Currently there are three members of staff based in the Sofia office including staff representing the Environment and Transport sectors. It was emphasised that once this arrangement had been put in place communication and co-ordination between the member state and JASPERS greatly improved. The need for a local presence was described as being significant, as it enabled JASPERS staff to better understand local issues. From the perspective of the Member State, it also demonstrated a greater commitment to issues in Bulgaria and enhanced the relationship with JASPERS officials.

The managing authorities emphasised that they consider JASPERS to be a very useful instrument for developing projects and for enabling timely implementation. Although there are elements of project development that Bulgaria will need less assistance with, the Directorate envisages that they will continue to seek JASPERS support on project planning and the application process. JASPERS support will continue to be particularly important for larger projects which have greater significance for the overall programme.

The delegates from Bulgaria acknowledged that they were considering broadening the areas in which they liaised with JASPERS including assistance with project phasing and input into strategic documents. Thus far, JASPERS has been reluctant to take a strong lead in strategic elements as they have avoided involvement in aspects of work that could be considered political, i.e. where a Member State such as Bulgaria has indicated that JASPERS involvement would not be considered appropriate. However, it was considered that support for Member States on strategic elements, in particular along corridors and across national barriers, is an area where additional support would be particularly beneficial, if political constraints are overcome.

Stakeholders in Bulgaria have also expressed a desire for greater involvement from JASPERS in the implementation of projects.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had a positive impact on projects application in Bulgaria. The support offered by JASPERS to Bulgarian beneficiaries has helped to increase the quality of project applications as well as decrease the time spent preparing the applications. JASPERS helped to build capacity in certain areas, such as among the different municipalities, through its project support and through the Horizontal Assignments it performed, such as developing national guidelines for cost benefit analysis.

JASPERS has typically been involved in Bulgaria projects at a relatively late stage of the project development process, usually once the appraisal process had begun. One example of a project where JASPERS was involved at an earlier stage in the Solid Waste sector has shown how earlier involvement can greatly assist with project development.

2. Czech Republic

Summary

In the Czech Republic, JASPERS was involved in 32 Major projects and 5 non-Major projects, as well as 3 Horizontal Assignments. In the same period, the Czech Republic also submitted 3 Major projects without JASPERS assistance. The Czech Republic's use of JASPERS on projects not including Horizontal Assignments is therefore 92.5%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Czech Major projects in were: Rail (9), Roads (9), Water & Wastewater (6), Knowledge Economy (6), Urban Transport (1), and Solid Waste (1). One project was first submitted for review in 2008, 10 in 2009, 18 in 2010, and 3 in 2011.

The only sector where the Czech Republic submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance was the Rail sector (3 projects). 2 projects were submitted to DG for Regional Policy in 2008 and one in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Romanian non-Major projects were: Water & Wastewater (3), Knowledge Economy (1), and Other (1). 3 projects were submitted in 2009 and 2 in 2010.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (1), Knowledge Economy (1), and Other (1). Two Horizontal Assignments were performed in the Czech Republic in 2008 and one in 2009.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in the Czech Republic was 716 days, of which JASPERS was involved in for 362 days on average. The average for the Member States as a whole was 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in the Czech Republic was 370 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 499 days in the Czech Republic, and 386 for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in the Czech Republic had an average DG for Regional Policy decision duration 129 days shorter than the decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in the Czech Republic.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in the Czech Republic was 249 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 254 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in the Czech Republic was 415 days compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 the Czech Republic had 22 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Czech Major projects contained an average of 3.1 topics per letter, compared to an average to 3.5 for all the Member States. The Czech Republic received Interruption Letters on 20 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Czech projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Czech Republic	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	9.1	35.0
Project Design	0.0	20.0
Project Cost Estimation	0.0	35.0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	9.1	10.0
Cost Benefit Analysis	31.8	35.0

Environmental Issues	9.1	65.0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	0.0	5.0
Competition & State Aids	13.6	20.0
Funding and Financing Issues	9.1	40.0
Procurement	0.0	5.0
Project Implementation & Structures	13.6	25.0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	4.5	-
No of Projects	22	20

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (32% of projects), Competition & State Aids (14%), and Project Implementation & Structures (14%). Less common topics were: Project Concept & Programming (9%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (9%), Environmental Issues (9%), Funding & Financing Issues (9%), and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries. Topics that were not subject to JASPERS assistance were: Projects Design, Projects Cost Estimation, Risk Sensitivity & Analysis, and Procurement.

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters were: Environmental Issues (65%), Funding & Financing Issues (40%), Project Concept & Programming (35%), Project Cost Estimation (35%), and Cost Benefit Analysis (35%). Less frequently raised topics were: Project Implementation & Structures (25%), Projects Design (20%), Competition & State Aids (20%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (10%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (5%), and Procurement (5%).

Czech Involvement with JASPERS

The Czech Republic brought forward 35 Major projects during the evaluation period, 32 of these received JASPERS assistance. These projects were in the areas of Rail, Roads, Urban Transport, Solid Waste, Water & Wastewater and the Knowledge Economy. In addition the Czech Republic sought JASPERS assistance on 5 non-Major projects and JASPERS carried out 3 Horizontal Assignments for the Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic's use of JASPERS appeared less intensive than that of other Member States. The average length of a JASPERS assignment for Czech was 362 days, compared to an average across all member States of 489 days. In addition, JASPERS assignments for the Czech Republic covered fewer topics than those for other Member States, an average of 2.9 topics per assignment compared 4.9 topics per assignment for the Member States as a group.

DG for Regional Policy took longer to decide on Czech applications than those from other Member States. The average DG for Regional Policy Decision period for the Czech Republic was 370 days compared to an overall average of 272 days. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for projects that had not received JASPERS assistance was significantly higher at 499 days.

Testing Preliminary Findings

Czech stakeholders were very strongly of the opinion that JASPERS did not speed up the process of obtaining DG for Regional Policy approval. In fact, there is a strong sense of frustration about this. Their perception of the application process was that JASPERS involvement in the preparation of an application and the provision of a Completion Note was supposed to reassure the DG for Regional Policy as to the quality of a project, and reduce the amount of examination that the DG for Regional Policy would have to carry out itself. From their point of view, this promised benefit of JASPERS involvement did not materialise. Instead the DG for Regional Policy would carry out a fresh examination of the application and issue Interruption Letters which contradicted the advice received from JASPERS.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in the Czech Republic

As described above, the Czech Republic is frustrated by what it sees as a failure by the DG for Regional Policy to give due credit for JASPERS “approval” of projects when it considers applications for funding.

However, it is acknowledged that the quality of presentation of the project application form has improved significantly since JASPERS have been involved. In addition, JASPERS has contributed to an increased understanding of EU requirements for transport modelling and cost benefit appraisal.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

It is worth noting the way in which the Czech Republic uses EU funding for Transport projects. The Czech Republic has a “State Fund of Transport Infrastructure”. Each year Parliament approves, “Investment Plans” prepared by the Ministry of Transport and allocates domestic revenues to this fund. The current process is for the Czech Republic to progress project development through to implementation with finance from the Fund. Retrospective applications for EU funding for major projects are then made to reclaim EU contributions to the projects. The EU co-financing received is then allocated to the “State Fund of Transport Infrastructure” for subsequent projects. As a result, applications for funding for Major projects often relate to projects that have commenced or are completed by the time the application is made. Typically, the project will have been completed by the time JASPERS involvement starts.

Stakeholders said that Czech authorities had not previously been familiar with Cost Benefit Analysis or with Feasibility Studies in the form expected by the DG for Regional Policy. A great deal had been learnt about these techniques from their interactions with JASPERS.

The Czech Authorities had not used Multi Criteria Assessment for project selection and prioritisation in their Operational Programmes and other strategies for infrastructure investment. JASPERS are providing assistance to include this technique in future planning, by providing technical support to the Czech authorities as they prepare a new transport Master plan.

The Czech authorities were not initially aware that JASPERS assistance was available when dealing with Interruption Letters. This has been corrected and the authorities are now receiving useful help in dealing with Commission Interruption Letters.

JASPERS is getting involved at an earlier stage with the development of some projects. They are starting to get involved in the Feasibility Study stage of projects. The Managing Authority singled out the example of the proposed Prague – Pilsen Rail project which incorporated a 20km long rail tunnel. JASPERS assisted the Managing Authority in explaining to the beneficiary that the project was not realistic, in terms of its fundability and its value for money from a cost benefit perspective. The project remains in the transport plan, but it is acknowledged that project planners need to look at alternative solutions.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Czech Authorities

In addition to its work on individual Major projects, JASPERS is advising the Czech Republic on Horizontal Assignments related to development of new National Transport Master Plan and National Guidelines for Cost Benefit analysis.

The Railway Administration pointed out that JASPERS organises seminars as part of its support to Feasibility Studies. These are attended by railway staff and their consultants.

JASPERS helped The Ministry of the Environment to develop a model for cost benefit assessment as a Horizontal Assignment. The Ministry holds seminars to train local authorities in the use of this model, and its use is obligatory when a local authority makes a bid for funding for a project to the Ministry. (Funding is allocated to environmental projects carried

out by local authorities based on competitions where a range of local authorities bid for funding for a project in their area).

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

Regular meetings are held, between the Managing Authorities and Beneficiaries to coordinate the development of projects and exchange information.

The railway administration actively tries to capture knowledge from JASPERS-assisted projects for use on other projects. Every rail corridor has one project used as model project. JASPERS assistance is sought for this project and it is then used for all other projects in the corridor.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover at the Managing Authority or other parts of the administration was not believed to be a problem and was not felt to be a barrier to transfer of knowledge.

Both the Managing Authority and the final beneficiary raised the issue of the lack of Czech speakers in the JASPERS team. The requirement to communicate in English leads to a preference for communications with JASPERS to be undertaken in writing, rather than face to face meetings. This partly explains why fewer meetings are held with JASPERS on Czech Republic projects.

The requirement for communication to occur in English also places an administrative burden on the Czech Republic. It is felt that the appointment of a Czech speaker into the JASPERS team would assist in improving communication between JASPERS and Czech Republic and understanding of the role of JASPERS.

There were also concerns that at least some JASPERS staff were insufficiently familiar with Czech legislation and local conditions, and that shortages of resource in JASPERS can lead to delays in the development of projects.

Czech Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The main issue with JASPERS for the Czech authorities is the relationship between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy and the role of both parties in the Project Approval process. It had been believed by the Czech authorities that a JASPERS Completion Note would be sufficient for the DG for Regional Policy to approve a project; this has not proved to be the case, with a perceived tendency for the DG for Regional Policy Desk Officers to raise Interruption Letters which contradict the advice which has been provided by JASPERS.

Member States are being advised to increasingly make use of JASPERS assistance for both projects and Horizontal Assignments by the DG for Regional Policy, which the Czech Republic are doing. However, the concern is that this will just continue to increase the workload for Member States, with little impact on project timelines unless the DG for Regional Policy take notice of the Completion Notes produced by JASPERS.

Although the rail administration is happy to involve JASPERS in individual projects as early as the Feasibility Study, it maintains that strategic planning (in other words the selection and prioritisation of potential projects) must remain the responsibility of Member State authorities. The Transport Ministry is open to JASPERS advice and input on strategies, but not to obligatory input or decision making by JASPERS. They point out that the main reason that JASPERS was not involved in strategic planning for the current programming period was that the bulk of this planning took place before JASPERS was even in existence. The Environmental Managing Authority was open to receiving JASPERS assistance with strategic planning on a strictly voluntary basis. It pointed out that for such assistance to be relevant for the next programming period starting in 2013 it would have to start very soon.

Concerns were expressed that it had become effectively compulsory to involve JASPERS in individual projects over the course of the programming period. There was a fear that offering

JASPERS help with strategic planning could change into a situation where JASPERS involvement in strategic planning became compulsory.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had limited scope for improving the quality of projects in the Czech Republic, due to the fact that most Czech projects are already complete or under construction by the time the Czech government is submitting the project for funding. JASPERS' role in the Czech Republic has therefore mostly been assisting with the project application.

There was some scope for capacity building as the Czech Beneficiaries had been unfamiliar with Cost Benefit Analysis and Feasibility Studies prior to their interactions with JASPERS, and JASPERS is providing assistance to include Multi Criteria Assessment in future planning alongside other Horizontal Assignments.

JASPERS is showing signs of earlier involvement in project development however; an example from the Rail sector demonstrates how JASPERS helped the Beneficiary identify an unfeasible rail tunnel project early in the process.

Despite Czech frustration with DG for Regional Policy Interruptions on JASPER-assisted Major projects, the average decision duration for assisted projects was 129 days shorter than the average decision duration for non-assisted projects.

3. Estonia

Summary

In Estonia, JASPERS was involved in 6 Major projects and 2 non-Major projects, as well as 4 Horizontal Assignments. In the same period, Estonia also submitted 6 Major projects without JASPERS assistance. Estonia's use of JASPERS is therefore 57.1%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Estonian Major projects in were: Roads (4), and Knowledge Economy (2). 3 projects were first submitted for review in 2009, 1 in 2010, and 1 in 2011.

The most common sectors where Estonia submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance were: Solid Waste (3), Urban Transport (2), and Rail (1). All 4 projects were submitted to the DG for Regional Policy in 2009.

The sectors where JASPERS assisted Estonian non-Major projects were: Rail (1) and Roads (1). One project was submitted in 2008, and one in 2009.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (2), Roads (1), and Other (1). One Horizontal Assignment was performed in 2007, 2 in 2008, and 1 in 2009.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Estonian Major projects was 760 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 404 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS assisted projects in Estonia was 264 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 195 days compared to the average 386 days for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Estonia had an average DG for Regional Policy decision duration 69 days longer than the decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in Estonia.

The average JASPERS duration for non-Major projects in Estonia was 290 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 594.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Estonia was 185 days, compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011, Estonia had 4 Major projects that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Estonia received Interruption Letters on 2 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below show the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Estonian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Estonia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Estonia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	75	0
Project Design	25	0
Project Cost Estimation	0	0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	75	0
Cost Benefit Analysis	75	0
Environmental Issues	0	50
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	75	0
Competition & State Aids	0	0
Funding & Financing Issues	25	50

Procurement	0	0
Project Implementation & Structures	25	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	
No of Projects	4	2

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Concept & Programming (3 out of 4 projects), Demand Analysis & Modelling (3 out of 4), Cost Benefit Analysis (3 out of 4), and Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (3 out of 4). Less common topics were: Project Design (1 out of 4), Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 4), and Projects Implementation & Structures (1 out of 4). Topics that were not subject to JASPERS assistance were: Projects Cost Estimation, Environmental Issues, Competition & State Aids, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The only topics raised in Interruption Letters to Estonia were: Environmental Issues (1 out of 2) and Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 2).

Estonian Involvement with JASPERS

Estonia brought forward 12 major projects during the evaluation period (up to the end of June 2011). Of these, six received JASPERS assistance. In addition, Estonia sought JASPERS assistance on two non-major projects. JASPERS carried out four Horizontal Assignments for Estonia.

Testing Preliminary Findings

The DG for Regional Policy took an average of 195 days to decide on the applications from Estonia that had not received JASPERS assistance, compared to an average of 264 days for JASPERS assisted applications. The number of projects concerned was not large enough for the First Intermediate Report to reach conclusions on the impact of JASPERS on Estonian projects. However, it is worth noting that the bulk of the JASPERS-assisted projects were in the Road and Knowledge Economy sectors, while the bulk of the non-assisted projects were in the Environmental sector. This means that it is not possible to directly compare the two durations.

However, Estonian stakeholders were certain that JASPERS assistance leads to applications being approved by the DG for Regional Policy more quickly than they would have been in the absence of such assistance. They were surprised by the observation that average approval times for JASPERS assisted projects were actually longer than those for non-assisted projects. They agreed with the hypothesis that this must be due to the different sectors represented in the two sets of projects.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Estonia

The Ministry of Economic Policy were very positive about JASPERS. Their initial assessment was that they could not think of anything negative to say about JASPERS. Further discussions identified some minor issues in relation to:

- The timing of JASPERS assistance;
- The resources JASPERS had available for Estonia; and,
- The need to deal with JASPERS in English.

JASPERS were considered to have too many projects to deal with but they always delivered. Their use did generate work for the managing authority but this was acceptable, given the considered benefit of enhanced applications, more successful applications and 'quality stamp' from JASPERS.

JASPERS was considered good in communicating with the beneficiaries. There were comments that they did not link as well with the Managing Authorities who felt left out of the

discussions at times. This was particularly towards the end of the application process, where managing authority involvement was needed and knowledge needed to be built up quickly.

JASPERS representatives were not always available, due to their workload. In general, however, there was good cooperation.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The standard approach to JASPERS assistance in Estonia was to arrange for them to review a draft application form and its supporting documents and to hold informal discussions with the DG for Regional Policy prior to ensure that as many issues as possible were dealt with in advance of a formal application. The key lessons learnt from JASPERS have related to the presentation of projects to the Commission. JASPERS assistance has improved the presentation of applications and given the Estonian authorities an insight into what the Commission looks for in an application, and into which parts of draft applications that should be developed more before being submitted to the Commission. Estonian stakeholders accepted that this limited the possibility of JASPERS improving the quality of projects. JASPERS was asked for help earlier in the project development process in two particularly complex projects: a tunnel in Tallinn and a major hospital project. The Ministry of Economic Policy is confident that enough knowledge and experience has now been gained for beneficiaries of transport projects to make at least some applications without JASPERS assistance.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS staff to the Estonian Authorities

The Road Administration acts on a national basis and so is involved in all projects in its sector. Environmental projects are split between a number of beneficiaries including municipalities and water supply companies.

The Ministry of the Environment acts as an Intermediate Authority for environmental projects, and an “Environmental Investment Centre” has been established as an Implementing Body. If an Implementing Body learns something from the involvement of JASPERS, it is expected to use this new knowledge to improve the guidance that it provides to beneficiaries.

The capture of knowledge by consultants involved in JASPERS assisted projects is also considered a key method of transferring knowledge and expertise to Estonia.

The provision of training workshops by JASPERS was well received by the Ministry of Economic Policy for transportation projects. However, Estonia had to request these sessions. The workshops were considered to be good, and built on the high standard and expertise of the roads industry in the country. A major reason for commissioning these was the use of technical language in cost benefit assessments and to ensure that beneficiaries and consultants were all using the right technical terms.

A similar exercise was completed for the environmental sector on cost benefit analysis. The use of Horizontal Assignments was very useful for the environmental sector, due to the open competition for funding that was in place. This promoted good practice/knowledge sharing without being unfair to any of the participants in the competitive process to select projects.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

As described above, projects learn from each other in Estonia through beneficiaries being responsible for several projects, and through the guidance given by Implementing Bodies.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

No such barriers were identified by the stakeholders. In particular they specified that staff turnover was not an issue in Estonia in this respect.

Estonian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

Transportation beneficiaries are now considered good enough to submit most applications to the DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS support. This will change the use of JASPERS by the Estonian managing authorities in the future.

As noted above, in Estonia JASPERS is typically used to review a draft application and supporting documents for a project that is, necessarily, at an advanced stage of development. In discussions the Estonian authorities were open to the idea of involving JASPERS earlier in the process of project development, and could see that this increased the opportunity for JASPERS advice to improve the quality of a project. They were particularly receptive to receiving earlier help in non-transportation projects, where skills sets and experience levels are lower.

Estonia could see a role for JASPERS in helping to set the terms of reference for feasibility studies and helping to manage the relationship with the consultant carrying out the Study. They pointed out that if certain standards were required for terms of reference that these could also be set out by the Commission.

According to the Estonian authorities, areas of potential need in the future including public transport and ITS (smartcards etc). The sharing of best practice through presentations on such issues and inter-modal hubs will be needed. This again implies earlier involvement of JASPERS in needs identification and pre-feasibility study. The Ministry of Economic Policy noted that they are looking to broaden the range of beneficiaries in the future (2013+) and JASPERS could therefore have an increased knowledge transfer role in the next programming period.

The merits of involving JASPERS in the strategic planning of infrastructure, including identifying the needs that should be developed into projects, were discussed at the Warsaw workshop. The input from Estonia was that strategic planning was necessarily the responsibility of the Member State in question, and that they did not see a potential role for JASPERS in strategic planning of infrastructure.

The workshop also discussed the possibility of JASPERS identifying ways that each Member State could maximise the transfer and use of knowledge and technical capacity from JASPERS. This would include JASPERS suggesting horizontal and training assignments that it should carry out for the Member State. Estonia was open to the idea of receiving such suggestions from JASPERS, but emphasises that they should be suggestions rather than being in any way mandatory.

Conclusions

JASPERS has been well received in Estonia. The average durations for DG for Regional Policy decisions were actually shorter for non-assisted projects, yet this may be attributed to a small sample and different projects sectors for assisted and non-assisted projects. Estonian stakeholders were certain that JASPERS support was helping to accelerate the decision duration, and admitted surprise at the fact that non-assisted projects were actually approved more rapidly.

Estonian Managing Authorities noted the benefits of JASPERS assistance as being: the enhanced applications, more successful applications, and the 'quality stamp' of JASPERS. JASPERS help to build capacity in Estonia through Horizontal Assignments and workshops, and through the function of the Ministry of the Environment and the "Environmental Investment Centre" as Implementing Bodies, which are key methods of transferring knowledge and expertise.

As the majority of JASPERS assistance has been at the projects application stage, there is acknowledged potential for further benefits from earlier involvement of JASPERS in project development.

4. Hungary

Summary

In Hungary, JASPERS was involved in 31 Major Projects and 2 non-Major Projects, as well as 2 Horizontal Assignments. Hungary did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Hungary's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Hungarian Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (11), Urban Transport (7), Rail (5), Road (4), and Solid Waste (4). 15 projects were first submitted for review in 2008, 6 in 2009, 4 in 2010, and 3 in 2011.

The only sector where JASPERS assisted Hungarian non-Major projects was the Water & Wastewater sector, where there were 2 projects submitted in 2009.

The two sectors that JASPERS performed Horizontal Assignments in were Energy (1) and Other (1), and were both performed in 2007.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major Projects in Hungary was 653 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 411 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Hungary was 290 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Hungary was 586 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 355 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Hungary was 585 compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Hungary had 23 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Hungarian Major projects contained an average of 4.4 topics per letter, compared to an average of 3.5 for all the Member States. Romania received Interruption Letters on all 23 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Hungarian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Hungary	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	30.4	26.1
Project Design	34.8	47.8
Project Cost Estimation	8.7	13
Demand Analysis & Modelling	34.8	26.1
Cost Benefit Analysis	82.6	60.9
Environmental Issues	39.1	69.6
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	13	43.5
Competition & State Aids	0	4.3
Funding & Financing Issues	17.4	69.6
Procurement	8.7	26.1
Project Implementation & Structures	17.4	34.8
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	-
No of Projects	23	23

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (83%), Environmental Issues (39%), Project Design (35%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (35%), and Project Concept & Programming (30%). Less common topics were: Funding & Financing Issues (17%), Project Implementation & Structures (17%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (13%), Project Cost Estimation (9%), and Procurement (9%). Topics on which JASPERS assistance was not sought were Competition & State Aids and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Hungary were: Environmental Issues (70%), Funding & Financing Issues (70%), Cost Benefit Analysis (61%), Project Design (48%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (44%), and Project Implementation & Structures (35%). Less common topics were: Project Concept & Programming (26%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (26%), Procurement (26%), Project Cost Estimation (13%), and Competition & State Aids (4%).

Hungarian Involvement with JASPERS

Hungary made substantial use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 31 major and two non major projects as well as two Horizontal Assignments. All major projects brought forward by Hungary were JASPERS-assisted. With regard to project related advice, the Hungary authorities sought JASPERS assistance very largely at the project application stage. The Hungarian use of JASPERS for non-major projects was low relative to major projects.

With regard to major projects, 16 were in the transport sector and 15 in environment.

Testing Preliminary Findings

When presented with analysis on project timelines, the Hungarian authorities expressed the view that some Member States may have sought help from JASPERS for the more simple projects. This would mean that the reduced the DG for Regional Policy decision period for JASPERS supported projects would not reflect the impact of JASPERS. They were also of the view that involvement of JASPERS adds to the whole project planning timeline.

The Hungarian authorities also expressed surprise that there were any major projects that had not been supported by JASPERS. Their understanding was that all major projects had to be submitted to the JASPERS process.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Hungary

The Hungarian authorities were very positive about the value of JASPERS, particularly in respect of their impact on Hungary's project planning capacity. Also the flexibility and co-operative working spirit of JASPERS was much appreciated. The scope of JASPERS activities in Hungary has expanded over time, which is an indicator of approval. There is a clear intention to involve JASPERS even more in the next programming period, which is also a clear sign of satisfaction.

The Hungarian authorities also believed that a positive completion note would greatly speed-up the DG for Regional Policy decision process, but found themselves answering the same questions all over again. Also the DG for Regional Policy often employed their own experts: resulting in two sets of experts paid by the same body. This was a particularly difficult situation for beneficiaries to understand: beneficiaries could spend years working with JASPERS and then have to go through the same process with the DG for Regional Policy and or their experts. The Hungarian authorities are of the view that the capability of some desk officers to appraise projects needs to be upgraded.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Hungarian authorities took the view that the impact on project quality depended on the stage of the planning process at which JASPERS became involved. If only involved at a late stage, JASPERS has a big effect on project presentation, but the earlier they are embedded the more fundamental improvements they are able to make. It is rare that JASPERS involvement changes the project fundamentally. However, they have sometimes been able to involve JASPERS in the preparation of the brief for feasibility studies and this has proved very valuable.

JASPERS contribution to the project application process was particularly positive in terms of advice on CBA, modelling (traffic), cost estimation and particularly environmental assessments. Environmental issues were particularly problematic as Hungarian legislation was not aligned with EU requirements until 2011. JASPERS was invaluable in helping to interpret the EU environmental requirements.

According to the Hungarian authorities, JASPERS involvement in project planning at an earlier stage often had the effect of making the beneficiaries aware of the DG for Regional Policy in respect of the type and structure of project that would be accepted for funding. This meant that, sometimes, poor projects would be dropped at an early stage. The Hungarian authorities note that informal contacts with officials, on the part of JASPERS personnel, have proved a fruitful approach and are not usually recorded.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Hungarian Authorities

The Hungarian authorities were of the view that transfer of technical knowledge has occurred through the involvement of JASPERS in the project planning and application process. JASPERS role in project development has now changed to more of a quality controller, as Hungarian capacity to prepare project applications has increased. However, they still need a high quality check, or sometimes face new requirements (e.g. in state aid for a rolling stock procurement) and this is provided by JASPERS.

Initially, JASPERS assistance was required with 'normal' projects in transport and environment. More recently, JASPERS has been involved in more unusual projects (e.g. a cultural centre).

There were few Horizontal Assignments undertaken by JASPERS in Hungary. In particular, there were very few in the Environment sector, as Hungarian preference was for all learning to be done within the context of projects. This will change in the future and the Hungarian authorities wish to see the role of Horizontal Assignments expanded.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The fact that the Hungarian authorities have amalgamated their managing authorities into one institution - the National Development Agency - has facilitated cross project learning at one level. However, there is much room for improvement in this regard. When new projects come along, their proponents often have little knowledge of the project application process. Member States need to have a more pro-active approach to disseminating learning including that arising from JASPERS involvement.

The Hungarian authorities consider that it is a strength of JASPERS that they work across member states. Sometimes JASPERS form a very strong opinion based, for example, on benchmarking data that the Member State does not have access to. The Hungarian authorities would very much like to see a sharing of information, particularly on benchmark capital costs.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover has been an issue with respect to the environment sector, but not in transport. However, it was also commented that while the staff are lost to the managing authority, most leave to join another body within the system, whether at beneficiaries, intermediate authorities or consultants. So, the body of knowledge within the system is increasing.

The Hungarian authorities had mixed views on whether the need to work in English was an impediment. Interpreters, if used regularly, became very proficient in the technical as well as language aspects.

Hungarian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Hungarian authorities see the value of having JASPERS involved at the earliest possible stage of planning. Strategy is the responsibility of the Ministries, so it is not up to the National Development Agency whether JASPERS are involved. However, after years of trying, an inter agency committee has been formed to prepare the transport strategy and JASPERS are

involved. However, the Hungarian authorities stressed that the development of strategies and establishment of priorities are ultimately a matter for the Member States.

The Hungarian authorities considered that there were dangers in pressurising JASPERS into a more pro-active role, e.g. in terms of identifying Member State needs. Currently, JASPERS is a demand driven process and the Member States “own” the initiative. If JASPERS is more proactive, then a doubt arises as to whom they are working for.

The next programming period is likely to have higher thresholds for Major projects, which will naturally take some projects out of the Major category. The Hungarian authorities are happy that they have capacity to deal with this increase in non-Major projects. There has been more and more involvement in horizontal programmes. In the next period there is a clear intention to involve them in strategy development.

There should be much greater emphasis on Horizontal Assignments and already the Hungarian authorities have identified the need for such assignments in the R&D sub-sector. The Hungarian authorities agreed that there was greater scope for JASPERS to transfer knowledge across Member States and mechanisms should be put in place to do this. Training was also important and JASPERS involvement in training should be enhanced.

There was also a view that the system must change so that the DG for Regional Policy take notice of the Completion Note, so that it speeds up approval, and eliminates repetition. However, the Hungarian authorities believe that the role of JASPERS should not be changed so that they become an arm of the DG, as this would fundamentally change the working relationship.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had a very positive reception in Hungary, in particular with regards to their impact on Hungary's project planning capacity. The scope of JASPERS activities on Hungary has increased over time, and there is clear indication that this trend will continue in the next programming period, indicating satisfaction on the part of the Member State.

The Hungarian authorities noted that the earlier the JASPERS was involved in project planning the greater its impact would be, in particular pointing out that poor projects would be dropped earlier as JASPERS assistance made the Beneficiaries more aware of the DG for Regional Policy and its requirements.

Through JASPERS involvement in project development a transfer of technical knowledge has occurred leading to an increase in Hungarian capacity to prepare project applications. This has meant a shift in role for JASPERS towards that of a quality controller. JASPERS knowledge of other Member States projects has assisted in project assessment, as the knowledge provides benchmark data which is useful for new projects.

5. Latvia

Summary

In Latvia, JASPERS was involved in 7 Major projects and 1 non-Major project, as well as 3 Horizontal Assignments. Latvia did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Latvia's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Latvian Major projects were: Roads (2), Urban Transport (2), Airports (1), Rail (1), and Other (1). 4 projects were first submitted for review in 2009, and 3 in 2010.

The only sector where JASPERS assisted a Latvian non-Major project was Urban Transport (1).

The sectors where JASPERS performed Horizontal Assignments were: Urban Transport (1), Water & Wastewater (1), and Other (1).

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPER-assisted Major projects in Latvia was 1020 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 493 days on average. The average planning duration for the Member States was 734 days and the average JASPERS duration was 489 days. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Latvia was 337 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Latvia was 554 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 362 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Latvia was 365 compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Latvia had 6 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by the DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Latvia received Interruption Letters on all 6 of the Major projects under review by DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Latvian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised and Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Latvia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Latvia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	33.3	66.7
Project Design	33.3	33.3
Project Cost Estimation	50	0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	0	50
Cost Benefit Analysis	50	33.3
Environmental Issues	0	50
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	66.7	0
Competition & State Aids	0	0
Funding & Financing Issues	50	66.7
Procurement	16.7	0
Project Implementation & Structures	0	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	33.3	-
No of Projects	6	6

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (4 out of 6), Project Cost & Estimation (3 out of 6), Cost Benefit Analysis (3 out of 6), and Funding & Financing Issues (3 out of 6). Less common topics were: Projects Concept & Programming (2 out of 6), Project Design (2 out of 6), Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (2 out of 6), and Procurement (1 out of 6). Topics on which JASPERS assistance was not sought were: Demand Analysis & Modelling, Environmental Issues, Competition & State Aids, and Project Implementation & Structures.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters to Latvia were: Project Concept & Programming (4 out of 6), Funding & Financing Issues (4 out of 6), Demand Analysis & Modelling (3 out of 6), Project Design (2 out of 6), and Cost Benefit Analysis (2 out of 6).

Latvian Involvement with JASPERS

Latvia is among the smaller Member States in terms of the scale of infrastructure investment. This is reflected in the number of Major projects developed by Latvia, and the extent of its use of JASPERS. During the evaluation period, Latvia made seven applications for funding for Major projects. All of these received JASPERS assistance. In addition, JASPERS completed three Horizontal Assignments for Latvia during the evaluation period.

Testing preliminary findings

As with Lithuania, there were only a very limited number of Major projects in Latvia that received JASPERS assistance and proceeded to a Commission Decision. Latvia did not develop any Major projects without JASPERS assistance. As a result, Tasks 1 and 2 did not lead to preliminary findings with respect to the impact of JASPERS in Latvia.

The average time taken for the DG for Regional Policy to reach a decision on an application from Latvia was 337 days compared to an average across all Member States of 272 days. Given the small sample of Latvian projects, no conclusions were drawn from this observation in the First Intermediate Report. In addition the Managing Authority explained that a long project timeline for Latvia may not be reflective of the capacity of the managing authority or of beneficiaries. Projects were regularly suspended as the funds for project preparation were limited as a result of the financial crisis that started in the second half of 2008. In addition, there is often a requirement for studies to be repeated from scratch when a significant timescale has passed. The Managing Authority also pointed out that Latvia has a high proportion of road projects which generally take longer to prepare.

The Managing Authority did not believe that JASPERS advice had an effect on the time taken for the DG for Regional Policy to reach a Decision on their applications for funding. In common with many other Member States, they felt that the DG for Regional Policy did not pay due attention to the work of JASPERS in its consideration of applications.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Latvia

The quality of JASPERS input was described as 'variable'. The Managing Authority has had some experiences in the past of particular experts where the quality of advice was deemed to be poor – leading to complications and delays following submission of completed application forms to the DG for Regional Policy. Following complaint, the Managing Authority found both JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy to be very responsive, and issues were resolved quickly. The quality of input is currently much improved. As a result, the Managing Authority sees input from Jaspers as now being 'very much positive'. The Managing Authority attributes some of this improvement to recent changes in the team of JASPERS experts dealing with Latvia. This team now includes experts with experience in Poland and appears to have stronger links with the DG for Regional Policy, giving it better insight into key issues in projects that might raise concerns for the DG for Regional Policy.

The Managing Authority felt that the involvement of JASPERS had not changed the time taken in project preparation. Nevertheless, there was agreement that the quality of projects submitted to the DG for Regional Policy was substantially improved. It was felt that although there has been some Horizontal Assignment activity, that this could be increased. Stakeholders believed that JASPERS assistance was reducing the time that the DG for

Regional Policy took to consider applications for funding compared to a hypothetical situation without JASPERS assistance.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

A persistent issue for Latvia has been the need to place individual projects in the context of an overall strategy for a sector. JASPERS and the Commission have found at least some individual projects presented for assistance or approval do not seem to be part of an overall strategy for the sector in question. The best practice in the development of public investments is to develop a strategy for a sector, for example a national transport plan, before proceeding to identify and develop individual projects. The overall strategy will identify areas where the need for transport or environmental services are not being met, or will not be met in the future. On this basis, the strategy will identify, in broad terms, the infrastructure investments that are needed. Once this strategy process is complete the development of individual projects can proceed. Project development consists of identifying the economically optimal technical solution that addresses each of the needs identified in the strategy.

If an applicant finds it difficult to identify where a project fits into an overall strategy, this suggests that this sequence of decision making has not been followed. This creates a risk that, whatever the merits of the individual project in question, that there are other potential projects that have not been developed and which should be considered more urgent.

JASPERS has been emphasising the importance of strategic planning to the Latvian authorities. One way it has done this has been to decline or resist involvement in projects that are not part of an accepted National Development Plan or Master plan. This created a practical difficulty for the Managing Authority, as the preparation of such plans can be outside its control. The wider message that moving from strategic planning to the development of individual projects, is the best way to identify and develop projects may not yet be fully accepted by all stakeholders.

The Latvian authorities indicated that they have a significant pipeline of potential projects and that they intend to develop strategic plans that incorporate these projects in time for the next programming period. They indicated that they would make the strategic decisions about the form of these plans, and the projects to be included, themselves. However JASPERS advice might be sought on the presentation and justification of these strategic plans to the DG for Regional Policy.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Latvian Authorities

The Managing Authority plays very much an administrative/programming role in the preparation of projects for the DG for Regional Policy. Although responsible for requesting JASPERS assistance, the technical ability within a project rests within JASPERS, the beneficiary and the consultant on the project. The main line of communication is between JASPERS and the beneficiary. As such, the Managing Authority's involvement in the detail of projects is relatively hands-off, although the Managing Authority, JASPERS and the beneficiary do meet regularly to update on performance.

Overall, the lines of communication with JASPERS are well established, and beneficiaries have additional informal links with JASPERS to assist with various technical or procedural issues that may arise. The Latvian authorities have taken the view that the preparation of projects is very much the responsibility of the beneficiaries. Although they provide programming support, they do seek to delegate as much of the technical input to the beneficiaries as possible. The Managing Authority has chosen not to seek external Technical Assistance for its own administrative and programming work, but instead relies on JASPERS for support and assistance.

For the next programming period, the Managing Authority stated an intention to reduce its reliance on JASPERS for its work major projects that were deemed to be relatively uncomplicated.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

Many of the beneficiaries operate on a national, rather than local, scale. This makes it possible for the same beneficiary, and indeed the same staff, to work on more than one project with JASPERS assistance, and for knowledge gained on a JASPERS assisted project to be applied to other projects. Overall Latvian stakeholders find that there has been an increase in capacity in beneficiaries and the consultants that work for Beneficiaries.

In addition, the Managing Authority has prepared guidance documents and advice noted on specific areas where they have gained JASPERS advice. This has led to knowledge transfer into all those involved in project preparation.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover is not an issue that restricts capacity building. As noted above, the relatively small number of institutions dealing with projects helps with knowledge transfer.

Latvian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The experience to date has been to bring JASPERS into the project at CBA/Application preparation stage, rather than at the earlier Master Planning and Feasibility Study stages. There is recognition that the support brings greater added value when brought into the project earlier, although for many of the current projects the earlier tasks had already been completed at the time when JASPERS assistance became fully available. For the next programming period, there is an intention to seek advice earlier in the project planning process.

JASPERS currently has no involvement in the implementation stage of projects, or in the ex-post stages of projects. This is something that the Latvian authorities would like to see as a future role within JASPERS.

In common with many other member States, Latvia is concerned that when the DG for Regional Policy considers applications, it often revisits issues that have already been examined fully by JASPERS. They suggest that this could be remedied through more contact between the DG for Regional Policy, JASPERS and Latvia, in advance of applications being made.

The Latvian authorities also made the following specific requests for future assistance from JASPERS:

- Provision of seminars, conferences, training on key issues that are relevant to project preparation – either by country or by sector;
- Provision of advice on the implementation of projects using PPP/Financial Instruments, in order to align the advice with current policy at EU level. This would be needed very early in a project. According to the Latvian authorities, JASPERS have refused this support on the basis of insufficient capacity in this area on the basis that this is an EIB task;
- Provision of advice on ICT evaluation and implementation; and,
- Continuity of JASPERS advice from project planning through to and including ex-post evaluation.

Conclusions

JASPERS has had a positive reception in Latvia. While there was the opinion that JASPERS had had no impact on the time taken for project preparation; there was an agreement among the Managing Authorities that the quality of projects submitted to the DG for Regional Policy had been substantially improved.

There has been good scope for improving Latvian project development capacity as many of the Beneficiaries operate on a national rather than a local scale, which means that they are involved in more than one project with JASPERS and have greater opportunity to absorb knowledge and apply it elsewhere.

JASPERS has mostly been involved in the project application stage, but there is acknowledgement in Latvia that JASPERS would have more scope to improve a project if it were involved in the project development at an earlier stage, and the Latvian authorities see JASPERS role expanding to include involvement at the earlier implementation and ex-post stages in the next programming period.

6. Lithuania

Summary

In Lithuania, JASPERS was involved in 5 Major projects and 1 non-Major project, as well as 5 Horizontal Assignments. Lithuania did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Lithuania's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The main sectors that JASPERS assisted Lithuanian Major projects in were: Knowledge Economy (2), Urban Transport (1), Water & Wastewater (1), and Other (1). One project was submitted in 2009, 2 in 2010, and 2 in 2011.

The only sector where JASPERS assisted a Lithuanian non-Major project was Roads (1). This project was submitted in 2009.

The main sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Solid Waste (2), Energy (1), and Other (2). One project was submitted in 2008, 3 in 2009, and 1 in 2010.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Lithuania was 1039 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 594 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Lithuania was 405 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average JASPERS assistance duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Lithuania was 654 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole of 927 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Lithuania was 151 days, compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Lithuania had 2 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Lithuania received Interruption Letters for both of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Lithuanian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Lithuania is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Lithuania	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	100	0
Project Design	50	50
Project Cost Estimation	0	0
Demand Analysis & Modelling	50	50
Cost Benefit Analysis	100	50
Environmental Issues	50	0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	50	0
Competition & State Aids	100	0
Funding & Financing Issues	50	50
Procurement	0	0
Project Implementation & Structures	100	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	-
No of Projects	2	2

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Concept & Programming (2 out of 2 projects), Cost Benefit Analysis (2 out of 2), Competition & State Aids (2 out of 2), and Project Implementation & Structures (2 out of 2). Less common topics were: Project Design (1 out of 2), Demand Analysis & Modelling (1 out of 2), Environmental Issues (1 out of 2), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (1 out of 2), and Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 2). The topics where no JASPERS-assistance was sought were: Project Cost Estimation, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters to Lithuania were: Project Design (1 out of 2), Demand Analysis & Modelling (1 out of 2), Cost Benefit Analysis (1 out of 2), and Funding & Financing Issues (1 out of 2).

Lithuanian Involvement with JASPERS

Lithuania, by virtue of its size, has relative low level of infrastructural investment compared to other Member States. This is reflected in the number of Major projects developed by Lithuania, and the extent of its use of JASPERS. During the evaluation period, Lithuania made six applications for funding for Major projects. All of these received JASPERS assistance. In addition, JASPERS completed five horizontal assignments for Lithuania during the evaluation period.

Testing Preliminary Findings

There were only a very limited number of Major projects in Lithuania that received JASPERS assistance and proceeded to a Commission Decision. Lithuania did not develop any Major projects without JASPERS assistance. As a result, Tasks 1 and 2 did not lead to preliminary findings with respect to the impact of JASPERS in Lithuania.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Lithuania

Lithuanian officials were appreciative of the support received from JASPERS. Their level of satisfaction indicated that they found that JASPERS had a positive impact for them.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Lithuanian managing authority explained that they expect two types of impact from JASPERS assistance: improvements in the quality and maturity of applications and a reduction in time taken for the Commission to approve applications for funding.

Their view was that JASPERS has made significant contributions to the quality and maturity of applications. This has been particularly useful in cases where the beneficiary had a great deal of technical expertise in the subject matter of the project but might not be familiar with the process of project development. The Lithuanian authorities referred in particular to the Major project to establish a National Centre for Physical and Technological Sciences

Lithuanian officials are also confident that JASPERS has had a positive impact on the time taken by the Commission to examine funding applications from Lithuania.

The Lithuanian authorities, in common with many Member States, did criticise what they regarded as a lack of consistency between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy. They regard a JASPERS Completion Note as being, at least in part, an assessment of the project in question on behalf of the Commission. They are surprised if the DG for Regional Policy raises an interruption based on an issue which they believe has been cleared by JASPERS. They referred to one project where JASPERS stated in its Completion Note that the project in question did not raise State Aid issues. When an application was made to the Commission, State Aid issues were raised in an interruption letter.

Lithuanian authorities quoted the example of a project establishing a National Centre for Physical and Technological Sciences. This project gained essential knowledge from JASPERS that enabled them to plan the project and make the case for it to the Commission.

The principal beneficiary in this project was Vilnius University, acting in partnership with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University and three state research institutes. The object of the project was to provide appropriate research facilities to Lithuanian scientists to allow research

to be carried out to the highest standards, and to make it possible for promising new scientists to complete their training and make their career in Lithuania.

While the project could only be led by experts from the universities and research institutes, JASPERS was able to bring valuable insights into the areas of research that might have future commercial applications and to the process of placing a money value on the benefits of the project. In this case JASPERS intervention could have improved the underlying quality of the project, by refining the strategy for the new research centre, and also improved the presentation of the project to the Commission by assisting the beneficiary to express the impact of the project in the form of a cost benefit analysis.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Lithuanian Authorities

Lithuania made extensive use of Horizontal Assignment to capture relevant technical knowledge from JASPERS. JASPERS is currently carrying out a project for the Managing Authority for Environmental projects to develop a national water strategy to 2020. A similar Horizontal Assignment is being carried out in the field of transport. JASPERS was unable to fulfil all of Lithuania's requests for Horizontal Assignments due to limited resources, and the wide ranging nature of some of the requests.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The fact that there were a number of road projects has allowed the relevant authority to build up a certain expertise in this sector. They anticipate needing less assistance from JASPERS for road projects in future. Conversely, they have not yet been able to develop significant experience of developing environmental projects, and anticipate needing ongoing JASPERS assistance with individual environmental projects into the next programming period.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

The Lithuanian Operational Programmes only contain a total of 10 Major projects, spread over a wide variety of sectors. This makes it difficult for the Lithuanian authorities to build up capacity based on experience with individual projects.

Lithuanian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

One stakeholder stated that that the Commission should "trust" JASPERS more as they are both EU institutions. This was a reference to the perception that the Commission reopens issues that have been "cleared" in a JASPERS Completion Note when it considers funding applications. This type of concern would be addressed by the current proposals that JASPERS take a more formal role in the approval of projects. Conversely other stakeholders maintained that JASPERS should be a source of help and support for Member States rather than assessing their projects. One official stated that Lithuania trusts its own institutions to identify good projects. In this analysis JASPERS priority is to assist Lithuania to make the best possible case for funding, and to act as a source of information on the project and on general conditions in Lithuania for the Commission.

It was clear from all stakeholders that Lithuania has involved JASPERS at an early stage in the development of at least some projects and has had positive results. JASPERS has also been involved successfully in the development of strategies and Operational Programmes. However, the Lithuanian stakeholders emphasised that any JASPERS involvement in developing strategies could only be purely advisory, for example informing them of best practices in developing strategies. Actual decision making as to which projects to include in an investment strategy, must be an exclusive competence of a Member State.

In discussing recommendations for the future role of JASPERS, Lithuanian officials made the very relevant point that any new tasks for JASPERS must be accompanied by the necessary resources and skills for JASPERS.

Conclusions

The Lithuanian Managing Authority were of the opinion that JASPERS has had a positive effect on the quality and maturity of projects, as well as a reduction in time taken by the Commission to examine the funding applications.

Lithuania's extensive use of JASPERS for Horizontal Assignments to capture technical knowledge meant that there was broad scope for the transfer of knowledge. The potential for capacity building was more limited, as there were only a small number of Major projects in Lithuania, and these were spread over a number of sectors, so it was difficult for the Lithuanian Authorities to build capacity based on individual projects.

7. Poland

Summary

In Poland, JASPERS was involved in 56 Major projects and 19 non-Major projects, as well as 19 Horizontal activities. In the same period, Poland also submitted 62 Major projects without JASPERS Assignments. Poland's use of JASPERS on projects not including Horizontal Assignment is therefore 54.7%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Polish Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (16), Energy (9), Roads (9), Knowledge Economy (7), Rail (4) and Solid Waster (1). There were also 6 projects in the Other category. 13 projects were first submitted for review in 2009, 25 were submitted in 2010 and 18 were submitted in 2011.

The most common sectors where Poland submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance were: Roads (20), Knowledge Economy (11), Water & Wastewater (8) and Rail (3) and Other (12). There were also single projects in each of the Airports, Urban Transport and Solid Waste sectors. 8 projects were submitted to the DG for Regional Policy in 2008, 14 in 2009, 20 in 2010, and 11 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Polish non-Major projects were: Water & Wastewater (5), Solid Waste (4), Energy (3) and Other (4). Single projects in each of the Airports, Rail and Knowledge Economy Sectors were also submitted. One non-Major project was submitted in 2006, 3 in 2007, 5 in 2008, 6 in 2009 and 3 in 2010.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (5), Solid Waste (4), Energy (3) and Other (3). One Horizontal Assignment was performed in each of the Airports, Rail and Knowledge Economy sectors. Two Horizontal Assignments were performed in Poland in 2006, 3 in 2007, 5 in 2008, 6 in 2009, and 3 in 2010.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Poland was 769 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 476 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Poland was 313 days, compared to the average for the Members States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 518 days in Poland, and 386 for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Poland had an average DG for Regional Policy decision duration 205 days shorter than the decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in Poland.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Poland was 879 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 542 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Poland was 365 days compared to the average of 386 days across all Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Poland had 32 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Polish Major projects contained an average of 2.8 topics per letter, compared to an average of 3.5 for all the Member States. Poland received Interruption Letters on 22 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Polish projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Poland	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	28.1	31.8

Project Design	21.9	50.0
Project Cost Estimation	15.6	13.6
Demand Analysis & Modelling	40.6	13.6
Cost Benefit Analysis	71.9	31.8
Environmental Issues	40.6	27.3
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	34.4	50.0
Competition & State Aids	12.5	4.5
Funding and Financing Issues	65.6	31.8
Procurement	12.5	9.1
Project Implementation & Structures	15.6	13.6
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	3.1	-
No. of Projects	32	22

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (72% of projects), Funding & Financing Issues (66%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (41%), Environmental Issues (40%) and Risk Sensitivity Analysis (34%). Less common topics were: Project Concept and Programming (28%), Project Design (22%), Project Cost Estimation (16%), Projects Implementation & Structures (16%), Competition & State Aids (13%), Procurement (13%) and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (3%).

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Poland were: Project Design (50% of projects), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (50%), Project Concept & Programming (32%), Cost Benefit Analysis (32%), Funding & Financing Issues (32%) and Environmental Issues (27%). Less frequently raised topics were: Project Cost Estimation (14%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (14%), Project Implementation & Structures (14%), Procurement (9%) and Competition & State Aids (5%).

Feedback

The Polish Managing Authority attributes the timing benefit observed to the DG for Regional Policy being more trusting of applications that have received JASPERS support, and this leading to faster Decision times. If JASPERS had sufficient resources, the Polish Managing Authority would involve it in most if not all Major projects. JASPERS is currently involved in approximately half of the major projects that have either been developed or are under development by the Polish authorities.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Poland

All of Polish stakeholders had a very positive general opinion of JASPERS. The key benefit of JASPERS was felt to be the support it gives to beneficiaries. It was emphasised Beneficiaries have other supports available, such as access to local consultants who can help with the process of obtaining construction permits. The need for JASPERS help varies by sector:

- Roads: The consensus among the Polish stakeholders was that the road authority is now able to prepare projects and applications without JASPERS assistance.
- Rail: Conversely the rail beneficiary is still in need of JASPERS assistance with individual projects and this is expected to persist well into the next programming period.
- Waste: Waste projects are now being developed with private partners. This raises new issues for the Beneficiaries, other Polish authorities and indeed the Commission itself. Some form of advice and support from JASPERS will be needed in the future to deal with these issues.
- Knowledge Economy: These projects raise unique issues, particularly of State Aid. In some cases private firms can seek funding as part of these projects, in nearly all cases some private firms will benefit from the project. JASPERS has had early success helping the Polish authorities to develop these projects, as seen in Case Study 10. However it will

have to continue to develop new skills and knowledge to deal with new issues emerging in these projects.

The Managing Authority made the point that the quality of JASPERS advice can vary from expert to expert.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The Polish regard the key added value from JASPERS, as opposed to other source of technical help, as being its insight into the likely attitude and concerns of the Commission with respect to an application. Since the DG for Regional Policy does not have the resources to engage with the Polish authorities in the preparation of the numerous Major projects in its Operational Programmes, JASPERS advice is extremely useful. In theory if the DG for Regional Policy had sufficient resources to engage with the Polish authorities in the preparation of projects, there might not be a need for JASPERS, in the opinion of some Polish stakeholders.

There is a good level of knowledge about JASPERS in the Managing Authority, Intermediate Authorities and Implementing Bodies. Some beneficiaries may be less aware of JASPERS and the assistance it can offer. However, beneficiaries must make applications via an implementing body and intermediate authority, so JASPERS will be brought to **the attention of all relevant Beneficiaries where relevant.**

As with other Member States, Polish stakeholders pointed out that for JASPERS to function effectively that it must have a successful working relationship with both Polish officials and with the Desk Officers dealing with Poland in the DG for Regional Policy. In order to achieve this, JASPERS must adapt its working methods and the assistance it offers to the capacities and priorities of the Member State, and of the relevant Desk Officers in the DG for Regional Policy. Polish stakeholders praised the way in which JASPERS had adapted itself to the needs of the Polish administration and of the DG for Regional Policy officials dealing with Poland.

Polish Beneficiaries, Implementing Bodies, Intermediate Authorities and the Managing Authority felt that JASPERS was particularly useful in assisting them in presenting projects effectively to the Commission. The Polish authorities felt able to identify potential projects, develop them and choose which ones should be implemented. Although JASPERS help with these aspects of project development could be useful, the key value of JASPERS for Poland was its insight into the Commissions priorities and the help it could give in presenting a project to the Commission in an application for funding.

Another area where JASPERS had brought new and useful knowledge and skills to the Polish administration is the development of projects in the area of the knowledge economy. Case Study 10 is an example of this. The two projects discussed in this case study involved public investment to establish new research institutes attached to Polish universities. JASPERS brought important insights to the Polish administration into the process of identifying the areas that these new institutes should target, in particular what areas would be likely to be of private firms in research and technology based industries. JASPERS supported the beneficiaries as they sought specialist consulting help to formulate a research strategy for these new institutes. As a result of this commercial focus it was possible to predict, and place a value on, the amount of commercially viable research that could be carried out by these new institutes. This in turn allowed a valuation of the benefits of these projects for the purposes of a funding application to the Commission.

A number of stakeholders pointed out that the work done by JASPERS, and hence the knowledge transferred from JASPERS to Poland, has changed over the programming period. JASPERS initial priority was explaining certain aspects of Polish regulatory procedures to the Commission so that it could properly assess funding applications from the Polish authorities. In particular, JASPERS helped the Commission to understand the significance of the various decisions taken by the Polish environmental authorities which was attached to an application for funding. The EIA Directive had been implemented in Poland in a way that led to a need for

several separate impact assessments and permissions from environmental authorities for different parts of a single project. The Commission needed to understand the Polish system to ensure that it provided the same level of protection and safeguards as a single EIA of the project as a whole.

In the earlier part of the programming period, JASPERS advice on cost benefit analysis was especially valuable for beneficiaries and other Polish authorities. The various beneficiaries and public authorities had extensive prior experience in the development of investment projects on a purely domestic basis and for project part funded by the Instrument for Pre Accession States. However, cost benefit analysis had not played a large part in the development of these projects, so the Polish authorities started the programming period with a relatively limited knowledge of cost benefit analysis. The calculation of funding gaps had also presented problems early in the programming period, and JASPERS help had allowed the Polish authorities to develop the necessary skills in this area.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Polish Authorities

Polish officials had particular praise for fieldwork carried out by JASPERS staff. They had found that visits to specific projects by JASPERS staff were a particularly valuable source of additional technical knowledge. The technical knowledge transferred would go beyond the specific project that was the subject of the visit. For example designers would gain valuable insights into approaches in other Member States from the JASPERS staff, and this new knowledge could be very widely applicable. The Polish National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water management also believed that interactions between JASPERS staff and Polish design engineers promoted awareness of and adherence to international quality standards, and encouraged Polish engineers and project promoters to seek internationally recognised quality certifications. In general, interaction between JASPERS staff and Polish engineers, particularly as part of “field work” by JASPERS staff, promoted the adoption of best international practices by Polish engineers for all of their work.

Poland has had positive experiences with Horizontal Assignments as a way to build the knowledge base and capacity of the Polish public service. Examples of Horizontal Assignments included:

- JASPERS had developed a useful guide to cost benefit analysis, usually referred to as the “blue book”;
- A comprehensive “case study” of the Polish gas sector, predicting future use etc. This is being used as reference material by consultants preparing projects in the sector;
- A seminar for rail sector beneficiaries to pass on lessons from experience securing approval for road projects.

The Polish authorities had already identified a number of priority areas for future Horizontal Assignments, for example.

- Guidance on financial and economic analysis of projects that generate revenue, e.g. public transport services, water charges, waste charges; and, related to this,
- Treatment of projects that are to provide a “Service of General Economic Interest” (i.e. will be in receipt of an ongoing subsidy to allow them to provide a non profitable service that is considered socially necessary);
- How to treat compensation for the Public Service Obligation in the financial and economic analysis. Address question of whether a private firm can be entrusted with a SGEI.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The two implementing bodies in Poland for the Infrastructure and Environment Operational Programme play a key role in ensuring that projects learn from each other. These bodies are:

- The Centre for European Transport Projects; and,
- The National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management.

The role of these bodies includes ensuring that useful knowledge gained from JASPERS support in one project is applied wherever it is relevant. For example, the National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management holds a general meeting with all beneficiaries twice a year. Significant points arising in each project and issues arising in competing application forms for each project are discussed by all beneficiaries. This process ensures that key learning and insights from one projects, including those gained from JASPERS assistance, are disseminated to all beneficiaries.

In the Polish Knowledge Economy sector JASPERS is undertaking a Horizontal Assignment involving the transfer of technical know-how and sharing this know-how within the community of Beneficiaries. This includes JASPERS meeting with groups of beneficiaries in order to share experiences and offer advice. This secures a sharing of knowledge between projects.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

In common with several other Member States, there was a broad consensus among Polish stakeholders that JASPERS working only in English acts as an impediment to the transfer of knowledge from JASPERS to the Polish authorities. This created difficulties when Polish officials or Polish consultants working on project development had to communicate with JASPERS in writing, rather than being able to have informal oral contacts in a common language.

Many stakeholders also found that some JASPERS staff did not have sufficient knowledge of Polish national laws and practices to ensure that their advice was practical in a Polish context. They were particularly concerned that JASPERS would propose solutions to issues that arose in a Polish project, based on successful experience in projects in other Member States. However these solutions might not be possible under the Polish legal system or might simply be incompatible with prevailing norms and practices in Poland. An example was given of Polish practices for the supervision of construction sites. In Polish practice, project supervisors are typically employees of the main construction contractor. In some other Member States the project supervisor is completely independent of the contractor, and the services of the project supervisor are obtained through a separate tendering process. In some projects JASPERS staff were concerned that construction and project supervision services were being procured through the same tendering process and would be provided by the same firm. These JASPERS staff would strongly recommend splitting the tender into two lots to procure a completely independent site supervisor. This recommendation was not necessary to ensure compliance with the relevant EU rules on site safety and supervision and would not be practical to implement in the Polish market.

The Managing Authority made the point that it takes responsibility for many aspects of preparing applications for EU funding, so much relevant knowledge about this aspect of project preparation is accumulated by the Managing Authority and applied to all major projects.

There was a consensus that prior to the current programming period that staff turnover was an issue for the Polish authorities. This used to cause a number of problems with the development of investment projects, including a loss of experience and knowledge as the personnel dealing with investments changed. The Polish authorities do not believe that staff turnover in Polish institutions is an issue in the current programming period. Turnover of staff is at a low level. Staff movements that do take place are often within institutions, so that knowledge gained by a public servant in one post can be used in another. The Managing Authority even suggested that staff turnover in the DG for Regional Policy now presents a greater problem for project development.

Polish Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

With respect to the current Operational Programme, the types of advice and assistance that Poland requires from JASPERS are evolving as the programming period progresses. Most

major projects in the current Operational Programme have been prepared and are being assessed at a national level. Polish institutions now want help from JASPERS on procurement and project implementation. In particular, there is a need for JASPERS help on the complex procurement and implementation issues that arise in Knowledge Economy projects.

The Polish authorities also recognised the potential for JASPERS to give useful guidance on the preparation for the next funding period from 2014 on.

As described above the Polish authorities see that main role of JASPERS as being to assist in the presentation of projects, which have already reached an advanced stage of development, to the Commission. They expect JASPERS involvement in the preparation of applications to speed the process of obtaining Commission approval for these projects. They were disappointed that projects that had been, in their view, “approved” by JASPERS went on to be examined in detail by the Commission. In this context they welcomed proposals for JASPERS to play a more formal role in the approval of projects.

The Polish authorities felt that JASPERS sometimes interpreted its mandate in a narrow way and concentrated on reviewing applications at the expense of contributing to projects at an earlier stage of development. They valued the contributions that JASPERS was able to make to projects when they were at an early stage of development and wanted a clarification that this work formed part of JASPERS role.

For this funding period, the majority of JASPERS work had been on projects at a late stage of development. Typically the design work would be completed, and JASPERS would be involved in presenting the project to the Commission in an application for funding. The Polish authorities agreed that, in principle, this limited the scope for JASPERS to improve the quality of projects themselves, as opposed to improving the presentation of projects in applications. They pointed out that, due the long preparation period needed for any large infrastructure projects it was inevitable that many of the projects funded in the 2007-2013 period would have to have started development well in advance of the launch of JASPERS in 2007. They intended to involve JASPERS more in the early stage of project development for projects in the next funding period. The Polish Authorities also intended to involve JASPERS in the preparation of the Operational Programmes for the next programming period. The authorities emphasised that the selection of potential projects for inclusion in an Operational Programme must be an exclusive competence of a Member State, and that any involvement of JASPERS would have to be on a purely advisory basis. Nonetheless they expected that JASPERS advice would improve the selection of projects.

Conclusion

JASPERS has had a positive impact on project timing of Polish projects by assisting preparation and presentation of projects to the Commission. JASPERS has also developed the capacity of the Polish authorities to carry out this work. It has had less influence on project quality due to the stage at which it was involved. There have been encouraging results regarding improved project quality when JASPERS is involved early in the process, for example; the projects in the Knowledge Economy sector.

8. Romania

Summary

In Romania, JASPERS was involved in 56 Major projects and 26 non-Major projects, as well as 29 Horizontal Assignments. In the same period, Romania also submitted 10 Major projects without JASPERS assistance. Romania's use of JASPERS on projects not including Horizontal Assignments is therefore 89.1%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Romanian Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (28), Roads (10), Solid Waste (8), Energy (6), Rail (3), and Ports & Waterways (1). 4 projects were first submitted for review in 2007, 8 in 2008, 15 in 2009, 20 in 2010, and 9 in 2011.

The most common sectors where Romania submitted projects to DG for Regional Policy without JASPERS assistance were: Water & Wastewater (7) and Solid Waste (3). 6 projects were submitted to the DG for Regional Policy in 2010 and 4 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Romanian non-Major projects were: Rail (12), Solid Waste (7), Energy (4), and Ports and Railways (3). 14 projects were submitted in 2007, 1 in 2008, 8 in 2009, and 3 in 2010.

The most frequent sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Energy (9), Solid Waste (5), Water & Wastewater (5), the Knowledge Economy (1), and Other (9). 14 Horizontal Assignments were performed in Romania in 2007, 2 in 2008, 9 in 2009, and 4 in 2010.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Romania was 660 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 594 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Romania was 158 days, compared to the average for the Member states as a whole which was 272 days.

The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted Major projects was 90 days in Romania, and 386 for the Member States as a whole. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Romania had an average DG for Regional Policy decision duration 68 days longer than the decision duration for non-JASPERS-assisted projects in Romania.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Romania was 904 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 927 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Romania was 365 days compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Romania had 53 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by the DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Romanian Major projects contained an average of 3.3 topics per letter, compared to an average of 3.5 for all the Member States. Romania received Interruption Letters on 16 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Romanian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter.

Romania	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	34.0	12.5
Project Design	22.6	50.0
Project Cost Estimation	3.8	18.8
Demand Analysis & Modelling	11.3	0.0

Cost Benefit Analysis	92.5	25.0
Environmental Issues	24.5	75.0
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	5.7	18.8
Competition & State Aids	7.5	0.0
Funding & Financing Issues	37.7	56.3
Procurement	15.1	0.0
Project Implementation & Structures	45.3	68.8
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	20.8	-
No of Projects	53	16

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (93% of projects), Project Implementation & Structures (45%), Funding & Financing Issues (38%), Project Concept & Programming (34%), Environmental Issues (25%), and Project Design (23%). Less common topics were: Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (21%), Procurement (15%), Demand Analysis & Modelling (11%), Competition & State Aids (8%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (6%), and Project Cost Estimation (4%).

The most frequent topics raised in Interruption Letters to Poland were: Environmental Issues (75%), Project Implementation & Structures (69%), Funding & Financing Issues (56%), and Project Design (50%). Less frequently raised topics were: Cost Benefit Analysis (25%), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (19%), Project Cost Estimation (19%), and Project Concept & Programming (13%).

Romanian Involvement with JASPERS

Romania made extensive use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 56 Major and 26 non-Major projects as well as 29 horizontal assignments. Accordingly, Romania may be viewed as the major user of JASPERS within the Member States. Romania was by far the most frequent user of JASPERS for Horizontal Assignments, and accounts for over one third of such assignments. With regard to project related advice, the Romanian authorities sought JASPERS assistance very largely at the project application stage.

With regard to Major projects, 36 were in the environment sector and 10 in transport. For non-Major projects, JASPERS assistance was most often sought for knowledge economy projects.

Romania was notable in bringing forward 10 Major projects without JASPERS assistance.

Testing Preliminary Findings

When presented with analysis on project timelines, the Romanian Ministry of Environment and Forests emphasised the need to consider the longer-term involvement of JASPERS and time taken to develop projects which are not reflected in the DG for Regional Policy durations for Major Projects. It was highlighted that developing a project up to the stage of submitting an application can take a number of years and can be influenced by a wide range of factors that may cause delay. Specific issues relating to different sectors and the size of sample were also thought to influence timescales for Major Projects.

Romanian delegates highlighted that delays as a result of the DG for Regional Policy interruptions were still occurring, although AECOM analysis identified that the average durations for these interruptions fell by a third over the evaluation period. It was suggested that as well as receiving JASPERS support in responding to these interruptions, a further factor behind reductions in delays may have been that JASPERS support resulted in interruptions being less demanding. Less complex interruption queries were potentially greater in significance than reducing the number of interruptions.

In Romania, the average DG for Regional Policy duration for non-assisted projects was actually less than for JASPERS-assisted projects. FB highlighted that there were three possible factors that may have influenced this occurrence:

- Due to the number of environmental projects, JASPERS did not have the capacity to assist with all projects; therefore, for half of the projects Romania's Ministry of Environment outsourced work to specialist consultants. JASPERS had played a role in these projects but as there was no Completion Note, this was not reflected in the analysis;
- Projects selected for JASPERS assistance were more likely to be challenging than non-assisted projects; and,
- At the start of the programme period the durations for projects were longer as the Romanian authorities and JASPERS developed capacity in new areas. As many of the environment projects have been similar, consultants working on non-assisted projects benefitted from this learning process.

For these reasons, the Romanian authorities considered that wider contextual factors should be acknowledged when discussing project timescales and that value could be gained from considering the whole lifespan of a project, rather than just the timescales relating to Commission.

Interruption Queries

The analysis of projects had shown that the number of interruptions had decreased over time, but that the subject of the queries did not necessarily relate to areas where JASPERS had assisted. However, and it was acknowledged by the Romanian authorities that it was a learning process for all of those involved. In particular, it was highlighted that there were a significant number of interruptions relating to environmental matters which resulted in Romanian Ministries commissioning their own reviews in this area.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Romania

The Romanian authorities had a generally a positive opinion of the quality of JASPERS support. However, there was a view that the quantity and quality of support in the JASPERS start up phase was deficient. This was due, in their opinion, to the fact that JASPERS were in a start up phase and to the large number of projects that the Romanian authorities had developed to application stage.

As JASPERS consolidated however, their view is that the quality of advice that they offered improved. It is now deemed "acceptable" particularly for transport and environment issues. JASPERS have outsourced expertise where they felt deficient. It was, however, acknowledged that issues relating to quality need to take into account the availability and quality of information provided by Member States.

In the next planning period 2013 to 2020, the emphasis will shift to energy and competitiveness, and there was concern that JASPERS strengths might not be aligned to these issues.

JASPERS support on environmental issues was a particular problem in the early stages of the Programme Period. It is considered that the ability of the Member State and JASPERS to respond to stringent environmental requirements depends on the capacity within the organisations respective environmental teams. The quality of advice from JASPERS on environmental issues has improved substantially in recent times.

It was also felt there was a disconnect between the DG for Regional Policy and the DG Environment, who have provided detailed assessments of projects from an environmental viewpoint. It was considered that greater co-ordination and earlier recognition of the environmental requirements would assist Member States and JASPERS.

Representatives from Romania suggested for some topics or projects, JASPERS appeared to be less willing to provide support. The Romanian authorities considered that the ongoing relationship with JASPERS would benefit from a more open and flexible approach that takes

into account the respective capacities of the Member States and also JASPERS. It was emphasised that it is vital that the Member States are made aware as soon as possible of the level of expertise and available support within JASPERS to avoid delays in the application process. Member States also suggested that they would rather have sustained and comprehensive support for a proportion of projects, and in areas where JASPERS has capacity, rather than a piecemeal approach across the full range of projects.

Romanian authorities suggested that where JASPERS is not able to fully address queries from Member States then beneficiaries should be provided with sufficient notice so that they can seek additional support. Overall it was considered that there was now perhaps more realistic expectations of the support available from JASPERS and that the Romanian Ministry of Environment saw JASPERS as one of a number of tools to assist project development.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

The early view of the Romanian authorities was that JASPERS were the eyes and ears of the Commission, so there was not full trust. Also, because many projects were in an advanced stage of planning when JASPERS support commenced, the focus of that support was very much on the project application process. These factors limited the capacity of JASPERS to influence project quality.

JASPERS was regarded as having a particularly positive impact on project timing and absorption of funding. Projects under the Ministry for Environment and Forestry were subject to monthly meetings of an Evaluation Group to include Ministry officials, the feasibility study consultants and separate technical consultants appointed by the Ministry. JASPERS were usually involved and this process proved to be very successful, as problems with the project planning and the application form were ironed out prior to submission. Also the DG for Regional Policy official often did an informal review of the documentation before the application was submitted. Romania achieved very good project progress and approval rates in 2010 and 2011 as a result of these arrangements. The contribution of JASPERS to getting the application form right was particularly noted.

The Romanian authorities noted that the role of JASPERS is changing, with greater impacts on project quality. This is because of somewhat earlier involvement in project planning. The Romanian Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Business Environment provided a number of examples of energy projects where they believed that project quality had been improved by earlier JASPERS support. This JASPERS support related to:

- State Aid Issues – JASPERS has provided valuable expertise relating to State Aid for a broadband infrastructure project along with wider technical support. In addition, JASPERS assisted with developing submissions for eight large combustion plants.
- Research and Development - JASPERS provided extensive support on a research and development project for a new bridge. Technical assistance was provided throughout the application period and it is considered to have helped reduce the time taken to submit the application and reduced the number and difficulty of interruption queries. The process of JASPERS assistance was enhanced through early involvement.
- Discussions with Financial Institutions - JASPERS assisted the Ministry in discussions with the European Investment Bank and the World Investment Bank relating to funding absorption. DM acknowledged that there was a lack of knowledge in this area within the Ministry and as such JASPERS assistance was invaluable.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Romanian Authorities

Given the relative late involvement of JASPERS in the project planning process, the potential for transfer of knowledge through project work was limited. Also that fact that the Ministry for Environment and Forestry appointed external consultants to provide technical advice obviously impact on JASPERS role.

However, both the Ministry for Environment and Forestry and the regional intermediate bodies made reference to the strong support role provided by JASPERS in the context of Horizontal Assignments. The work requested from JASPERS followed the Romanian Government

Ordinance HG No.28 of 2008, which set out methodological rules for the elaboration and approval of technical and economic documentation for investment projects.

The Romanian authorities suggested there was potential for improving the exchange of information including between Member States. A desire for greater dissemination of guidance was also identified.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

It was considered that considerable cross project learning had occurred, particularly in respect of environmental projects. This was due to a number of factors:

- The fact that many projects on the environment sector were identical, with Water & Wastewater and Solid Waste projects being developed for almost all Romanian counties;
- The recruitment of external technical expertise in addition to JASPERS to manage feasibility studies; and
- The awarding of multiple feasibility studies to each feasibility study consultant, facilitating learning on the part of the consultant.

With respect to the JASPERS involvement, as this was confined largely to the project application process, it was largely knowledge in this area that was transferred.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

Staff turnover is not a huge issue for Romanian officials centrally, more so in intermediate bodies. The fact that beneficiaries were not included in the project planning process (except to review documents) is a barrier to transfer of knowledge to them. It should be understood that the decision not to involve them relates to the fact that local authorities were disparate and not large enough to engage in planning.

There was a process of setting up water companies to achieve the required scale and giving one local authority a lead role in planning solid waste projects.

Language barriers were not regarded as significant, as much of the planning was organised centrally where English speaking capability was readily available. This could change, if beneficiaries became more central to the process.

Romanian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Romanian authorities were of the view that the new programming period offered opportunities to extend the scope of JASPERS involvement in relation to project planning. Indeed, this was already happening through involvement of JASPERS in advising on strategic plans and programmes and on the terms of reference for feasibility studies. With regard to strategies and programmes, it was emphasised that these were ultimately a matter for decision by the Member States.

The Romanian authorities indicated that they would not be acquiring external technical assistance in addition to JASPERS for the future. Thus, they would be more reliant on JASPERS. However, it was suggested that based upon the experience gained from the initial programme period, Romania's Ministry of Environment will not seek to use JASPERS on every project. JASPERS should therefore focus less on individual projects and instead seek to provide high-level horizontal expertise to be used by beneficiaries and consultants. Provision of templates and guidance would provide greater scope for beneficiaries to complete applications with greater independence.

The Romanian authorities suggested that overall the interaction between JASPERS and Member States could be strengthened through clearer definition of roles and responsibilities, lines of communication and requirements for information. Prompter feedback is considered desirable as although there are existing forms, a more direct and flexible approach would support changing circumstances, such as changes in JASPERS personnel, and enable Member States to respond earlier. Where new staff are recruited by JASPERS, early contact with Member States would enable the JASPERS officials to gain familiarity with local

conditions and improve working relationships. Improved channels of communication between JASPERS appointed consultants and Member States would also help address current barriers when providing feedback.

MD suggested that a degree of flexibility was required for timescales to account for delays caused by JASPERS. Preference was therefore given to setting timescales for delivery internally. There was also a further request for earlier acknowledgement from JASPERS where they lacked the capacity or resources to assist Member States.

It was considered that the scope for JASPERS to influence organisational structures would be more limited as there are significant political factors and established structures that would need to be considered.

It was suggested that JASPERS could play a more proactive role in training to ensure that training and guidance is in place to provide beneficiaries with the necessary skills to address issues before they arise. Existing examples of forward planning included an action relating to training in this year's Romanian environment Action Plan. An ex-ante agreement is also in place for the Member State covering EIA training.

The Romanian authorities acknowledged that JASPERS does not have the resources to provide training on all areas, especially if provided with additional responsibilities elsewhere. Resources should therefore be concentrated on areas where there is greatest benefit, with particular value gained from transferring technical knowledge and providing expertise in areas which are less developed (e.g. new technologies, climate change adaptation and renewable energy sources).

Conclusions

Romanian opinion of JASPERS has been generally positive in nature. In particular; improvements in the quality of JASPERS advice were highlighted. JASPERS was regarded as having a particularly positive impact on project timing and absorption of funding, and on improving the standard of the application form.

In Romania, JASPERS was typically involved in the project planning process at a relatively late stage, which left little room for the transfer of knowledge through project work. JASPERS did play a strong support, however, through the use Horizontal Assignments, and produced a set of methodological rules for the elaboration and approval of technical and economic documentation for investment projects.

While JASPERS-assisted Major projects actually had longer DG for Regional Policy decision durations than non-assisted projects, three possible factors may explain this result. Firstly, JASPERS was partially involved in some environmental projects but, lacking the capacity for complete assistance, did not produce a Completion Note for the project; secondly, projects selected for JASPERS were more likely to be challenging than non-assisted projects; and thirdly, project duration were longer at the start of the programme period as JASPERS and the Romanian authorities built capacity.

9. Slovakia

Summary

In Slovakia, JASPERS was involved in 16 Major projects and 5 non-Major projects, as well as 2 Horizontal Assignments. Slovakia did not submit any projects without JASPERS assistance. Slovakia's use of JASPERS is therefore 100%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Slovakian Major projects in were: Water & Wastewater (7), Rail (5), and Road (4). Two projects were first submitted for review in 2008, 3 in 2009, 6 in 2010, and 5 in 2011.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Slovakian non-Major projects were: Rail (2), Water & Wastewater (2), and Roads (1). 4 projects were submitted in 2008, and 1 in 2009.

The main sectors for JASPERS to perform Horizontal Assignments in were: Water & Wastewater (1) and Other (1).

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Slovakia was 913 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 574 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovakia was 494 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovakia was 587 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 409 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Slovakia was 1031 days, compared to the average of 388 days across Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Slovakia had 6 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by the DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Slovakia received Interruption Letters on 5 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy.

The table below shows the relative frequencies of each topic as a percentage of the total number of Slovakian projects: a) in which JASPERS assisted the beneficiary; and b) in which the DG for Regional Policy raised an Interruption Letter. It is important to note here that the sample size for Slovakia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Slovakia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	66.7	80
Project Design	50	60
Project Cost Estimation	0	60
Demand Analysis & Modelling	50	40
Cost Benefit Analysis	83.3	100
Environmental Issues	50	80
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	50	60
Competition & State Aids	16.7	0
Funding & Financing Issues	50	40
Procurement	16.7	0
Project Implementation & Structures	0	0
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	33.3	-

No of Projects	6	5
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The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (5 out of 6 projects), Project Concept & Programming (4 out of 6), Project Design (3 out of 6), Demand Analysis & Modelling (3 out of 6), Environmental (3 out of 6), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (3 out of 6), and Funding & Financing Issues (3 out of 6). Less common topics were Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries (2 out of 6), Competition & State Aids (1 out of 6), and Procurement (1 out of 6). The topics where no JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Cost Estimation, and Project Implementation & Structures.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters were: Cost Benefit Analysis (5 out of 5 projects), Project Concept & Programming (4 out of 5), Environmental Issues (4 out of 5), Projects Design (3 out of 5), Project Cost Estimation (3 out of 5), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (3 out of 5), Demand Analysis & Modelling (2 out of 5), and Funding & Financing Issues (2 out of 5).

Slovakian Involvement with JASPERS

Slovakia made moderate use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for 16 major and five non-Major projects as well as two Horizontal Assignments. All Major projects brought forward by Slovakia were JASPERS-assisted. With regard to Major project related advice, the Slovakian authorities sought JASPERS assistance largely at the project application stage only.

Of the 16 major projects, nine were in the transport sector and seven in environment.

Testing Preliminary Findings

The Slovakian authorities found it difficult to prove that JASPERS had reduced the time taken to approve projects, as they as they did not have a comparable set of projects to benchmark against. However, their view was that benefits in terms of reduced timelines had probably arisen.

In the view of the Slovakian authorities, a major source of delay was a failure of JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy to co-ordinate. The DG for Regional Policy often interrupted the process on issues that JASPERS had already approved.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Slovakia

Overall the Slovakian authorities are very happy with the support received from JASPERS. The co-operative and open dialogue that has occurred between organisations has led to faster project development and submissions to the DG for Regional Policy.

There is a view that JASPERS officials have been helpful. JASPERS staff has responded promptly to queries for the Slovakian authorities. Personal visits from JASPERS staff were highlighted as being positive aspects of the assistance and there was thought to be a good relationship between Slovakian staff and JASPERS staff.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

JASPERS support has made a significant contribution to improving the quality of projects. JASPERS input has been particularly useful for specific issues where there is less knowledge and experience within Slovakia or for new issues such as those relating to air quality.

The Slovakian authorities indicated that there have been instances where JASPERS involvement has led to changes to the scope or design of projects. It was suggested that early involvement is more likely to influence the design of projects and is more beneficial to projects as it reduces the likelihood of having to modify the design at a later date.

JASPERS has provided input on cost estimation although the extent of support has varied by project. The provision of benchmarks by JASPERS was valued. However, it was also acknowledged that it can be difficult to compare projects.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Slovakian Authorities

JASPERS has provided significant and consistent levels of support and advice throughout the programme. This has occurred through assistance that has led to improved Major project submissions and development of knowledge and skills within Slovakia. The Slovakian authorities considered that overall the input from JASPERS has been of great value to project development and increased capacity amongst Slovakian staff.

An example of an area where JASPERS support has proved invaluable is in relation to cost-benefit analysis. The complexities of the DG for Regional Policy requirements and limited experience within Slovakia had resulted in weaker responses in this area. JASPERS provided horizontal support including the development of a cost-benefit manual to guide future submissions. Although the timescales for developing the manual were significant it would have taken longer if the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Public Works undertook this task independently. It was considered that the technical input from JASPERS had resulted in guidance that has led to significant improvements in quality, reduced timescales and increased capacity in this area.

Horizontal support has been ongoing throughout the programme period and was described as being "very useful". JASPERS has provided information to the managing authority which can then be disseminated amongst project staff. Of particular value has been assistance with feasibility studies (non project specific) and other research used to inform project development. Assistance with developing capacity in Environmental Impact Assessments was cited as an example of where transport projects have benefitted.

Capacity for Projects to Learn from Each Other

The Slovakian authorities suggested that possibly of greatest value was JASPERS ability to share knowledge from other member states. Experience from other countries has been utilised by the Ministry of Transport to enhance the planning of their projects.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

The Slovakian authorities indicated that language barriers have made communication more difficult. Staff mobility is also a problem. Lack of knowledge of national legislation, and particularly environmental legislation, has hindered the possibility of transfer of knowledge in that area.

Slovakian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

The Slovakian authorities indicate that anticipate that they will continue to use JASPERS in the same manner as they have in the past. Slovakia was uncertain as to whether they would reduce the amount of assistance they sought: although they have developed capacity in some areas, if there are new issues or revisions to the DG for Regional Policy' requirements, then additional support may be sought.

The Slovakian authorities reiterated that currently support provided by JASPERS is productive as JASPERS are able to promptly respond to queries. If there is a widening of JASPERS brief, it is essential that there is sufficient capacity within JASPERS to provide the same level of support.

The Slovakian authorities suggested that closer co-ordination between JASPERS and the DG for Regional Policy would reduce uncertainty and delay and that JASPERS should have a more prominent role in setting eligibility and approval criteria. If JASPERS led the development of the application forms, this would decrease the number of instances where suggestions made by JASPERS were overruled by the DG for Regional Policy.

The Slovakian authorities believe that there are practical obstacles to early involvement, such as stage of planning process and political opposition. Within these constraints, they are seeking to involve JASPERS at earlier stages. Already, they have involved JASPERS in strategy development e.g. in development of a national waste strategy.

The Slovakian authorities will continue to need JASPERS support for project applications. Having said that, they would like to see JASPERS involve in more Horizontal Assignments, such as in training.

Procurement was identified as being an area where further assistance from JASPERS would be advantageous.

Conclusions

The Slovakian authorities report being very happy with the support received from JASPERS, in particular with the prompt responses from JASPERS to queries, and with the improved project quality that resulted from JASPERS involvement. Quite often JASPERS was able to help in specific issues where there was less knowledge and experience within Slovakia. On some occasions there have been instances where JASPERS involvement has led to change to the scope or design of the project, suggesting that earlier JASPERS involvement can lead to increased potential for project improvement by JASPERS. The Slovakian authorities believe that there are practical obstacles to early JASPERS involvement however, such as stage of planning process and political opposition.

The consistent and significant levels of support from JASPERS to Slovakia has resulted in the development of knowledge and skills in the Member State, with the Slovakian authorities reporting that JASPERS has been of great value to project development and has increased capacity among Slovakian staff. JASPERS also performed Horizontal Assignments to transfer knowledge such as Cost Benefit Analysis and Feasibility Studies which are considered to have “very useful” in increasing capacity. The Slovakian authorities also suggested that JASPERS’ ability to share knowledge from other Member States was of great value.

10. Slovenia

Summary

In Slovenia, JASPERS was involved in 8 Major projects and 10 non-Major projects, as well as 2 Horizontal Assignments. In the same time period, Slovenia also submitted one Major project without JASPERS assistance. Slovenia's use of JASPERS is therefore 94.7%.

The most common sectors that JASPERS assisted Slovenian Major projects in were: Roads (3), Water & Wastewater (2), Rail (1), Solid Waste (1), and Knowledge Economy (1). One project was first submitted for review in 2007, 1 in 2008, 3 in 2009, 2 in 2010, and 1 in 2011.

The only sector in which Slovenia submitted a project to the DG for Regional Policy for review without JASPERS assistance was Roads (1). This project was submitted in 2008.

The most common sectors where JASPERS assisted Slovenian non-Major projects were: Water & Wastewater (6), Roads (2), Airports (1), and Solid Waste (1). One project was submitted in 2006, 3 in 2007, 4 in 2008, and 2 in 2009.

The main sector for JASPERS Horizontal Assignments in was Other (2). One of these projects was submitted in 2007, and the other in 2008.

Duration

The average planning duration for JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Slovenia was 658 days, of which JASPERS was involved for 297 days on average. The averages for the Member States as a whole were 734 days of planning and 489 days of JASPERS involvement. The average DG for Regional Policy decision duration for Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovenia was 336 days, compared to the average for the Member States as a whole which was 272 days.

The DG for Regional Policy decision duration for the single non-JASPERS-assisted Major project was 423 days in Slovenia, and the average across the Member States was 386 days. Therefore, JASPERS-assisted Major projects in Slovenia had an average DG for Regional Policy decision duration 87 days shorter than the decision duration for the non-JASPERS-assisted project in Slovenia.

The average planning duration for non-Major JASPERS-assisted projects in Slovenia was 415 days, of which JASPERS was involved for, on average, 396 days. The average planning duration for the Member States was 760 days and the average JASPERS duration was 594 days.

The average JASPERS duration for Horizontal Assignments in Slovenia was 365 days compared to the average of 388 days across the Member States.

Interruption Topics

By the end of June 2011 Slovenia had 8 Major projects assisted by JASPERS that were subject to a decision by DG for Regional Policy. Interruption Letters on Major projects contained an average of 3.5 topics across the Member States. Slovenia received Interruption letters on 7 of the Major projects under review by the DG for Regional Policy. It is important to note here that the sample size for Slovenia is very small so the frequencies here are not subject to high degrees of confidence.

Slovenia	JASPERS-assistance Topics (%)	Interruption Topics (%)
Project Concept & Programming	37.5	28.6
Project Design	0	42.9
Project Cost Estimation	0	14.3
Demand Analysis & Modelling	12.5	14.3
Cost Benefit Analysis	87.5	42.9
Environmental Issues	37.5	57.1
Risk & Sensitivity Analysis	12.5	14.3
Competition & State Aids	0	0
Funding & Financing Issues	0	57.1
Procurement	0	42.9

Project Implementation & Structures	12.5	28.6
Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries	0	-
No of Projects	8	7

The main topics for which JASPERS assistance was sought were: Cost Benefit Analysis (6 out of 8 projects), Project Concept & Programming (3 out of 8), and Environmental Issues (3 out of 8). Less common topics were: Demand Analysis & Modelling (1 out of 8), Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (1 out of 8), and Project Implementation & Structures (1 out of 8). The topics for which no JASPERS assistance was sought were: Project Design, Project Cost Estimation, Competition & State Aids, Funding & Financing Issues, Procurement, and Assistance in Answering Interruption Queries.

The main topics raised in Interruption Letters were: Environmental Issues (4 out of 7), Project Design (3 out of 7), Cost Benefit Analysis (3 out of 7), and Procurement (3 out of 7). Less common topics were Project Concept & Programming (2 out of 7), Project Implementation & Structures (2 out of 7), Project Cost Estimation (1 out of 7), Demand analysis & Modelling (1 out of 7), and Risk & Sensitivity Analysis (1 out of 7).

Slovenian Involvement with JASPERS

Slovenia made moderate use of JASPERS, receiving assistance for eight major and ten non major projects as well as two horizontal assignments. Only one major project brought forward by Slovenia was unassisted by JASPERS. With regard to major project related advice, the Slovenian authorities sought JASPERS assistance at the project application stage only.

Of the major projects, four were in the transport sector, three in environment and one in the Knowledge Economy.

Testing Preliminary Findings

With regard to the impact of JASPERS on timelines, the Slovenian authorities drew attention to their experience on the Silvnica – Drazenci motorway project. JASPERS support was sought for the Beltinci – Lendava motorway project, but not for the Silvnica – Drazenci section. At the time, Slovenia considered that JASPERS support was not required for the Silvnica – Drazenci motorway as their view was that sufficient knowledge had been gained from the Beltinci – Lendava project. In reality, Silvnica – Drazenci took longer to reach the approval stage than expected – this mainly resulted from technical issues raised following an independent check of the application form (the review was undertaken by a private consultancy, commissioned by the DG for Regional Policy). The response time to the DG for Regional Policy queries was also longer than for the JASPERS-assisted project.

The Reputation and Value Added of JASPERS in Slovenia

The focus of JASPERS support for Major projects has been on the preparation of application form. The Slovenian authorities' view of JASPERS assistance is very positive. Slovenia has benefited from the quality of the technical advice provided and the level of service in terms of response time to queries is regarded as very good.

Experience from previous projects where JASPERS raised issues relating to feasibility reports in the process of reviewing the application forms has prompted Slovenia to seek to extend the role of JASPERS. In terms of individual projects, addressing issues relating to feasibility is clearly challenging at the application form stage, so it is considered to be beneficial to involve JASPERS earlier. It is now considered that the best time to involve JASPERS is at the feasibility stage of a project. Slovenia is now issuing feasibility reports to JASPERS for projects prior to the submission of the application form. The advice provided by JASPERS in relation to scheme feasibility has also been found to be valuable and informative.

Key Lessons arising from the JASPERS Initiative

Given the focus of JASPERS on the latter stages of the project development process, the Slovenian authorities consider the scope for influencing the quality of projects was limited.

Mechanisms to Transfer Technical Knowledge from JASPERS to the Slovenian Authorities

The Slovenian authorities drew attention to Horizontal Assignments as a conduit through which technical knowledge was transferred from JASPERS. Reference was made to a workshop held in Slovenia on cost benefit analysis, which included presentations from JASPERS staff. Knowledge was also transferred through the production of Slovenian guidelines for non-Major projects, which, it is anticipated, will improve future project development and delivery.

It was also noted that while Slovenia will continue to use JASPERS support for all major projects, it is anticipated that the level of support required will reduce following knowledge transfer and the build up of internal capacity. It was stressed that the technical requirements and expectations in terms of quality have increased markedly since 2007. If this change had not arisen it is likely that JASPERS assistance would no longer be required.

Factors Limiting Knowledge Transfer

The Slovenian authorities note that language barriers can present a problem. Only one member of JASPERS staff dealing with Slovenia is Slovenian. Procedures that are specific to Slovenia are also a barrier to involving JASPERS earlier in the project development process.

Staff turnover was not seen to be a barrier to knowledge transfer.

Slovenian Views on the Future Direction of JASPERS

As identified above, JASPERS input is regarded by the Slovenian authorities as valuable, in terms of reviewing feasibility studies and supporting the development of application forms. However, it is considered that issues relating to the scope and design of individual projects should be dealt with by the Member State. Slovenia would like to receive continued in-depth support from JASPERS in the analysis and presentation of projects for approval and funding.

At a more strategic level, Slovenia is intending to involve JASPERS in the preparation of the Operational Programmes (in a reviewing capacity) for the next programming period - this was not undertaken for the period 2007-13. It is anticipated that the comments received will relate more to the quality of the document itself rather than challenging the inclusion of individual projects. Slovenia intends to continue to prepare the national programmes independently of JASPERS.

Conclusions

The Slovenian Authorities' view of JASPERS has been very positive. JASPERS has been mostly involved at the project application stage and is seen to have improved the quality of the projects application. The Slovenian authorities acknowledge that JASPERS' scope to influence the project quality was limited by the late stage of its involvement, and is working towards including approaching JASPERS for advice earlier in the development process. The transfer of knowledge and skills was achieved through Horizontal Assignments and workshops performed by JASPERS on topics such as cost benefit analysis. The production of guidelines for Slovenian non-Major projects is anticipated to improve future project development and delivery through the transfer of knowledge. Slovenia anticipates its usage of JASPERS to decrease as it builds up internal capacity through interaction with JASPERS.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Annex 2 – Workshop Reports

Project:	JASPERS Evaluation	Job No:	60239949
Subject:	Workshop for Member State Authorities – Romania and Bulgaria	Date:	14 August 2012

1. Introduction

On 8th of August 2012 Member States representatives from Romania and Bulgaria attended a workshop held to present preliminary findings of the JASPERS Evaluation and to allow attendees to provide feedback on the findings and on the future role of JASPERS.

The workshop covered the following topics which provide the structure for this file note:

- Results of Tasks 1 and 2;
- JASPERS Impact on Project Quality; and
- JASPERS Impact on Administrative Capacity.

2. Representation

The following attendees were present from AECOM:

- Bernard Feeney (BF); and
- Simon Telford (ST).

The following representatives from Romania and Bulgaria were present at the workshop (**Table 1.1** and **1.2**).

Table 1.1: Romanian Delegates

Name	Institution/position	Contact Details
Mariana Svestun (MS)	Ministry of European Affairs	Mariana.Svestun@nueaus.ro
	ACIS	
Florian Burnar (FB)	Ministry of Environment and Forests (MA)	Florian.burnar@mmeidu.ro
	Director	
Alina Iacob (AI)	Ministry of Environment and Forests (MA)	Alina.Iacob@posmediu.ro
Cristina Dobranici (CD)	Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MA)	Cristina.Dobranici@mt.ro
Vicenția Duțescu (VD)	Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure (MA)	Vicenția.Duțescu@mt.ro
Luca Irimes (LI)	Romanian National Company for Railways (B)	Luca.Irimes@cfr.ro
	SET UIP	
Cornueu Rosu (CR)	Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Business Environment (MA)	Cornueu_Rosu@mivivol.ro
Dolivo Munteone (DM)	Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Business Environment (MA)	Dolivo_Munteone@mivivol.ro

Table 1.2: Bulgarian Delegates

Name	Institution/position	Contact Details
Monica Dandulova (MD)	Council of Ministers	m.dandulova@government.bg 0035929402535
	Expert, Central Coordination Unit	
Galina Vassileva (GV)	Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications	gvassileva@mtitc.government.bg 0035929409421
	Director, Managing Authority OP Transport	
Martin Georgiev (MG)	Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications	mgeorgiev@mtitc.government.bg 0035929409885
	Head of Department, Managing Authority OP Transport	
Radostina Petrusenko (RP)	Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works	rpetrusenko@mrrb.government.bg 0035929402687
	Expert, OP Regional Development	
Viktoria Lapadatova (VL)	Ministry of Environment and Water	v.lapadatova@moew.government.bg 0035929406597
	Expert, CF (CR 1164/94) Directorate	

3. Results of Tasks 1 and 2

A summary of the analysis relating to timelines for projects and horizontal assignments (Task 1) was presented alongside findings of research examining links between JASPERS advice and DG REGIO Project Assessment (Task 2). This section summarises the feedback from Member States on the findings.

3.1 Project timelines

When presented with analysis on project timelines, FB (Romanian Ministry of Environment) emphasised the need to consider the longer-term involvement of JASPERS and time taken to develop projects which are not reflected in the DG REGIO durations for Major Projects. It was highlighted that developing a project up to the stage of submitting an application can take a number of years and can be influenced by a wide range of factors that may cause delay. Specific issues relating to different sectors and the size of sample were also thought to influence timescales for Major Projects.

Romanian delegates highlighted that delays as a result of DG REGIO interruptions were still occurring, although AECOM analysis identified that the average durations for these interruptions fell by a third over the evaluation period. FB suggested that as well as receiving JASPERS support in responding to these interruptions, a further factor behind reductions in delays may have been that JASPERS support resulted in interruptions being less demanding. Less complex interruption queries were potentially greater in significance than reducing the number of interruptions.

Member States acknowledged that there were some factors that influenced timescales but for which JASPERS has had less influence, including the actions of the Member States themselves. Representatives from Bulgaria also emphasised that they considered JASPERS to play an advisory role and therefore advice was not always taken up (it was suggested that this was the case for up to 25% of their total projects).

In Romania, DG REGIO durations for non-assisted projects were actually less than for JASPERS assisted projects. FB highlighted that there were three possible factors that may have influenced this occurrence:

- Due to the number of environmental projects, JASPERS did not have the capacity to assist with all projects; therefore, for half of the projects Romania's Ministry of Environment outsourced work to specialist consultants. JASPERS had played a role in these projects but as there was no Completion Note they were not reflected in the analysis;
- Projects selected for JASPERS assistance were more likely to be challenging than non-assisted projects; and
- At the start of the programme period the durations for projects were longer as Member States and JASPERS developed capacity in new areas. As many of the environment projects have been similar, consultants working on non-assisted projects benefitted from this learning process.

For these reasons, FB considered that wider contextual factors should be acknowledged when discussing project timescales and that value could be gained from considering the whole lifespan of a project, rather than just the timescales relating to Commission. In Bulgaria these issues did not occur as JASPERS assistance was sought on all Major Projects.

3.2 Interruption Queries

The number of interruptions was considered to decrease over time. The subject of the queries did not necessarily relate to areas where JASPERS had assisted, however, and it was acknowledged that it was a learning process for all of those involved. In particular, it was highlighted that there were a significant amount of interruptions relating to environmental matters which resulted in Romanian Ministries commissioning their own reviews in this area.

3.3 Skills and capacity

GV highlighted the importance of having the necessary skills and experience within Member States and JASPERS to handle all topics. The Member States also recognised that their own internal constraints can have a significant impact on the performance of JASPERS and the availability of suitable projects.

Capacity issues have been significant in relation to JASPERS support on environmental issues which have been a considerable source of delay, in particular in the early stages of the Programme Period. The ability of the Member State and JASPERS to respond to stringent environmental requirements depends on the capacity within the organisations respective environmental teams. It was also felt there was a disconnect between DG REGIO and DG REGIO's Environment team, who have provided detailed assessments of projects. It was considered that greater co-ordination between DG REGIO departments and earlier recognition of the environmental requirements would assist Member States and JASPERS.

3.4 Topics receiving JASPERS assistance

Representatives from the Member States suggested that there was sometimes inconsistency in the quality of support offered by JASPERS. For some topics JASPERS appeared to be less willing to provide support and the quality of available expertise varied across different sectors. Initially there was also confusion with regards to the remit of JASPERS and the relationship with DG REGIO. It was however, acknowledged that issues relating to quality need to take into account the availability and quality of information provided by Member States.

Bulgarian and Romanian delegates considered that the ongoing relationship with JASPERS would benefit from a more open and flexible approach that takes into account the respective capacities of the Member States and also JASPERS. FB emphasised that it is vital that the Member States are aware of the level of expertise and available support within JASPERS to avoid delays in the application process. Member States also suggested that they would rather have sustained and comprehensive support for a proportion of projects, and in areas where JASPERS has capacity, rather than a piecemeal approach across the full range of projects. In Bulgaria, although transport projects had generally benefited from a full range of support, assistance was not provided across all the tasks for Urban Transport projects.

Delegates emphasised that JASPERS should be aware of constraints within the beneficiaries throughout the lifespan of the project. It was suggested that JASPERS support needs to acknowledge local conditions and limitations in order to overcome local constraints. The opening of a local JASPERS office in Sofia was seen to have been very successful at increasing this awareness and improving communication between JASPERS and beneficiaries in Bulgaria. Site visits and meetings with beneficiaries were also thought to be beneficial.

Romanian delegates suggested that where JASPERS is not able to fully address queries from Member States then beneficiaries should be provided with sufficient notice so that they can seek additional support. Overall FB considered that there was now perhaps more realistic expectations of the support available from JASPERS and that the Romanian Ministry of Environment saw JASPERS as one of a number of tools to assist project development. Indeed both Bulgarian and Romanian delegates highlighted that there were areas where the Member States maintained sufficient competency to deliver tasks without JASPERS support.

3.5 Horizontal Support

Delegates reiterated a desire for a transparent approach from JASPERS in relation to horizontal support. It was felt that there were topics where JASPERS appeared to be reluctant to assist with politically sensitive tasks (such as scheme prioritisation) or where they lacked capacity in that particular field. GV emphasised that in these instances mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that Member States are made aware of this.

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3.6 *Politically sensitive issues*

Delegates from the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport referred to instances where they felt that JASPERS was less willing to assist. Examples given included feasibility studies for highway schemes (in particular where the schemes were under implementation) and options analysis based on outdated strategy documents. The Member States suggested that JASPERS appeared to be reluctant to challenge decisions that could be politically sensitive. Although the Member States accepted that it is likely that there will be further situations where this occurs, CD emphasised that JASPERS needs to inform the Member States at an early stage so that they can make alternative arrangements for seeking assistance.

Member States also referred to use of JASPERS feedback as political arguments when selecting solutions.

3.7 *Feedback from DG REGIO*

Delegates highlighted that they had received limited feedback on JASPERS performance from DG REGIO. Greater awareness of topics where DG REGIO had concerns about JASPERS and earlier intervention would reduce delays, facilitate continued learning and enable Member States to seek assistance in the most appropriate areas. FB also suggested that there was a need to introduce mechanisms to enable Member States to escalate concerns where they consider JASPERS is not delivering upon tasks agreed within Action Plans. Careful consideration of capacity within JASPERS would reduce uncertainty and ensure that Action Plans reflect available resources.

4. **JASPERS Impact on Project Quality**

BF outlined a number of areas where JASPERS had scope to positively impact on projects including through assistance with detailed design, option analysis and horizontal assignments. Although generally positive, initial findings from the evaluation had suggested that earlier involvement in project development would increase the impact on project quality. In response to these findings the Romanian and Bulgarian delegates made the following observations.

The impact on project quality has varied depending on the involvement of JASPERS in project development although, generally it was thought to have added value across sectors. As identified previously, the Member States highlighted that the impact on quality had been affected by the quality and availability of JASPERS support, support received external to JASPERS and the lines of communication. There is now a better understanding of the role of JASPERS and with earlier involvement in the next Programme Period it is hoped that this will facilitate a greater contribution to project quality.

MD highlighted that JASPERS had provided assistance to Bulgaria with a breadth of expertise across Operational Programmes for Transport, Urban Transport, Environment and Competitiveness. This included input to both Major and non-Major Projects. The Managing Authority considered JASPERS to be a good partner and that they had assisted with the process of absorbing funds.

Romanian Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Business

Romanian delegates responsible for economic competitiveness provided a number of case studies on projects that JASPERS had supported. The Ministry considered that JASPERS had assisted with the quality of the projects in particular for energy projects. The most significant factor behind the success of JASPERS was considered to be the quality of personnel and although their experiences had varied across projects, overall it was positive. Where issues had arisen they were not necessarily related to JASPERS involvement. The following examples demonstrate the range of assistance that JASPERS has provided:

1. State Aid Issues – JASPERS has provided valuable expertise relating to State Aid for a broadband infrastructure project along with wider technical support. In addition, JASPERS assisted with developing submissions for 8 large combustion plants. The first project provided a template and following the receipt of a JASPERS Completion Note the application was submitted and approved by DG REGIO. Despite following the template for the previously approved project, on subsequent combustion plant applications issues were raised, in particular in relation to State Aid. The Ministry has now had to reconsider how all the schemes will be funded.
2. Research and development - JASPERS provided extensive support on a research and development project for a new bridge. Technical assistance was provided throughout the application period and it is considered to have helped reduce the time taken to submit the application and reduced the number and difficulty of interruption queries. The process of JASPERS assistance was smoothed through early involvement and by providing JASPERS with information where required.

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3. Discussions with Financial Institutions - JASPERS assisted the Member State with discussions with the European Investment Bank and the World Investment Bank relating to funding absorption. DM acknowledged that there was a lack of knowledge in this area within the Ministry and as such JASPERS assistance was invaluable.

5. Discussion on Preliminary Recommendations on Project Quality

Delegates from Romania and Bulgaria broadly agreed with the findings relating to impact on project quality although for the next programming period there will be a need for further external support in response to any broadening of scope. FB suggested that based upon the experience gained from the initial programme period, Romania's Ministry of Environment will not seek to use JASPERS on every project. Delegates from both Member States suggested that JASPERS should perhaps focus less on individual projects and instead seek to provide high-level expertise to be used by beneficiaries and consultants. Provision of templates and guidance would provide greater scope for beneficiaries to complete applications with greater independence.

GV specified that JASPERS support will continue to be particularly important for larger projects which have greater significance for the overall programme. The delegates from Bulgaria acknowledged that they were considering broadening the areas in which they liaised with JASPERS including assistance with project phasing and input into strategic documents. Thus far JASPERS has been reluctant to take a strong lead in strategic elements as they have avoided involvement in aspects of work that could be considered political. However, it was considered that support for Member States on strategic elements, in particular along corridors and across national barriers, is an area where additional support would be particularly beneficial if political constraints are overcome.

In Bulgaria support has been received towards developing management structures in the rail sector and for developing project management capabilities for beneficiaries. MD also referred to assistance in the environment sector which if successful will be extended to other areas. Stakeholders in Bulgaria have expressed a desire for greater involvement from JASPERS in the implementation of projects.

6. JASPERS Impact on Administrative Capacity

Prior to the next programming period, Member States identified a need to assist contracting authorities in closing down existing projects as this is a new area for Member States. Assistance with phasing may also be required, including consideration of projects carried over from the first programming period. If JASPERS is to assist with programme phasing then existing commitments and resourcing of JASPERS will need to be acknowledged.

JASPERS is already involved in planning for the next programming period in Bulgaria. Although the programme has helped to develop capacity in the Member State, the need for continued support was acknowledged as there remains areas where there is less internal capacity.

When asked about their experience relating to knowledge transfer within the Member States and the added value provided by JASPERS, delegates suggested there was potential for improving the exchange of information including between Member States. A desire for greater dissemination of guidance was also identified. MD referred to existing knowledge transfer, but hoped that proposals being developed for next year will provide greater structure and fluidity to facilitate a more consistent transfer of intelligence. MD also suggested that earlier JASPERS involvement in developing horizontal support would increase the likelihood of quality improvements.

7. Discussion on Preliminary Recommendations on Administrative Capacity

The recommendations were received positively by representatives from Romania and Bulgaria although a number of additional suggestions were made to improve the interaction between JASPERS and Member States.

Delegates suggested that overall the interaction between JASPERS and Member States could be strengthened through clearer definition of roles and responsibilities, lines of communication and requirements for information. Prompter feedback is considered desirable as although there are existing forms, a more direct and flexible approach would support changing circumstances, such as changes in JASPERS personnel, and enable Member States to respond earlier. Where new staff are recruited by JASPERS, early contact with Member States would enable the JASPERS official to gain familiarity with local conditions and improve working relationships. Improved channels of communication between JASPERS appointed consultants and Member States would also help address current barriers when providing feedback.

MD suggested that a degree of flexibility was required for timescales to account for delays caused by JASPERS. Preference was therefore given to setting timescales for delivery internally. There was also a further request for earlier acknowledgement from JASPERS where they lacked the capacity or resources to assist Member States.

Delegates considered that the scope for JASPERS to influence organisational structures would be more limited as there are significant political factors and established structures that would need to be considered.

7.1 *Impact of staff turnover at JASPERS*

DG REGIO suggested that they thought a significant barrier impacting upon JASPERS support was rotation of officials. However, the Member States present at the workshop did not consider this to be a significant issue.

7.2 *Training and Knowledge transfer*

MI suggested that JASPERS could play a more proactive role in training to ensure that training and guidance is in place to provide beneficiaries with the necessary skills to address issues before they arise. Existing examples of forward planning included an action relating to training in this year's Romanian environment Action Plan. An ex ante agreement is also in place for the Member State covering EIA training.

Delegates acknowledged that JASPERS does not have the resources to provide training on all areas, especially if provided with additional responsibilities elsewhere. Resources should therefore be concentrated on areas where there is greatest benefit, with particular value gained from transferring technical knowledge and providing expertise in areas which are less developed (e.g. new technologies, climate change adaption and renewable energy sources).

FB highlighted that there are other factors that may influence knowledge transfer. Structural reforms, for example, could reduce the transfer of knowledge in instances where beneficiaries are given tasks currently carried out at the managing authority level.

7.3 *Language*

In relation to overcoming language barriers representatives from the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport did not consider that this was a significant issue for them. The opening of an office in Sofia has significantly improved communication between the Member State and JASPERS. The Romanian delegates also referred to JASPERS' use of Romanian consultants in helping to overcome this issue.

Project:	JASPERS Evaluation	Job No/Ref:	60239949
Purpose:	Workshop with Hungarian & Slovenian authorities	Date held:	Tue 14 August 2012
Held at:	Sofitel Hotel, Budapest, Hungary	Made by:	PM
Present:	Bernard Feeney (BF) AECOM Peter Morrow (PM) AECOM Ms. Beatrix Horvath (BH) Coordination Ms. Zsuzsanna Kondor (ZK) Managing Authority (Hungary) Ms. Timea Baan (TB) Transport Managing Mr. Florian Szaloki (FS) Authority (Hungary) Mr. Adam Abdulwahab (AA) DG REGIO	Distribution:	AECOM
Apologies:	Mr. Blaž Mozetič Mrs. Nena Dokuzov	Slovenian authorities	

No.	Item	Action By
1	<p>Introductions</p> <p>BF opened the meeting at 09:50, presenting and discussing via PowerPoint slides the terms of reference for the evaluation and the preliminary findings and recommendations. The Slovenian delegates did not attend the meeting.</p> <p>The following records the instances where the delegates interjected or discussed particular issues.</p>	
2	<p>Terms of Reference</p> <p>FS asked whether projects that 'fell out' of JASPERS assistance had been considered in the study. BF said that the study had also looked at non-JASPERS assisted projects.</p> <p>In relation to the ToR for Task 3, FS stated that all of the Hungarian projects were JASPERS assisted. Hungary was always keen to use JASPERS assistance.</p> <p>BF stated that there does seem to be a difference between member states (MS) in the understanding of the role of JASPERS. For example, Romania have a large number of Environmental projects and they realised that JASPERS resource in this area is limited and so hired separate assistance. However the peak of such projects has now passed and so they are likely to use JASPERS more.</p>	
3	<p>Results of Tasks 1 and 2</p> <p>FS raised an issue regarding the number of 'days saved' by JASPERS. Is there an issue that some MS avoid try to avoid JASPERS assistance for 'poorer quality' projects (and vice versa), however on occasion DG REGIO forced them to use JASPERS, making it harder for such projects to be processed. BF acknowledged this point but also noted that some MS say that they give</p>	

JASPERS the more difficult/complex projects rather than those that are 'poorer quality'.

FS suggested that authorities can exercise political pressure for certain projects that don't have JASPERS assistance. BF replied that this depends on the attitude of the MS.

FS was interested as to why the instances of JASPERS support in the 'State Aid' topic was low, and anticipated that this would increase in the future due to the rules resulting in a lot of checking of documentation/

AA acknowledged that it is not clear how to apply the State Aid rules.

BF suggested that resourcing for the forthcoming programme period may be an issue for JASPERS.

BH suggested that the level of intervention in relation to the 'Project Concept/Programming' topic has risen more recently, certainly as Hungary now involves JASPERS earlier e.g. in feasibility studies.

BH stated that Hungary used JASPERS for Environmental issues a lot, especially as the nearby Vienna office has a good environmental expert. BH also noted an issue that sometimes national environmental policies were not in line with EU policies.

FS stated that they had implemented their own practices to mitigate this, to avoid projects being stopped.

FS also raised concerns about the tension between the initial engineering/cost-benefit analysis (CBA) estimate of schemes and the difference with competition price (which often includes claims). The funding gap for the former is however fixed by the Commission and will not allow it to be altered. This is a major systemic problem as the eventual cost can be significantly different.

BH also raised similar concerns regarding public procurement and how contingency is included within price.

BF gave two observations. (1) has JASPERS led to an increased absorption fund? and (2) DG REGIO seems to conduct very elaborate environmental assessment, but could this be more coherent?

FS noted that in relation to Interruptions, the State Aid topic was the only one rise in 2010-12 compared to 2006-09.

FS also raised an issue with the capacity of the desk officer to raise comments on applications, suspecting limited capacity. They always seem to have experts alongside them, so there is a third level of overlap; another set of opinions which can be ridiculous. Is it the desk officer's opinion or a third party's? The desk officers don't have local knowledge and so ask local sub-contractors. These issues can be very subjective.

BF acknowledged that the desk officers have the capacity to buy in consultancy advice, but there may be issues with what is considered to be a 'significant' issue for a project.

FS it would be beneficial if a benchmark study could be undertaken into costs/km for (transport) schemes. A unit cost database could be produced. There is not a good understanding of actual project costs, particularly in Central Europe, and this distorts competition. A minimum and maximum cost/km is needed to aid understanding and public procurement. There is also an issue with price rises being accepted year on year, which could be the result of cartel activities.

BF stated that producing unit costs was a notoriously difficult thing to do. MS have stated that they need greater help in public procurement – documentation, performance indicators – would help significantly.

FS asked what the motive was for non-major projects to seek JASPERS

assistance.

BH stated that they may be 'priority projects' which could be complex and require the development of a system.

BF stated that the smallest MS's have more non-major projects and have fewer technical skills and there can be planning process issues. It could be possible that they are more complex than the major ones, so JASPERS assistance should be seen as a positive thing.

4 **Break @ 11.30**

FS left the meeting and ZK arrived.

5 **Impact on Project Quality – Findings**

BH noted the value of early involvement of JASPERS. Hungary involved them in this programming period. It would also be good to involve them before the programming period. In one particular project, an application was made and the Commission asked for JASPERS to be involved. The Commission then asked for the Completion Note before the start of the appraisal. There were also 3 cases where they had to go back to earlier stages of the project planning process.

BF stated that AECOM's remit was to find out what JASPERS did over the period, but we also have to consider the further potential of JASPERS, however it should be understood that in the early days, JASPERS was in a start-up phase.

TB also stated that JASPERS has had earlier involvement in Transport projects. For example, one project was particularly poorly prepared and JASPERS assistance improved it substantially.

BF noted that it seemed that a 'model' had been developed in Hungary. Can this be developed for other sectors? As JASPERS has always been demand driven, MS do need to be more proactive in this regard.

ZK stated that there are whole sectors that have become dependent on EU funding. We have benefitted from the best JASPERS experts in developing skills in project management and design. We have tried to involve them in programme and concept development, i.e. from the very first moment. We have also involved JASPERS in capacity building, among our consultants too.

BH stated that this year they identified some horizontal tasks for JASPERS, e.g. in R&D sector.

ZK said that the MS seem to have different approaches/strategies, yet Hungary has maximised JASPERS involvement.

BF enquired as to why JASPERS were involved so early in strategic level of Transportation projects?

BH said that transport decision making is more centralised in Hungary and state directed. Also, the local JASPERS Transport expert is very able.

ZK said that MS should do the strategic planning itself, and an outside appointment can be a very sensitive issue. JASPERS experts do need to be able to think at a strategic level (as some don't).

BF said each MS has different practices and strategies with differing levels of political baggage. However some countries have more centralised decision making. He could envisage JASPERS having different levels of involvement or JASPERS having an 'advisory' or 'for comment' role for projects (although some MS may be against this). An additional, third, role could be dealing with specific issues via horizontal assignments.

6 **Impact on Project Quality – Recommendations**

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TB stated that regarding involvement in Feasibility Studies, this is already happening in Hungary.

BF enquired as to whether there were any issues with the railway authorities developing their plans alongside JASPERS?

BH replied that Hungary has established one state company for preparation of plans/projects – 'National Infrastructure Development Company'.

BF asked whether JASPERS should be more proactive in horizontal assignment development and identification.

BH responded that there are four horizontal tasks in the waster sector, they are good examples of proactive involvement, yet it is more difficult to start working on these sort of projects which is why these horizontal assignments have been developed.

ZK stated that in Transport, JASPERS experts may see their role differently; if the particular expert understands the project better or is more experienced, he will be more proactive. We have already identified any training needs that have arisen.

BH said that there was a reluctance regarding horizontal assignments initially as it was not focussed specifically on projects, yet now there is a realisation of how important capacity building is.

AA stated one concern with a more 'proactive JASPERS'. There have been some instances where JASPERS advice was ignored. If JASPERS takes a more proactive role, will it lack ownership?

BH replied that the instances where JASPERS advice was ignored have not occurred in Hungary.

BF outlined that the study had focussed on a subset of projects. AECOM ranked all of the projects according to how much overlap there was. In a third of cases, the MS ignored JASPERS advice, but this was for an abnormal set of projects and so not a widespread problem. We do see evidence of where JASPERS was involved in 6-7 meetings (i.e. a lot) and the MS did seem to embrace the advice of JASPERS by and large.

BF asked whether JASPERS have a protocol for this, i.e. are there Completion Note issues that could be considered for horizontal assignments? Some MS have few horizontal assignments, why is this, surely there is a need and are such assignments transferable across MS?

BH supported this idea and said that there they got JASPERS experts involved in a new R&D project which was very useful. Agreed that transferability would be useful as there are lots of similar assignments that have the same directives. A networking platform would be a good initiative.

4 **Break @ 13.00 for lunch**

5 **Discussions continued**

ZK stated that she saw more value in JASPERS developing guidance rather than providing similar assistance to lots of projects. It would be a good use of resources, especially for new/niche projects.

BH stated that some projects have new staff/consultants, and a lot of time is spent on explaining all the details to them, seemingly repeatedly explaining things. They should assist one another.

ZK said that sometimes JASPERS can become the 'go between' between the beneficiaries and the civil servants, as JASPERS are viewed as being impartial.

6 **Impact on Administrative Capacity – Findings**

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BH enquired as to whether capacity building is part of the new strategy and BF confirmed that it was.

7 **Impact on Administrative Capacity – Recommendations**

ZK thought that recommendations seemed to be very relevant, especially those about capacity building. JASPERS could possibly come up with standard methodologies. In relation to working in more languages, this would help as there is only one Hungarian-speaking JASPERS expert, so we have to rely on translation.

AA stated that having multiple languages in use can actually reduce efficiency and it is not really feasible for smaller countries. Important to have project skills before language skills, but the rapport that JASPERS has with countries is excellent.

BH stated that the JASPERS experts must have international experience, and this is something that cannot be 'bought' through consultants etc.

ZK said that the pool of Hungarian expertise is limited, is there a danger that using Hungarian experts more and more could endanger JASPERS?

AA said that this was not a large concern, and the limited prevalence of Hungarian as a spoken language limits the employment pool.

ZK said that there is an issue of not communicating fluently but also discussions can be very technical.

BH stated that they often use the same interpreter who is familiar with these technical terms. The use of English is of course an alternative.

ZK said that they were to discuss a training programme this week. They are developing modules for all involved – Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies and Beneficiaries, but it would be good to see 'off the shelf' training packages brought forward, particularly in programme/project management. We are also looking at specific technical training e.g. environmental area.

BH thought this was a big step forward as training was not so systematic before.

ZK said a possible idea would be to involve JASPERS assistance in the first tranche of training and then the MS would be able to run subsequent training themselves after that.

BF enquired about the level of staff turnover.

ZK said that they lose some junior staff within the first year and then more senior civil servants leave after 5-6 years to join the Commission, private sector or move internationally.

BH thought that turnover could be 'good' in some situations, especially if some staff move to the beneficiaries and therefore 'stay in the system' in some shape or form and maintain professional relationships. Often people were attracted out of the Managing Authority into the Intermediate Bodies for higher salaries.

ZK thought that training could mitigate this.

BF enquired about the local consultancy market.

TB stated that they do use it. Some are very good and have a good understanding.

ZK thought that the Hungarian consultancy market was now much smaller and in many ways 'closed'. Such companies were very dependent on public money and could not invest in new methodologies, they don't invest in training so any liaison with JASPERS experts would help them upskill. There is maybe an issue with the expectations of MS of JASPERS, they need to be realistic.

No further issues were raised. The meeting closed.

JASPERS Prague Workshop

Date of Meeting: 14th Aug 2012

Venue: Prague

Parties Present

Mr. John Finnegan (AECOM Dublin)

Ms Evelyn Judge (AECOM Dublin)

Kai Skyczyuski, (DG REGIO)

Katerina Nevesela, Ministry of Regional Development, Czech

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

Jaromir Slezak, Ministry of Transport, Czech

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

Murgonova Zuzana, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia

Viera Jozsova, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia

Lubos Duric, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

John Finnegan

Gave Presentation on Task 1 and Task 2 findings.

John Finnegan

When is it appropriate to involve JASPERS in major projects, at design stage or when presenting the project to JASPERS?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Not an easy question. There are procedures in place that mean the development cycle for projects can take 8-10 years, some of our projects were commenced in the 1990s, in view of new programming period it will be possible to involve JASPERS early, but this was not practical for current programming period.

Then there are also political issues, changing regimes wanting different projects, this is a reality we have to face.

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

Strategic planning is task for superior managing authority,

We are involving JASPERS in feasibility study development phase, for next programming period.

Previously this did not happen as view held that involving JASPERS would entail complications and delays.

Jaromir Slezak, Ministry of Transport, Czech

Are involving JASPERS in the development of the next sector strategy; this was not possible in past (i.e. current) programme period, as that strategy was developed as far back as 1998.

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

When it is possible to involve JASPERS at an early stage, are ok with it. JASPERS are helping higher authorities in a variety of areas including safety, environmental issues, modelling issues; we have asked specific questions to them, and they have provided guidance.

Lubos Duric, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

As part of OP there is an obligation to involve JASPERS in major projects, we try to involve then as soon as possible - but some Feasibility Studies have already been prepared.

We try to involve JASPERS to save time and also it is positive for project promotion.

We are trying to involve JASPERS in Horizontal Assignments for future programming period; we are also trying to involve them in the development of the list of major projects.

JASPERS have been involved in the development of the Air Strategy 2014 – 2020; and the Strategy for Waste Sector.

Model of Project Development

(intervention at different stages involves different costs and benefits, often it is the case that JASPERS is involved at 4th step of project application)

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

Your findings that the impact of JASPERS on project quality has been limited, is that saying projects are not good projects?

John Finnegan

No, we are looking at what JASPERS has achieved, what can be done to improve JASPERS output, it is all about the impact of JASPERS, not looking at the quality of projects

JASPERS are giving good advice on CBA and FS as part of HA

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Agree with what the model is saying about the optimum time for JASPERS to intervene, but reality dictates a different scenario, personally am happy to pick the project with the best CBA, but situation, and politics can get in the way

Every project has their own specific problems; MS can learn how to present projects, using JASPERS to improve project applications, we are still learning from JASPERS

John Finnegan

So sometimes it is a case of finding a project that is possible legally knowing what you want.

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

There are time pressures also to finding suitable projects.

Jaromir Slezak, Ministry of Transport, Czech

There are other aspects, for example the language issue, JASPERS should employ consultants that understand our national legislation, foreign experts are used with no relevant knowledge so we have to spend time informing them, translating documents etc.

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

I support my colleague, it is important for JASPERS intervention to be available in our language. Previously communication was restricted to email (when JASPERS were not involved in feasibility study stage), but now they are present at feasibility steering meetings, with their own consultants, so there is the need to have documents translated, & interpretations

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

Agree

We have had to spend many hours presenting Czech legislation and procurement procedures to JASPERS experts in English. Would speed up process if this was not necessary.

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

Documents are having to be translated.

Jaromir Slezak, Ministry of Transport, Czech

Worry re success indicator you have alluded to in presentation, as have seen situations where after months of months of interruptions, EC have approved projects, - the delay was owing to a lack of understanding at EC level, the project was never changed but eventually approved. JASPERS was right, but took a while for EC to acknowledge this.

DG Environ does not respect Czech legislation

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

Why involve JASPERS in project design, if JASPERS are not performing very well in this area according to interruptions?

John Finnegan

The table misses a lot of the quality of what is happening behind the scenes. We have seen one person say it was a long process of convincing the EC that project should be approved.

Lubos Duric, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Sometimes it is a case of the EC asking for additional information.

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

They say they require more detail, but what is the appropriate level of detail?

KAI

The EC is not shocked if they are asked to be involved earlier in projects.

They are planning on holding a conference later in the year, where MS will be asked to attend and question the EC regarding their systems and processes

On language issue, and involvement of people with necessary language and legislation knowledge, is there the fear that such consultants will be corrupt, have seen cases where EC approached and asked what they want to see in the report.

Jaromir Slezak, Ministry of Transport, Czech

Do not think this is a problem

Recommendations

Lubos Duric, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

How does the new proposals from EC re approval role of JASPERS fit with recommendations as set out here , of an expanded JASPERS role

John Finnegan

The proposal is that the part of JASPERS that would assess projects would be an independent separate department within JASPERS

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

It is hard for me to understand, there would be in effect three teams, one JASPERS team assisting in preparation of project application, a second assessing project application; and a third team in the EC assessing the application

KAI

John and AECOM are looking at JASPERS role, putting forward arguments to alter role,

John Finnegan

The recommendations are not part of any report, not even AECOM's as yet, they have not been discussed at EC level,

John Finnegan

JASPERS is doing v different things in different MS, it is very flexible at the moment – but in genera, at a high level they are a group of experts trying to be helpful as possible

In MS with sophisticated systems of project development, JASPERS are providing advice in terms of what the EC are looking for in applications; in other MS with less sophisticated systems of project development, JASPERS are more involved in developing the project

In Brussels, JASPERS is seen as an advice facility for MS, hence Completion Note originally just went to MS.

But the CN now goes to EC also, this means 2 things:

- CN is a piece of publicity for project
- It is a report, that points out issues with projects

It is a complicated 3-way relationship, with JASPERS partly helping both EC and MS

If there are changes made to role and new aspects to role implemented, it will be important to define the roles clearly

Do you consider there is scope to reduce JASPERS assistance at individual project level and increase their role in terms of strategic planning and horizontal assignments

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

We need JASPERS assistance at project application level as part of next programming period. Have specific projects, have to look at each carefully, still need JASPERS assistance to identify right solution

There is a Horizontal Assignment to develop a strategy Master plan; we are involving them more and more in that aspect of our work; but still need them at the project level, in same capacity as up till now, or more.

Hence if they are to be involved in SP will need more resources.

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

The JASPERS role has evolved, was optional for new MS to avail of JASPERS assistance, then moved to obligation, now starting to talk re Strategic Planning, is it an option we are talking about, or a requirement?

John Finnegan

There is a potential, in principle, for involvement of JASPERS at an early stage to have big impact, if resources existed for them to help in this way, would you be happy?

Feedback I am getting is that you are potentially interested, but not at total expense of involvement of JASPERS in individual projects; and also not on a compulsory basis

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

Don't think JASPERS assistance will be as needed, not in MS where there are sophisticated systems of project development

Katerina Nevesela, Ministry of Regional Development, Czech

MS should have learnt how to do things better by virtue of work to date

John Finnegan

So you are saying you will not need as much JASPERS assistance with individual projects, where will you want help going forward?

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

Depends on kind of project, in the Environmental sector the range of projects is very broad, this differs to transport sector, there are new complicated environmental projects, such as geothermal energy, and air quality, where JASPERS assistance in strategic planning and project applications would go hand in hand.

The programming period is quite short, so this assistance would need to be ongoing now. Would like JASPERS assistance in these areas. Question is will the assistance be voluntary or obligatory?

There is a timing issue, as we are being asked these questions before decision re JASPERS role in future programme - it is difficult to answer in the abstract,, not knowing the conditions

Think however that the quality of applications has improved owing to JASPERS, and JASPERS have helped to deal with issues where we didn't have capacity

Happy for help to continue in relation to new project areas, and areas where do not have capacity.

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

Think JASPERS assistance should be an option, where it can be decided on a case by case basis if JASPERS assistance is required

John Finnegan

And the recommendation that JASPERS would take an active role in deciding Horizontal Assignments?

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

JASPERS do not have knowledge of legal systems, in our country hence hard to see how they could do this.

John Finnegan

So you are experts in own systems and know them best?

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

We ask for HA based on our own knowledge; could see a different picture emerging if JASPERS were to suggest our problem areas.

John Finnegan

In principle MS should be implementing acquis, therefore JASPERS should be able to guide MS to what the systems should be to implement acquis - gave example of environmental projects in Poland - on that basis why wouldn't JASPERS be able to take initiative and suggest guidance needed by MS?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

In some cases we have asked for specific guidance to understand the directions

John Finnegan

So they have given general guidance on issues

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

EC have sometimes stated that the guidance of JASPERS does not express their view

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

EC sometimes do not believe us (re what JASPERS have said?)

John Finnegan

So guidance not enough, EC wants specific assurance that JASPERS has looked at individual projects.

It is hard to generalise, but you value individual project help; sceptical re JASPERS being able to identify HA;

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

Communication could improve between EC and MS

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

Don't think there are reasons for JASPERS to intervene, the big interruptions are related to individual projects i.e. CBA, project financing

John Finnegan

But CBA is a horizontal skill, JASPERS should be able to provide guidance on it that could be applied across projects.

If we look at non-decided projects, and what are issues that arise, usually those projects have not identified a need that they are addressing; there is a need to improve that aspect of project preparation,

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

In transport sector, we know the projects, we know the timing of projects, we are playing with dates at the moment

John Finnegan

But there are projects where there are questions re the identification of need,

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

This is not a strategy issue however, it is an individual project issue, where the route should go

John Finnegan

Identifying need is not an area where JASPERS currently help, it is an area where problems arise, do you see potential for help?

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

See role in FS, there should be guidance on how to do a good FS, MS should be able to prepare quality FS themselves.

Have started to co-operate with JASPERS on this, the output of which will include a methodology, a national methodology.

John Finnegan

So projects will work to the national guidelines in future?

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

JASPERS raised the issue to Ministry of Transport

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

We have invited JASPERS assistance re Horizontal Assignments,

Re Strategic Planning, it is my own personal opinion that JASPERS can identify solutions, but no assurance Government will accept what they say, there are national/political issues at play

John Finnegan

So scope for SP advice to change things are limited by other factors

John Finnegan

(summary)

1. JASPERS involved already in SP for next programming, extent to which happened in this period was limited by timing
2. Can get a lot of advice but there are other issues at play
3. In current period, there is a move to get JASPERS more involved in FS
4. Resistance to idea of JASPERS proposing HA, prefer to identify own needs

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

Depends on definition of HA

John Finnegan

HA is any guidance applicable to more than one project

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

We use JASPERS to prepare CBA guidelines

John Finnegan

You are more advanced in using JASPERS for HA, where more sceptical is with SP, cause of reality of political situation.

You are cautious re the re-allocation of JASPERS resources

On-going need for PA assistance in Slovak transport projects

Viera Jozsova, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia

JASPERS was involved in field of environmental projects since beginning, strongly set within framework of OP, especially with respect to wastewater projects.

We knew priorities, and had a list of Major Projects. JASPERS went to visit each project before a FS was completed.

We organised workshops for all stakeholders, identified what needed for Project Application, the timelines, accessed application and gave feedback,

In terms of SP, JASPERS does not have necessary knowledge re MS, hence it is not realistic, If JASPERS do not know legislation, how can they guide.

Unless terms change in next programming period, will not need JASPERS assistance in wastewater sector,

John Finnegan

You do not anticipate you will need JASPERS to review PA?

Viera Jozsova, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia

Unless conditions change, our consultants got experience, know how to complete Applications, it would just duplicate work

John Finnegan

Do not see need re SP, because not familiar with national conditions/law, see limited role in setting strategy and choosing projects

Viera Jozsova, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia

If do not know how MS functions, then the question is for the national state, they know the strengths and weaknesses of the MS, we are always explaining to JASPERS why things are done the way they are done

John Finnegan

But if you have to comply with acquis, having someone familiar with community rules not helpful?

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

Issue is where MS has more stringent regulations than those set at EU level, the MS regulations go beyond degrees, are more specific - it is people with national experience that have knowledge of this

Role of JASPERS should be to present view of EC and to meet somewhere in the middle

It would be easier for us if we didn't have to spend time presenting/translating this knowledge to JASPERS re our national structures and legal obligations

Kai Skyczyuski, (DG REGIO)

This issue is more applicable to environmental projects

John Finnegan

Summary

Sceptical re JASPERS role in strategic planning

JASPERS already involved in FS

JASPERS doing good work re HA

Sceptical re re-allocation of JASPERS resources (esp Slovak transport), however re environmental projects a lot learnt and do not envisage JASPERS assistance in next period at individual project level unless conditions change

After Lunch

Impact of JASPERS on administration capacity

John Finnegan

Relatively little JASPERS resources going into capacity building

Is taking place, but not formally an objective of JASPERS

Can take place in scenarios where there is:

- An authority like NRA looking after roads, applying learning across projects
- Where beneficiaries do project applications, but there is an Intermediary body who coordinates the work and the learning.

The risk is that individual beneficiaries gain the learning and are not involved in subsequent projects, and lessons are lost,

Need to ensure maximum use of Intermediary bodies/coordinating structures

Views re JASPERS role reviewing administrative structures of MS?

Viera Jozsova, Ministry of Environment, Slovakia

We know ourselves what weak points are – not obvious what JASPERS can do here, maybe organise training courses, I think it would be good, to see what their assessment would be vis a vis our own.

Since beginning of JASPERS, JASPERS have been involved in the dissemination events organised at a central level, where the authorities and beneficiaries and international experts all meet to discuss projects.

All consultants and beneficiaries participate in training.

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

At every meeting JASPERS and beneficiary are present, we are learning something new.

JASPERS very willing to share info, we (Ministry) share with beneficiary, but people move positions, this is an internal problem, not a JASPERS problem

John Finnegan

Is the Ministry for Transport in a position to gather and share skills and learning?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Some is specific to projects, some is general

JASPERS provide us with views from their experience in other MS, this gives us more options

We gather knowledge from each project

We are much better now at project applications, problem is management, we can predict issues better now.

Mostly agree with recommendations, some stuff is already happening

National Motorway Company – staff trained by JASPERS, this has avoided spending money on consultants, but sometimes the politicians decide to use consultants

Petr Bubela, National Coordination Authority, Czech

Ok with recommendations

In reviewing admin capacity would JASPERS include Consultants?

Probably welcome JASPERS opinion, as for politicians, they often welcome outsourcing

Consultancy companies are learning.

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

We cooperate with JASPERS, organise seminars for Feasibility Studies, consultants are present also, no control over consultant staff present
We try to use knowledge from one project in other projects.
There is mutual cooperation between JASPERS, consultants, and the authority

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

Ministry of Environment have developed capacity in area of CBA.
Meet MA and JASPERS to disseminate
Have developed CBA model as part of a Horizontal Assignment
When we have calls for proposals it is obligatory to use the CBA Model if responding to the call. We have seminars on CB for the applicants responding to the call.

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

We have also developed a CB model, asked for JASPERS assistance, they were invited to a workshop.

John Finnegan

Do you find JASPERS Completion Notes useful?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Use for who?
Their quality is improving.

John Finnegan

Are they more geared to selling project or to informing MS?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

It's an issue for JASPERS, don't have problem with CN

Lubos Duric, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Completion Note is the basis for approving projects

John Finnegan

Use CN as evidence?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Depends on question, some answers found in PA

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

Raises question of what should be output of JASPERS work?,
Should they be putting everything into one extensive document?
This is not the situation, after our first interaction with JASPERS we expected a document, but there was none, at a later stage started to issue Completion Notes to MS; later bigger CN docs were required for EC; but sometimes projects still not approved even with a CN.

Jaromir Slezak, Ministry of Transport, Czech

We thought the CN was for the EC; that it would include everything important in a few pages to present the project to the EC.

John Finnegan

A pre-processing document.

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

Role of JASPERS is evolving, but we don't even know what its original role was

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Don't know what EC want from it
Opinion of EC is still developing

John Finnegan

Different people have different views of role of JASPERS

Lubos Duric, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

EC are still coming up with new comments on projects, projects that JASPERS have completed

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

EC bringing up old issues in some instances

John Finnegan

Big issue is role of JASPERS.
You'd welcome JASPERS opinion on administration capacity
Grappling with issue of how to capture know-how.

Discussion points

Question 1 (lessons learnt)

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Personally have learnt a lot re CBA, area work in, can meet and ask experts, there are not too many people can ask, important source of information

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

A lot of knowledge re CBA and FS. These techniques were not used previously; we cooperated with JASPERS in area of CBA and FS

Question 2 (how transfer knowledge)

- Meetings with JASPERS and beneficiaries
- Asked JASPERS to provide training/guidance docs

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

JASPERS present at steering committee meetings for FS
Asked JASPERS to provide training and guidance

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Informal meetings, expert advice on tap, „JASPERS involved early doors

Question 3

John Finnegan

Would skills and approaches used be used in non-Major Projects and non-EU projects?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Yes, trying to prepare all projects to standards of Major JASPERS assisted Projects

Lubos Duric, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

We do not have many non-MP, consulting with JASPERS as part of a HA re non-MP, asking for ideas and opinions

John Finnegan

Are skills being transferred?

Radka Snajderova, Railway Infrastructure Administration, Czech

JASPERS contributed to CBA methodology
Used for non-MP
For MPs, use JASPERS for all, so knowledge automatically transferred

Every rail corridor has one project used as model project, which is then used for all other projects in the corridor

Question 4

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Hard to say, we work with one office, can't compare

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

Consistent quality of support provided

John Finnegan

Are there things JASPERS could do better?

Lucie Pudivitrova, Ministry of Environment, Czech

We received guidance documents on filling out application for waste projects

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

Interesting have asked for similar guidance

Question 5

John Finnegan

What factors?

Dusan Brecka, Ministry of Transport, Slovakia

When JASPERS resources away, time passes, it can be a problem,

John Finnegan

This is a capacity issue

JASPERS Warsaw Workshop

Date of Meeting: 8th Aug 2012

Venue: Warsaw

Parties Present

Mr. John Finnegan (AECOM Dublin)

Ms Evelyn Judge (AECOM Dublin)

Stefan Sarna, (AECOM Warsaw)

Juliet Martinez, (EC Project Manager)

Michael Piwowarczyk, MRD Poland

Sabina Rutkowska, MRD Poland

Anna Potocka, MRD Poland

Tomasz Wydra, MRD Poland

Katarzyna Kaczkowska, MRD Poland

Honorata Sieminska, Ministry of Transport, Construction and Maritime (MT), Poland

Jaroslaw Kopylowski, Centre for EU Transport Projects (CEUTP), Poland

Michael Filipek, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, NFEP&WM, Poland

Ewa Zbiec, General Directorate for National Roads and Motorways, Poland

Majodutenu Sue, Intercity railways, Poland

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Agne Kazlauskaite, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Dainius Kazlauskas, Deputy Head of Environmental Projects Managing Authority, Lithuania

Irita Barakane, Ministry of Finance, Latvia

Edgars Kalbergs, Ministry of Environmental protection and regional development, Latvia

Egila Stokis, Ministry of Transport, Latvia

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

John Finnegan

Gave Presentation on Task 1 and Task 2 findings.

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

Did you take into account active and interrupted DG REGIO durations?

John: Yes, explained how we did.

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

- (1) When will report be finalised?
- (2) Where are Lithuania not appearing in the stats?
- (3) Lithuania had long involvement with JASPERS, have circa 7 major projects, all involved with JASPERS, if we look at JASPERS from point of view of:

- a. Speeding up approvals
- b. Improving quality and maturity of applications

b - Lithuania have received a lot of help re the quality and maturity of applications, gave e.g. of a scientific project where beneficiary was strong on technical side of things but not so strong in relation to other aspects of project development, that is where JASPERS assistance was important. Communication with EC was v important.

a – Regarding the speed of approvals, have a huge system on a national level of reviewing projects. At a first level. JASPERS submit Completion Note (CN) to Implementing Agency. Then the Implementing Body provides questions, JASPERS responds and reviews CN accordingly. Then it goes to Managing Authority for questions, JASPERS has to re-issue CN each time. This is an important process, it is not causing a bottleneck for Lithuania; maybe it is one for the EC.

Are using JASPERS for assistance in relation to:

- CB of environmental projects;
- horizontal issues;
- procurement of environmental projects.

In area of CBA have asked for JASPERS assistance, but also get separate review by experts and align accordingly.

In area of State Aids have seen situation where JASPERS have stated there is no state aid issue and the EC have asked for evidence of this.

In general, consider JASPERS a huge help, but some issues need to be ironed out on EC side to make process aligned and as efficient as can be.

John Finnegan

Get opinion of attendees regarding the possible role of JASPERS in approving projects?

(Juliette clarified proposal to expand JASPERS role to providing draft approval from new JASPERS office in Brussels, partial agreement on this proposal)

Dainius Kazlauskas, Deputy Head of Environmental Projects Managing Authority, Lithuania

Did you make adjustment for different types of projects in measuring JASPERS effort?

Did we look at correlation between JASPERS support and length of decision?

John Finnegan

We measured the effort, in terms of durations, for each member state and each sector. It is hard to draw conclusions with so many factors at play. We also looked at CN topics and interruption letter topics; and the number of meetings.

Felt it was not fair to do correlations, as so many factors affect timelines, and it is hard to measure the actual amount of JASPERS support given. From limited evidence available there isn't much variability in level of JASPERS support.

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Do any MS have experience of financial engineering?

Do MS have experience of presenting projects to EC before applications actually made?

Is EC dependent on Desk Officers (DO), or do they consult JASPERS directly?

John Finnegan

We know JASPERS are giving advice on tolling, and how the tolling will affect applications. Have heard MS say that as time goes on they are looking at other ways of financing such as PPPs, commercial ventures. Have been warned that this is an area where JASPERS advice will be needed in the future.

Know it is very usual in some cases for EC to be involved in early stages of project, before an application is made. Different DOs have different types of relationships with their MS, and interact with them in different ways. It does happen that DO are involved in project development, have seen them involved in designing programmes and identifying major projects – this works well for those involved. JASPERS is also involved in three way meetings between DO, MS and JASPERS.

It also happens that EC use JASPERS in advisory capacity, as well as to confirm understanding of CNs.

So there is scope for early involvement.

There is scope of EC to interact with JASPERS before and after project application.

Juliette

It is an open secret that the Romanian DO is involved in preparing the Romanian strategy. Each DO takes their own approach to communicating with MS, some have hands-on, some have hands-off approach. In Poland the projects are more developed, so the interaction with DO is at a later stage of project development. In Hungary, JASPERS support provided at an early stage.

DO can contact JASPERS directly if need clarification, or if have project for which there is no CN. Some DO have formal or casual meetings with JASPERS.

Michael Piwowarczyk, MRD Poland

We have a lot of formal contact with DO before project being submitted, to discuss problem areas. This is not a problem for us, owing to fact DO is eager to interact owing to large number of projects.

JASPERS is flexible. EC is flexible. Relationships adjust to needs and circumstances of MS, there is always scope to change relationships.

John Finnegan

Are views positive re JASPERS? Is it living up to expectations?

Should CN tell you all areas where application might be weak, or should it present the best possible case for application?

Agne Kazlauskaite, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Second option.

We think that EC should trust JASPERS, it is an EC institution.

MS and EC should use JASPERS more. The communication between JASPERS, MS and EC should be more frequent, less formal.

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

JASPERS should be a source of help. On a national level have a lot of institutions available to value projects, Implement Agency; Implement Body; Manag Authority; We want JASPERS as a source of assistance, but we trust our own institutions to know if the project is a good one or not. From a national perspective we know projects, the EC does not have this knowledge of projects, so JASPERS is a good idea for EC.

Sabina Rutkowska, MRD Poland

Everything depends on moment JASPERS gets involved. If the project is completed, the CN is needed for the EC – in this situation JASPERS just extends the project time. When JASPERS involved at an early stage, can assist beneficiaries and MS, when involved later the assistance is for EC.

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

JASPERS help is for both.

As part of CN JASPERS should identify the crucial weaknesses associated with project, and points to take account of in the future. As well as giving a sense of the project.

John Finnegan

You put value on CN, but reserve right to have own opinion.

Certain MS are reluctant to involve JASPERS till the end, feel it will just identify problems, they are however learning to trust the process, and see that involving JASPERS earlier yields benefits if issues are rectified earlier. Question of gaining trust of MS.

In Poland, there is a large machinery in place to decide on project, so it is reasonable to have complete projects presented to JASPERS for quality check.

In other MS, when projects are presented to JASPERS are they in a final form, or open to changes?

Agne Kazlauskaite, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Depends on certain projects. Have cases where involved early stages of infrastructure, preparing for procurement.

It depends on beneficiary.

The moment when they are involved, depends on MA, they are coordinating activities.

In Lithuania, we try to get involvement started early in year for beneficiary, it is important to catch the moment, to inform beneficiary, they are the ones that need the assistance.

Irita Barakane, Ministry of Finance, Latvia

Up till now have involved JASPERS at an early stage, at the idea stage, when preparations starting. JASPERS point out the risks. They are speeding up approval time. Can depend on JASPERS expert. Have seen a case where the delay was with the issuing of the CN.

Sabina Rutkowska, MRD Poland

Depends on project, competitions projects need to have applications completed, it depends on the sector. In some sectors (e.g. waste) the list of projects is developed centrally, JASPERS involved in programming.

In other sectors projects selected on basis of competition.

Stages of Project Development

Michael Piwowarczyk, MRD Poland

Fully agree with opinion of the potential benefits associated with early involvement of JASPERS.

JASPERS and MA roles: JASPERS is looking objectively at the issues associated with projects; the projects that the MA owns.

Think there is a big advantage in having a flexible tool, that can be engaged at early stages of strategic programming, or that can be involved more in project development through identification of project limitations and improving project presentation.

Is this practical? Yes generally. Group major projects which are not uniform, looking at new perspectives, problematic areas, need to receive EC opinion on these. JASPERS not involved from beginning in the case of (1) competition projects; (2) where no projects is v large

Based on our evaluation, areas where JASPERS involved:

- one area where JASPERS assistance needed – combining public and private funding. JASPERS already involved in this in the Health care sector
- how to acquire private funding
- programming basics

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Yes we are involving JASPERS in programming for next period.

Dainius Kazlauskas, Deputy Head of Environmental Projects Managing Authority, Lithuania

We have one Horizontal Assignment (HA), JASPERS are involved in the development of a Water Strategy to 2020.

JASPERS are involved in feasibility studies.

Agne Kazlauskaite, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Also have similar HA for transport sector, JASPERS involved in working out the key issues

John

And Latvia? Is the model the same? Is this how you approach it? Is there potential to involve JASPERS early?

Irita Barakane, Ministry of Finance, Latvia

Thought about it, but decision was made to bring in JASPERS later. Do not know at this stage what projects will be included in next period. When have decided, will bring in JASPERS.

So the MA is making the strategy decision, and using JASPERS to refine and present projects.

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

For Estonia, haven't seen need to bring in JASPERS for SP. It is an area where we should be making decisions. JASPERS involvement is more at project level.

Juliette

Juliettes points re recommendations

- (1) JASPERS has to take into account MS specific recommendations – these are on EC website – these have to be the starting point (set out in individual MS fiches)
- (2) DO should be involved – they know the issues
- (3) Allocation of resources, future topics – financial engineering, need to get the resources, state aid ??
- (4) SEA – expect JASPERS to have expertise in SEA, not just EIA (DG Environ issue)

Dainius Kazlauskas, Deputy Head of Environmental Projects Managing Authority, Lithuania

We do that in the environment sphere - involve JASPERS in programming

Katarzyna Kaczkowska, MRD Poland

Not realistic to involve JASPERS in actively suggesting HA, as they are involved in major projects – resource issue.

Early involvement – probably advisable, but it is a timing issue, project has to be within eligibility period, given timelines feasibility studies should be taking place now, but they are working on current projects.

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

For Strategic Planning, it is more a national thing, procedures are in place in national regulations. Dont see JASPERS involvement there.

For Feasibility Studies, see room for improvement, JASPERS involved in TOR, the requirement can be put forward by EC i.e. questions FS needs to address, standards etc.

There is also the issue of JASPERS having decision role in next period.

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Help always need, good practice needs to be shared, but cannot see role for JASPERS in SP. It is a national thing. Yes for discussions with JASPERS, sharing good practice learning.

Sabina Rutkowska, MRD Poland

Can't agree more with others. Problem not SP, knowledge of issues connected with MS are important. Yes, for JASPES help and assistance, with projects, even choosing them, but at a strategy level, don't see JASPERS involvement. Rather let them to focus on best practice, it is a national issue identifying need.

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

Help and advice on SP yes, but not a decision making role.

Michael Filipek, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, NFEP&WM, Poland

In highly complex projects, there is a role for JASPERS in design. Not possible for them to be involved in all projects, owing to the number, also it is not necessary.

Horizontal Assignments – JASPERS were involved in developing national guidelines (known anecdotely as JASPERS guidelines). A problem emerged - EC had some objections with respect to the methods used in guidelines. Had to apply different rules. There is a need more precision re role of JASPERS wrt HA. Is it a stamp of authority?. Do the EC always agree with JASPERS views?

Majodutenu Sue, Intercity railways, Poland

JASPERS is very helpful for projects already included in OP.

We Submit environmental documents to JASPERS to be examined.

We have informal meetings to clarify issues.

For next perspective want to keep work on individual projects, the projects need to be examined by experts with relevant expertise.

Important to decide when feasibility study should be carried out. Important decision, with cost implications, as further on documents are more detailed.

Have very frequent interaction with JASPERS.

CN are important sources of project description/detail, they recognise the value of work currently doing.

John Finnegan

To summarise, you are saying the status of horizontal guideline documents needs to be established.

Katarzyna Kaczkowska, MRD Poland

Yes, for both member states, and also for the Commission.

John Finnegan

Impact of JASPERS on administration capacity?

Michael Piwowarczyk, MRD Poland

National authority has role of SP

JASPERS can be involved in FS

JASPERS is an external organisation, does not have decision making powers. It can add a point of view, which may be used. Decision making power lies with National Authority.

Share this view with others at the table.

The role of the National Authority is to provide a competent effective system of government, JASPERS is external to this role. It can add a point of view, an external objective point of view.

From Poland's point of view, the administrative structure is already in place, it has been put in place to deal with national circumstances.

There are certain relationships between the various agencies and authorities that external organisations like JASPERS are not aware of.

JASPERS may offer a very precious view, which may be used, it can be useful from this perspective.

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

From the recommendations, a lot of functions are to be assigned to JASPERS, the phrase good at everything, master of nothing springs to mind. The recommendations raise a lot of questions for this reason, re competencies and resources.

Need to be cautious re number of fuctions.

Dissemination of knowledge is very important, the knowledge is out there, but it can get lost, and be hard to find.

A website of relevant JASPERS resources would be useful.

Michael Filipek, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, NFEP&WM, Poland

Important not to dilute role of JASPERS.

It is not role of JASPERS to stand as consultants, or to supplement National authority. They are there are a group of experts, with independent point of view, with knowledge of Acquis, as well as expert technical and financial knowledge.

They are an important informal source of information – we want them to read the mind of EC.

They are knowledge of a vast array of project types.

They have knowledge of the most frequent mistakes/errors made, these should be made known to MS. Like wise they know what projects have been successful. In this respect they are an important source of continuity in terms of what procedures have worked well in other MS.

John Finnegan

JASPERS was intended to be a temporary entity, hence its limited mandate. We are hearing a lot of praise for it, we need to find ways to capture knowledge for MS, so as to bring MS to point where they don't need JASPERS. How do we get there?

Michael Piwowarczyk, MRD Poland

Organisational matters need to be taken into consideration. Need to make EC system of approvals more effective. That's what MS want. What should such a system look like?

Institutional environment needs to change. The question then becomes what is the role of JASPERS in this new environment?

If projects are complex then the additional view offered by JASPERS is useful. Naturally it is the preferred choice, as it is a free resource. It makes business sense to use it, to transfer their knowledge, share competencies gained elsewhere.

Some projects are not complex. There are areas where the national authority is competent enough (e.g. environment, transport, waste water), where there is limited resources, pick areas where need assistance, delete areas where already have gained the knowledge. Get JASPERS involved in innovative areas, if they still offer support in other areas (transport etc) that is nice, but where resources are limited, restrict to innovative areas.

As a National Authority we should first be looking for competencies in our own back yard, if not available, look externally.

John Finnegan

In Poland have a strong institutional structure in place, have a lot of experience of projects in certain sectors, in the single MA.

It is a very encouraging claim that you have developed a lot of expertise and that JASPERS could withdraw from some areas, because of the strength of the Polish administrative structure. In other MS need to get to that stage. Do not think the other MS have got there, what ways can we get them there – that is where recommendations are coming from.

The recommendations have been phrased so as to provoke reactions from your selves. You have all welcomed advice from JASPERS, but not JASPERS taking control. There is room for JASPERS advice in the areas of SP, reviewing structures, and horizontal assignments. Delighted to hear that there is an administration that has learned from their interaction with JASPERS, the challenge is to achieve that in all MS.

Still envisage project based advice, but more HA and more training based advice.

Estonia - would you welcome JASPERS input?

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

If on a voluntary basis yes. An opinion. In Estonia, owing to size and small number of projects, the knowledge is well spread. Have built up capacity in transport and the environment sectors. Support Polish opinion for JASPERS support for different projects, where there is a need for assistance, e.g. hospital project.

If there is the possibility of advice in terms of capacity assessment, on a voluntary basis, it would be ok.

John Finnegan

What about JASPERS reviewing your training programmes and making suggestions?

Agne Kazlauskaitė, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

We are reviewing our own national capacities.

Important for JASPERS to add value.

Katarzyna Kaczkowska, MRD Poland

Agree, we have so many training programmes and assessments, hard to see value in adding to that.

JASPERS might set up a training programme themselves, providing training in areas specific to structural funds, where it is harder to get specific up to date knowledge

Offer training, as opposed to reviewing national training

John Finnegan

JASPERS would take a strategic view of where they can add value, and come up with suggestions for MS. Provide guidance on where they think they can add value.

If there are interesting issues coming up in other MS, that have done similar projects, can offer the insight.

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

In Estonia, we asked JASPERS for a HA on CBA, on a sectoral basis, they have knowledge of the problem areas, they can provide the training re these areas.

The suggestions approach would be ok.

For Estonia, asking for HA assistance was new.

Raimonda Eidziune, EU Structural Assistance Management Department, Lithuania

We were aware of this HA re CBA, but failed to get hold of it – were discouraged from asking for it.

John Finnegan

Need focused suggestions, for discrete relatively small problem areas, would not be possible to write complete guidance on CBA for all sectors, but can provide training on specific problem areas.

Think we can find a degree of common ground, involving JASPERS on an advisory basis. You have expressed your concern re decision making planning remaining within competence of MS alone/ But open to advice at an early stage.

JASPERS could improve the transfer of knowledge. Point has been made that MS know themselves the capacity issues and technical capabilities they have, but there is scope for JASPERS proactively offering guidance on HA, approaching MS and offering HA on topics.

Think if suitably refined recommendations can be made.

Discussion questions

(1) Key Lessons Learned

Katarzyna Kaczkowska, MRD Poland

JASPERS has provided assistance:

- In how to present projects to the EC, areas to emphasise etc
- Awareness raising, how important it is to work with entrepreneurs (specific to knowledge economy)

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

Presentation of applications, identifying main things the EC are looking for, where they is not enough emphasis.

(2) Mechanisms to transfer technical knowledge

John

- CN
- Meetings
- Guidance docs
- Training

Which found useful?

Sabina Rutkowska, MRD Poland

Sharing information by JASPERS is limited

Michael Filipek, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, NFEP&WM, Poland

Fieldwork by JASPERS staff very useful, when experts visit the project, very useful for designers, they give insights from other projects in other MS

Onsite meetings v useful, JASPERS have always stressed importance of projects fitting in with a strategy

They also pay attention o quality certification/standards, promoting good practice, these aspects are intangible but important

Karen Veidik, Ministry of Finance, Estonia

There is no official procedure in place, when JASPERS are involved, the knowledge is transferred to consultants involved in project.

If the intermediary body learns something from the involvement of JASPERS, it is their responsibility to better the guidance they have available

(3) Projects learn from each other

Do Projects learn from each other, in smaller MS it may happen automatically, informally, in larger MS need intermediary body. How is it happening in current structures?

Michael Filipek, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, NFEP&WM, Poland

Have intermediary body meetings with beneficiaries twice yearly where talk re significant points, and how to draft project application, there is a clear role for intermediary body

Katarzyna Kaczkowska, MRD Poland

In Knowledge Economy sector, have HA involving knowledge sharing/transfer of technical know-how, JASPERS meet with beneficiaries and share experiences and offer advice, this is possible in Poland as have enough projects to take this approach

(4) Factors limiting knowledge transfer between JASPERS and project applicants

What are barriers?

Sabina Rutkowska, MRD Poland

There is a lack of consultants with English language and knowledge of sector
Comments of JASPERS are not cognisant of laws, and their advice not practical as a result
Something that may be workable in one MS may not be workable in another, need to be knowledge of local circumstances/situation

John

JASPERS must have minimum knowledge of local law, to make advice practicable

Michael Filipek, National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, NFEP&WM, Poland

It is not just about law, need to be knowledgeable of traditions and practices, gave example of construction sites where Supervisors were employed by construction company, JASPERS kept making point that there was a need to tender separately for supervisory services, but that is not how it is done here

(5) Factors limiting knowledge transfer within MS

Katarzyna Kaczkowska, MRD Poland

Most knowledge is at MA level. Intermediary body is less involved in project application. Ok, as we have separate Intermediary Bodies for separate sectors, we transfer knowledge that we think is good practice.

Capabilities on project:
Economics

Annex 3 – Data Tables

Annex 3: Data Tables

Annex 3.1: Details of Databases

Table 1: Data Fields in the JASPERS Database

Field	Options (where relevant)
JASPERS Reference Number	
Title	
Sector	Air, maritime and public transport; Roads; Water and wastewater; Knowledge economy, energy and waste; Multi-sector
Subsector	There are 19 subsectors used in the database
Country	Bulgaria; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Malta; Poland; Slovakia; Slovenia; Multi
Status	All Completed
Application Status	Not Applicable; Concept Stage; Pre Feasibility; Completed; Feasibility Ongoing; Feasibility Completed; Application Approved at National Level; Application Submitted to EC; Application Approved by EC; Project Implementation Completed
Project Type	Small; Major; Horizontal
Completion date	
Submission date	
Approval date	
Elapsed days with interruption	
Elapsed days without interruption	
Estimated Total Cost	
Community Amount	
Evolution	All "Completion Note Validated"
Office	Luxembourg; Warsaw; Vienna; Bucharest
Target Fund	ERDF; Cohesion Fund
Operational Program	
European Commission Reference*	
Project Promoter	
Programming Period	All "2007-2013"
National Approval Date	

Source: JASPERS

Table 2: Data Fields in the DG REGIO Database

Field	Options (where relevant)
JASPERS Reference Number	
Title	
Sector	Air, maritime and public transport; Roads; Water and wastewater; Knowledge economy, energy and waste; Multi-sector
Subsector	There are 19 subsectors used in the database
Country	Bulgaria; Cyprus; Czech Republic; Estonia; Hungary; Latvia; Lithuania; Malta; Poland; Slovakia; Slovenia; Multi
Status	All Completed
Application Status	Not Applicable; Concept Stage; Pre Feasibility; Completed; Feasibility Ongoing; Feasibility Completed; Application Approved at National Level; Application Submitted to EC; Application Approved by EC; Project Implementation Completed
Project Type	Small; Major; Horizontal
Completion date	
Submission date	
Approval date	
Elapsed days with interruption	
Elapsed days without interruption	
Estimated Total Cost	
Community Amount	
Evolution	All "Completion Note Validated"
Office	Luxembourg; Warsaw; Vienna; Bucharest
Target Fund	ERDF; Cohesion Fund
Operational Program	
European Commission Reference*	
Project Promoter	
Programming Period	All "2007-2013"
National Approval Date	

Source: DG REGIO

Annex 3.2: Additional JASPERS Documentation

- **JASPERS Action Plan**

A JASPERS Action Plan is prepared annually by the Managing Authority in the Member State availing of JASPERS assistance. The Action Plan is finalised following discussions between the Member State and the four partners in JASPERS. The Plan sets out:

- A summary of the Member State's objectives in terms of JASPERS assistance;
- A listing of the sectors and subsectors where JASPERS assistance will be sought;
- A summary of the current status of JASPERS activities during the previous year in the Member State; and
- A listing of the key projects and horizontal activities for which the Member State requires JASPERS support for the forthcoming year.

- **JASPERS Project Fiche**

A Project Fiche is prepared by JASPERS at the commencement of JASPERS involvement with a major project, non-major project and horizontal assignment. The Fiche is a small document that sets out summary details of the project, including:

- A project description and its associated objectives;
- The degree of preparation of the project at the time JASPERS was consulted;
- The tasks JASPERS will carry out; and,
- The timing of the JASPERS work.

- **JASPERS Completion Note**

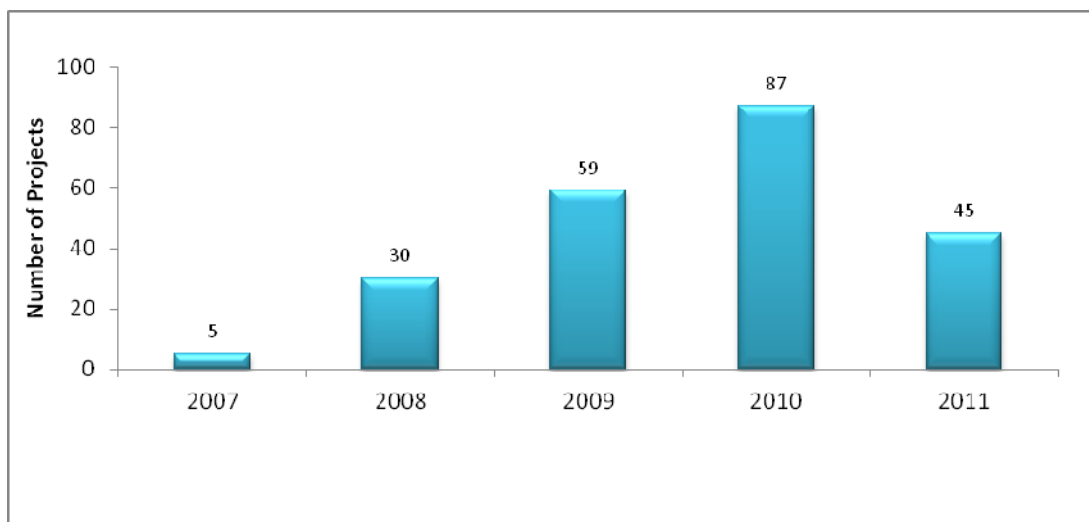
A Completion Note is prepared by JASPERS when JASPERS involvement with a project is complete. The Completion Note is significantly more detailed than the Project Fiche. Since 2009 have been provided to DG REGIO when an application for funding is made.

Completion Notes broadly follow the same format containing project related information, including:

- A project description and its associated objectives;
- Details of JASPERS input to the project, including a list of JASPERS activity areas;
- The schedule of key JASPERS activities, including dates (in some cases approximate) of when JASPERS involvement with the project commenced;
- Key issues that arose over the course of JASPERS involvement with the project;
- Sensitivity and risk analysis completed; and
- Any recommendations JASPERS have made in relation to the project at the time they have completed their work in relation to the project.

Annex 3.3: Profile of Major Projects in Receipt of JASPERS Assistance

Figure 1: Number of Major JASPERS-Assisted Projects by DG REGIO Application Year



Year of Application to DG REGIO	No Projects	% Projects
2007	5	2.2
2008	30	13.0
2009	59	25.5
2010	87	37.7
2011 (part of)	45	19.5
Not applicable	5	2.2
Total	231	100.0

Figure 2: Number of JASPERS-Assisted Major Projects by Sector and by Project Size

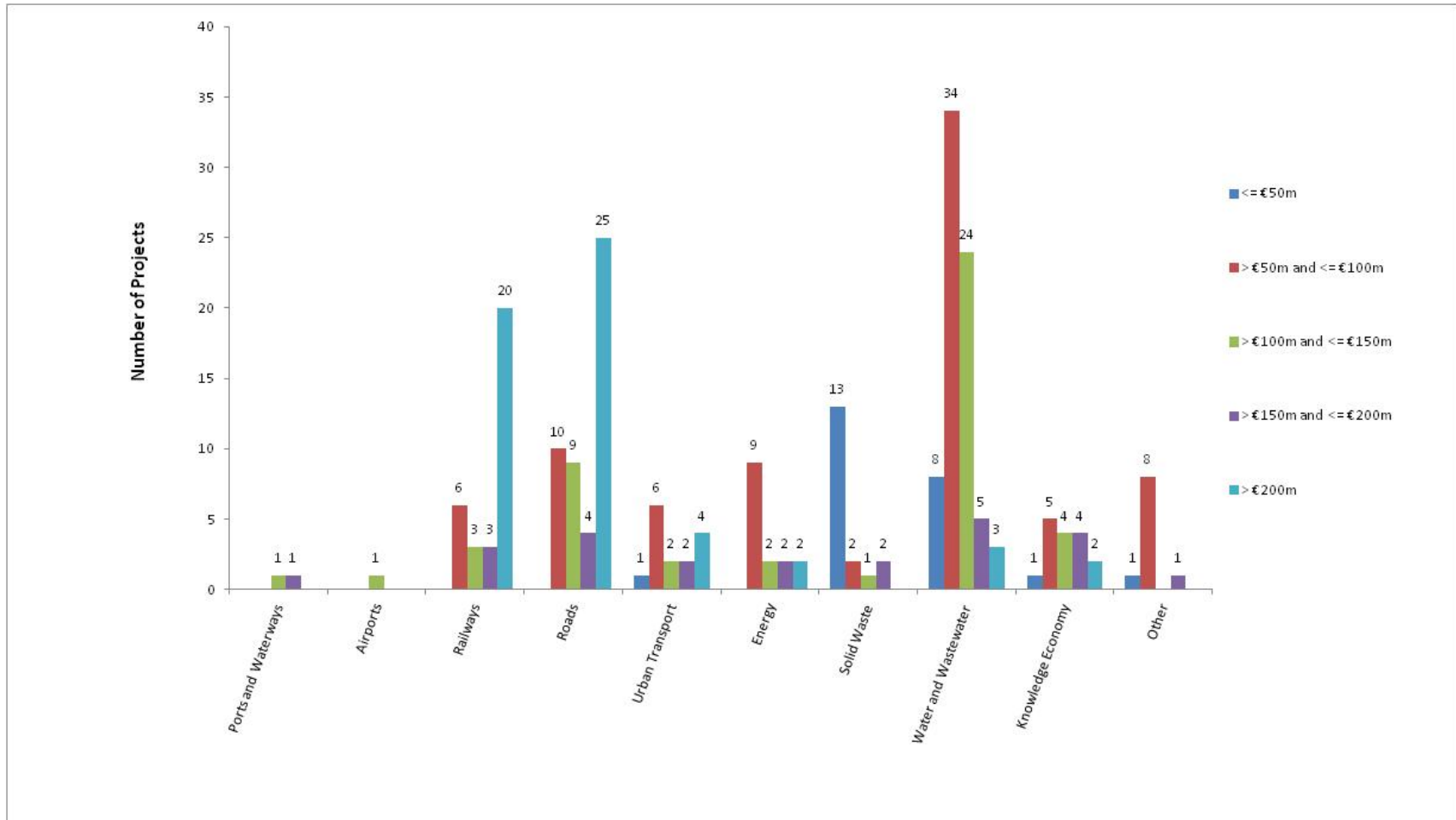


Figure 3: Number of JASPERS-Assisted Major Projects by JASPERS Start Date and by Project Size

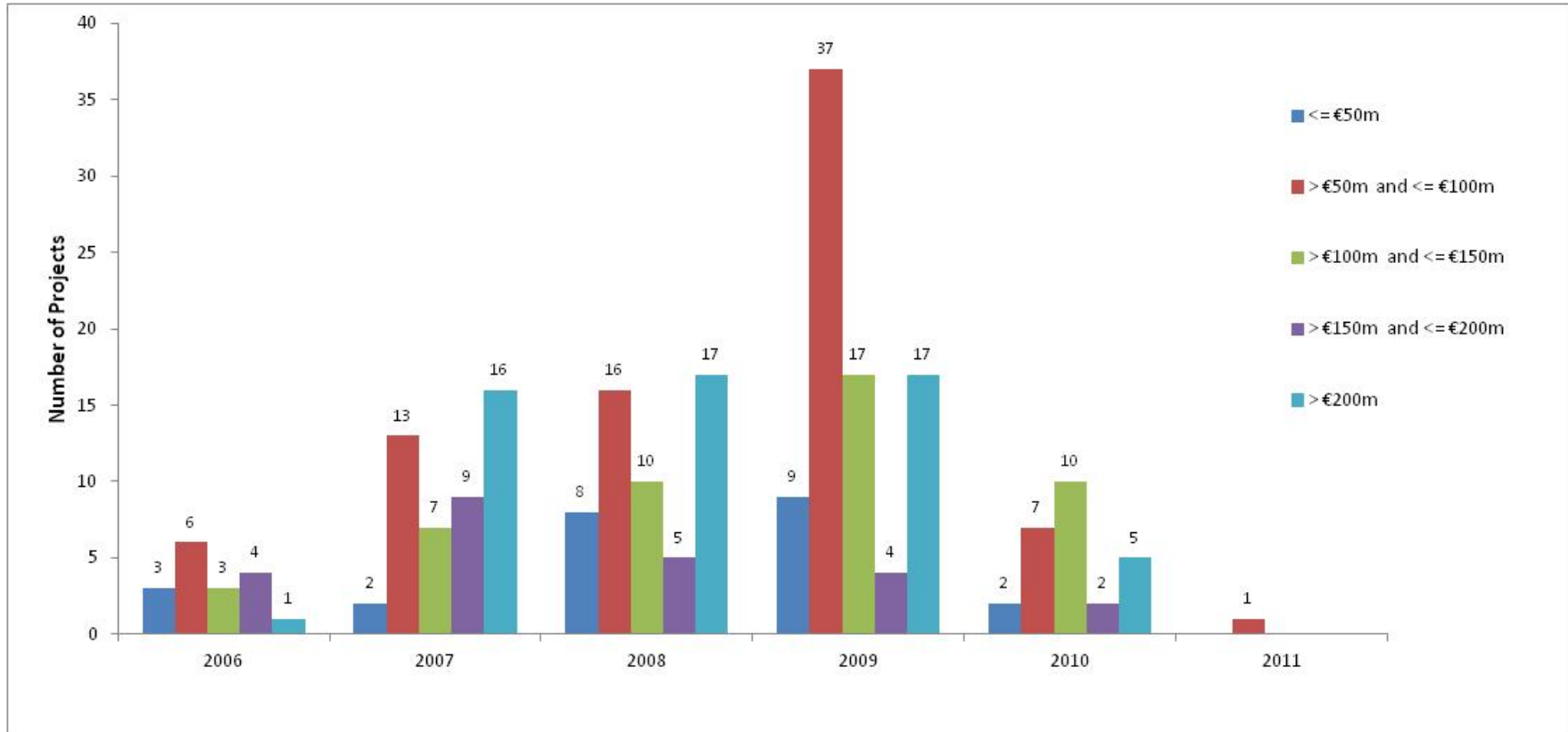
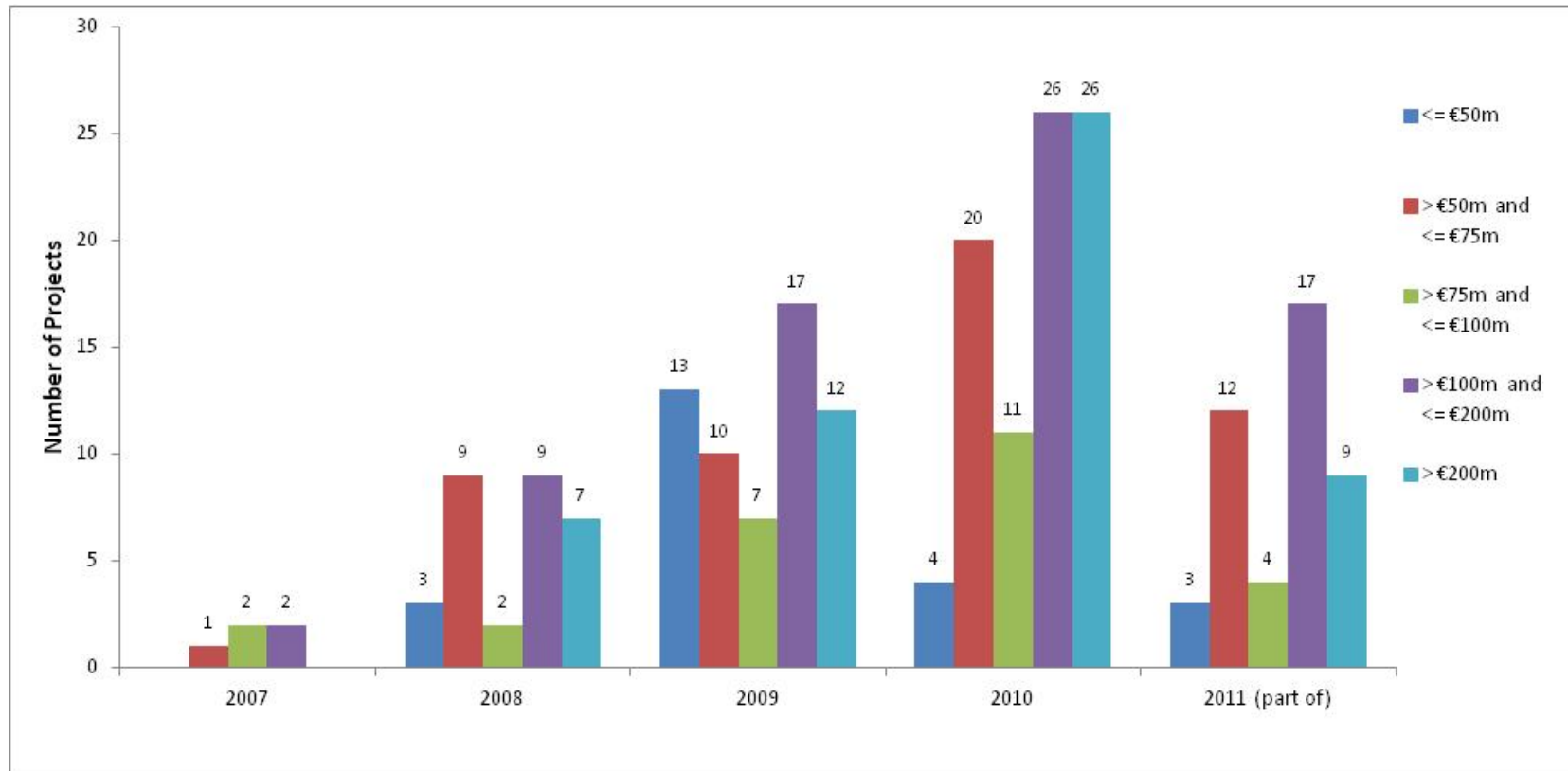


Figure 4: Number of JASPERS-Assisted Major Projects by Year Submitted to DG REGIO for Approval and by Project Size



Annex 3.4: Profile of Major Projects Not in Receipt of JASPERS Assistance

Figure 1: Number of non-JASPERS-assisted Major Projects by Project Size and Sector

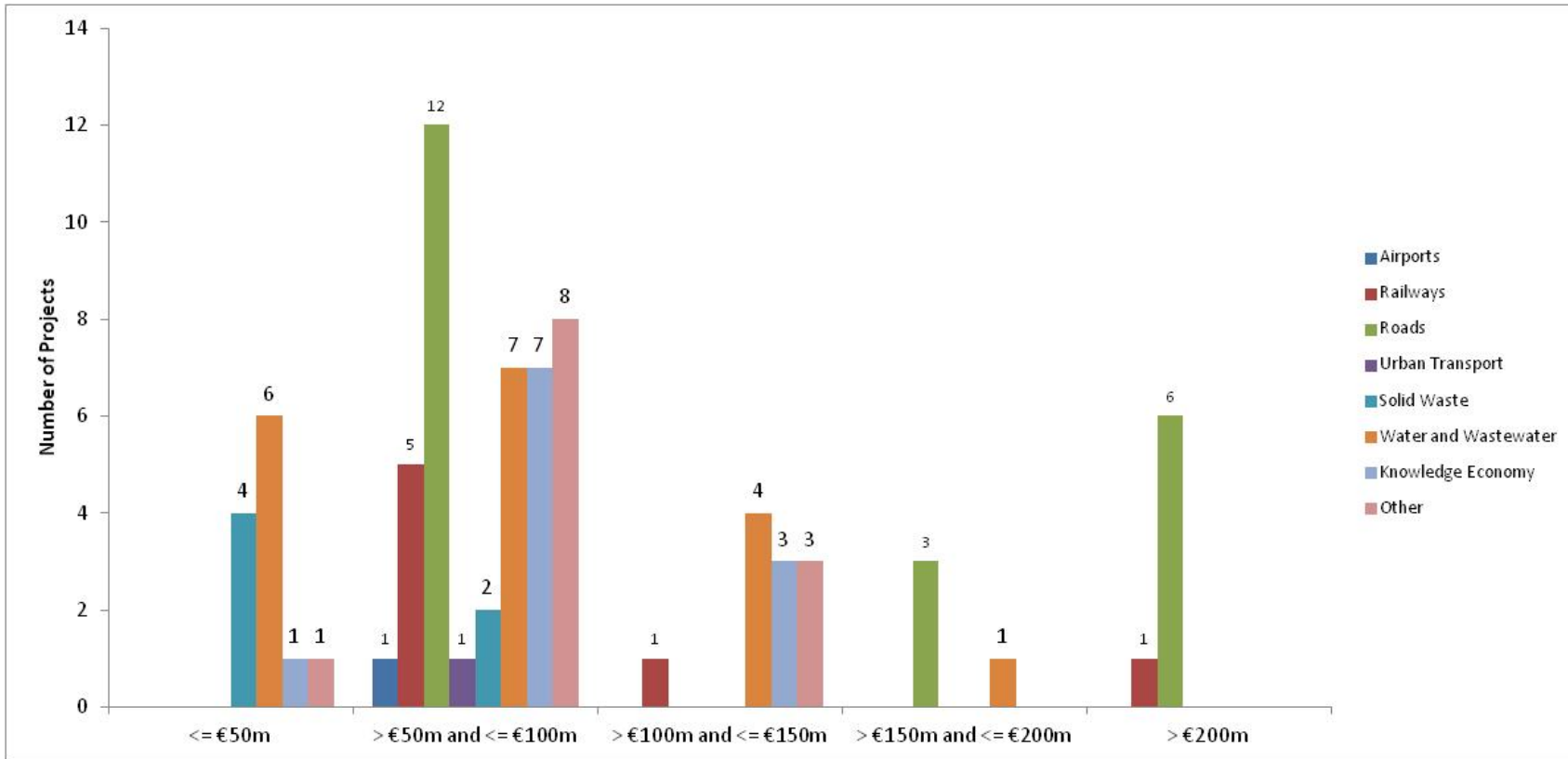
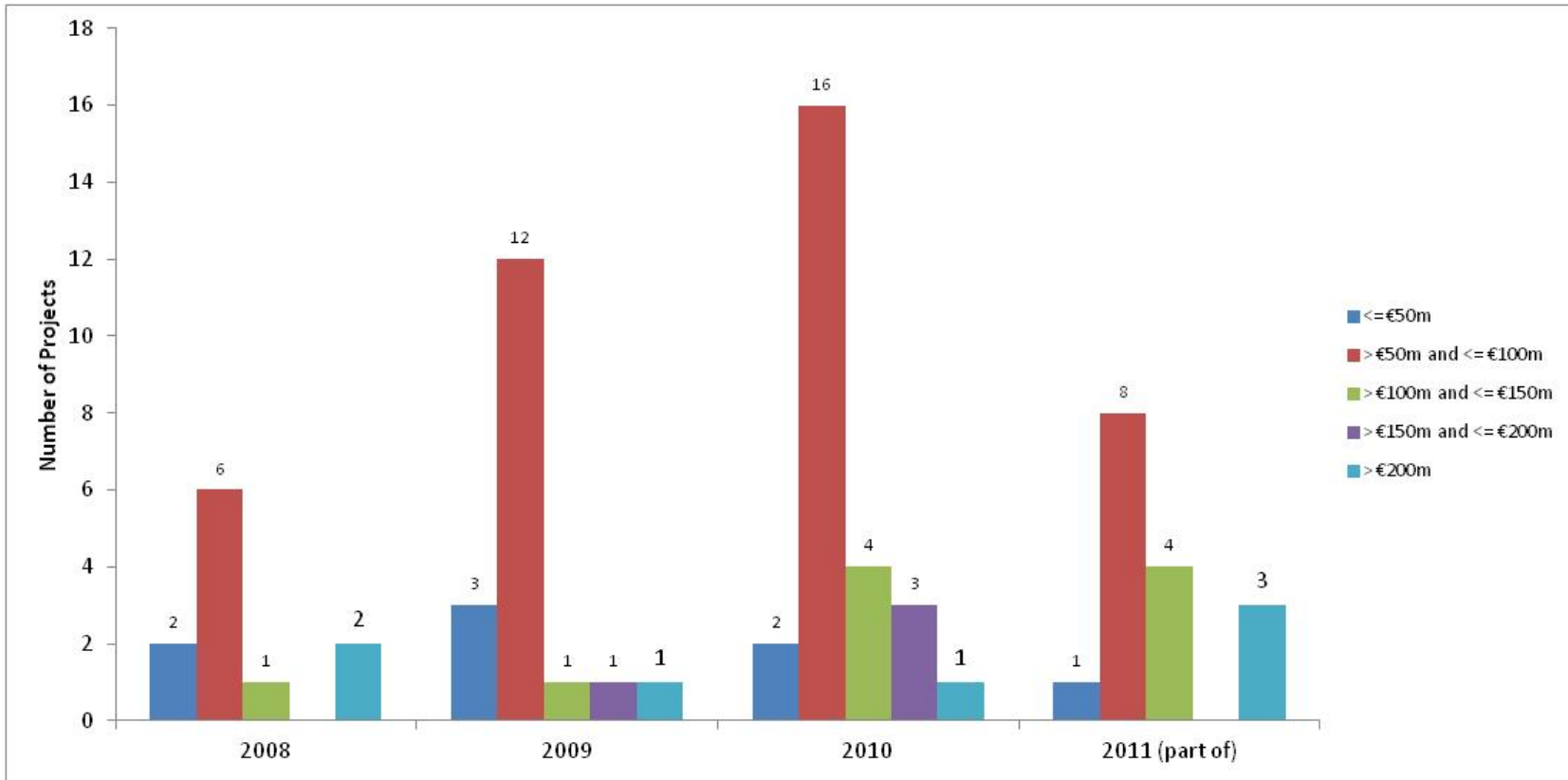


Figure 2: Number of non-JASPERS-assisted Major Projects by DG REGIO Application Year and by Project Size



Annex 3.5: Analysis of Timeline Durations: Major JASPERS-assisted Projects

Table 1: Average Project Planning Duration by Member State and Project Size

	<= €50m (n)	> €50m and <= €100m (n)	> €100m and <= €150m (n)	> €150m and <= €200m (n)	> €200m (n)	All (n)
Bulgaria		940 (3)		1957 (1)	727 (5)	934 (9)
Czech Republic	287 (3)	702 (7)	804 (4)	443 (1)	901 (7)	716 (22)
Estonia		1195 (1)	576 (2)	692 (1)		760 (4)
Hungary	561 (5)	553 (7)	797 (4)	659 (2)	768 (2)	653 (23)
Latvia	1541 (1)	1000 (1)	891 (3)		907 (1)	1020 (6)
Lithuania		1039 (2)				1039 (2)
Malta	834 (1)	876 (2)				862 (3)
Poland	751 (2)	726 (17)	576 (3)	1209 (3)	774 (7)	769 (32)
Romania	611 (7)	692 (16)	573 (17)	536 (5)	897 (8)	660 (53)
Slovakia				1104 (3)	723 (3)	913 (6)
Slovenia	955 (2)	594 (1)	552 (5)			658 (8)
All MS	654 (21)	730 (57)	644 (38)	877 (16)	818 (36)	734 (168)

Table 2: Average JASPERS Duration by Member State and Project Size

	<= €50m (n)	> €50m and <= €100m (n)	> €100m and <= €150m (n)	> €150m and <= €200m (n)	> €200m (n)	All (n)
Bulgaria		516 (3)		1394 (1)	561 (6)	631 (10)
Czech Republic	91 (3)	341 (10)	395 (4)	244 (2)	450 (13)	362 (32)
Estonia	375 (1)	543 (2)	229 (2)	502 (1)		404 (6)
Hungary	200 (6)	335 (8)	542 (6)	785 (3)	407 (8)	411 (31)
Latvia	358 (1)	412 (1)	419 (3)	959 (1)	466 (1)	493 (7)
Lithuania		550 (5)				550 (5)
Malta	555 (1)	543 (3)				546 (4)
Poland	411 (2)	352 (27)	317 (7)	1004 (8)	506 (12)	476 (56)
Romania	555 (7)	593 (16)	488 (17)	561 (5)	802 (11)	594 (56)
Slovakia	337 (1)	786 (4)	644 (3)	461 (3)	477 (5)	574 (16)
Slovenia	398 (2)	454 (1)	226 (5)			297 (8)
All MS	358 (24)	451 (80)	428 (47)	747 (24)	540 (56)	489 (231)

Table 3: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by Member State and Project Size

	<= €50m (n)	> €50m and <= €100m (n)	> €100m and <= €150m (n)	> €150m and <= €200m (n)	> €200m (n)	All (n)
Bulgaria		358 (3)		436 (1)	232 (5)	297 (9)
Czech Republic	193 (3)	385 (7)	407 (4)	294 (1)	420 (7)	370 (22)
Estonia		269 (1)	331 (2)	125 (1)		264 (4)
Hungary	333 (5)	242 (7)	264 (4)	179 (2)	381 (5)	290 (23)
Latvia	396 (1)	278 (1)	316 (3)		399 (1)	337 (6)
Lithuania		405 (2)				405 (2)
Malta	78 (1)	150 (2)				126 (3)
Poland	331 (2)	296 (17)	387 (3)	198 (3)	368 (7)	313 (32)
Romania	101 (7)	157 (16)	143 (17)	154 (5)	244 (8)	158 (53)
Slovakia				601 (3)	388 (3)	494 (6)
Slovenia	368 (2)	129 (1)	364 (5)			336 (8)
All MS	229 (21)	259 (57)	255 (38)	274 (16)	336 (36)	272 (168)

Table 4: Average Project Planning Duration by Member State and Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
Bulgaria			998 (2)	531 (1)	677 (3)		1957 (1)	948 (2)			934 (9)
Czech Republic			856 (8)	831 (2)			351 (1)	533 (5)	703 (6)		716 (22)
Estonia				782 (3)						692 (1)	760 (4)
Hungary			654 (2)	763 (3)	813 (4)		412 (4)	652 (10)			653 (23)
Latvia		768 (1)	895 (2)	1012 (2)			1541 (1)				1020 (6)
Lithuania									1039 (2)		1039 (2)
Malta				995 (1)			834 (1)	757 (1)			862 (3)
Poland			799 (2)	805 (7)	946 (4)			554 (10)	1050 (5)	704 (4)	769 (32)
Romania	932 (1)		1344 (1)	828 (9)		637 (6)	600 (8)	593 (28)			660 (53)
Slovakia			1139 (3)	688 (3)							913 (6)
Slovenia			587 (1)	464 (3)			453 (1)	955 (2)	922 (1)		658 (8)
All MS	932 (1)	768 (1)	899 (21)	776 (34)	824 (11)	637 (6)	681 (17)	619 (58)	891 (14)	702 (5)	734 (168)

Table 5: Average JASPERS Duration by Member State and Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
Bulgaria			886 (3)	338 (1)	272 (3)		1394 (1)	550 (2)			632 (10)
Czech Republic			381 (9)	328 (9)	737 (1)		75 (1)	347 (6)	388 (6)		362 (32)
Estonia				386 (4)						439 (2)	404 (6)
Hungary			405 (5)	402 (4)	634 (7)		134 (4)	376 (11)			411 (31)
Latvia	959 (1)	427 (1)	442 (2)	412 (2)			358 (1)				493 (7)
Lithuania				1002 (1)				477 (1)	556 (2)	159 (1)	550 (5)
Malta				582 (1)			555 (1)	618 (1)		429 (1)	546 (4)
Poland			515 (4)	408 (9)	708 (4)	626 (9)	1549 (1)	208 (16)	745 (7)	395 (6)	476 (56)
Romania	557 (1)		1051 (3)	701 (10)		468 (6)	536 (8)	552 (28)			594 (56)
Slovakia			597 (5)	378 (4)				669 (7)			574 (16)
Slovenia			188 (1)	271 (3)			202 (1)	398 (2)	381 (1)		297 (8)
All MS	758 (2)	427 (1)	543 (32)	455 (48)	588 (15)	563 (15)	498 (18)	442 (74)	565 (16)	383 (10)	489 (231)

Table 6: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by Member State and Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
Bulgaria			274 (2)	190 (1)	231 (3)		436 (1)	402 (2)			297 (9)
Czech Republic			461 (8)	550 (2)			272 (1)	234 (5)	318 (6)		370 (22)
Estonia				310 (3)						125 (1)	264 (4)
Hungary			394 (2)	317 (3)	212 (4)		275 (4)	299 (10)			290 (23)
Latvia		371 (1)	338 (2)	290 (2)			396 (1)				337 (6)
Lithuania									405 (2)		405 (2)
Malta				161 (1)			78 (1)	139 (1)			126 (3)
Poland			333 (2)	337 (7)	137 (4)			349 (10)	292 (5)	374 (4)	313 (32)
Romania	448 (1)		479 (1)	263 (9)		141 (6)	101 (8)	122 (28)			158 (53)
Slovakia			548 (3)	441 (3)							494 (6)
Slovenia			370 (1)	157 (3)			568 (1)	368 (2)	540 (1)		336 (8)
All MS	448 (1)	371 (1)	422 (21)	307 (34)	190 (11)	141 (6)	215 (17)	220 (58)	337 (14)	324 (5)	272 (168)

Table 7: Average Project Planning Duration by JASPERS Office and Project Size

	<= €50m (n)	> €50m and <= €100m (n)	> €100m and <= €150m (n)	> €150m and <= €200m (n)	> €200m (n)	All (n)
Bucharest	611 (7)	745 (20)	573 (17)	773 (6)	831 (13)	704 (63)
Luxembourg	834 (1)	787 (2)				803 (3)
Vienna	558 (10)	625 (15)	705 (13)	845 (6)	821 (15)	704 (59)
Warsaw	1014 (3)	790 (20)	694 (8)	1080 (4)	791 (8)	815 (43)
Total	654 (21)	730 (57)	644 (38)	877 (16)	818 (36)	734 (168)

Table 8: Average JASPERS Duration by JASPERS Office and Project Size

	<= €50m (n)	> €50m and <= €100m (n)	> €100m and <= €150m (n)	> €150m and <= €200m (n)	> €200m (n)	All (n)
Bucharest	555 (7)	581 (20)	488 (17)	700 (6)	717 (17)	600 (67)
Luxembourg	555 (1)	526 (2)				536 (3)
Vienna	229 (13)	421 (23)	438 (18)	528 (8)	442 (26)	412 (88)
Warsaw	393 (3)	393 (35)	328 (12)	950 (10)	503 (13)	478 (73)
Total	358 (24)	451 (80)	428 (47)	747 (24)	540 (56)	489 (231)

Table 9: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by JASPERS Office and Project Size

	<= €50m (n)	> €50m and <= €100m (n)	> €100m and <= €150m (n)	> €150m and <= €200m (n)	> €200m (n)	All (n)
Bucharest	101 (7)	187 (20)	143 (17)	201 (6)	239 (13)	178 (63)
Luxembourg	78 (1)	167 (2)				137 (3)
Vienna	298 (10)	301 (15)	346 (13)	409 (6)	401 (15)	347 (59)
Warsaw	353 (3)	310 (20)	346 (8)	180 (4)	372 (8)	319 (43)
Total	229 (21)	259 (57)	255 (38)	274 (16)	336 (36)	272 (168)

Table 10: Average Project Planning Duration by JASPERS Office and by Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways	Airports	Railways	Roads	Urban Transport	Energy	Solid Waste	Water and Wastewater	Knowledge Economy	Other	Total
Bucharest	932		1113	816	677	637	751	617			704
Luxembourg							834	757	817		803
Vienna			868	673	813		408	653	734		704
Warsaw		768	847	833	946		1541	554	1085	702	815
All MS	932	768	899	776	824	637	681	619	891	702	734
	(1)	(1)	(21)	(34)	(11)	(6)	(17)	(58)	(14)	(5)	(168)

Table 11: Average JASPERS Duration by JASPERS Office and by Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
Bucharest	557 (1)		969 (6)	661 (12)	272 (3)	468 (6)	632 (9)	552 (30)			600 (67)
Luxembourg							555 (1)	618 (1)	434 (1)		536 (3)
Vienna			432 (20)	344 (20)	647 (8)		136 (6)	450 (26)	387 (7)	375 (1)	412 (88)
Warsaw	959 (1)	427 (1)	490 (6)	440 (16)	708 (4)	626 (9)	954 (2)	224 (17)	737 (8)	384 (9)	478 (73)
All MS	758 (2)	427 (1)	543 (32)	455 (48)	588 (15)	563 (15)	498 (18)	442 (74)	565 (16)	383 (10)	489 (231)

Table 12: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by JASPERS Office and by Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
Bucharest	448 (1)		342 (3)	247 (11)	231 (3)	141 (6)	138 (9)	141 (30)			178 (63)
Luxembourg							78 (1)	139 (1)	195 (1)		137 (3)
Vienna			463 (14)	349 (11)	212 (4)		323 (6)	288 (17)	350 (7)		347 (59)
Warsaw		371 (1)	335 (4)	323 (12)	137 (4)		396 (1)	349 (10)	346 (6)	324 (5)	319 (43)
All MS	448 (1)	371 (1)	422 (21)	307 (34)	190 (11)	141 (6)	215 (17)	220 (58)	337 (14)	324 (5)	272 (168)

Table 13: Average Project Planning Duration by Project Size and by Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
<= €50m							642 (13)	599 (7)	1194 (1)		654 (21)
> €50m and <= €100m			885 (5)	873 (5)	897 (6)	612 (5)	415 (2)	661 (26)	892 (4)	704 (4)	730 (57)
> €100m and <= €150m	932 (1)	768 (1)	792 (3)	564 (8)	1020 (1)	763 (1)	453 (1)	579 (18)	808 (4)		644 (38)
> €150m and <= €200m			1000 (3)	649 (3)	762 (1)		1957 (1)	665 (4)	1004 (3)	692 (1)	877 (16)
> €200m			908 (10)	865 (18)	635 (3)			479 (3)	734 (2)		818 (36)
All	932 (1)	768 (1)	899 (21)	776 (34)	824 (11)	637 (6)	681 (17)	619 (58)	891 (14)	702 (5)	734 (168)

Table 14: Average JASPERS Duration by Project Size and by Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
<= €50m					75 (1)		412 (13)	258 (8)	732 (1)	375 (1)	358 (24)
> €50m and <= €100m			443 (6)	469 (10)	647 (6)	337 (9)	232 (2)	476 (34)	452 (5)	370 (8)	451 (80)
> €100m and <= €150m	557 (1)	427 (1)	307 (3)	336 (9)	650 (2)	747 (2)	202 (1)	439 (24)	411 (4)		428 (47)
> €150m and <= €200m	959 (1)		503 (3)	408 (4)	995 (2)	954 (2)	1472 (2)	599 (5)	871 (4)	502 (1)	747 (24)
> €200m			615 (20)	500 (25)	394 (4)	1006 (2)		308 (3)	458 (2)		540 (56)
All	758 (2)	427 (1)	543 (32)	455 (48)	588 (15)	563 (15)	498 (18)	442 (74)	565 (16)	383 (10)	489 (231)

Table 15: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by Project Size and by Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
<= €50m							177 (13)	296 (7)	445 (1)		229 (21)
> €50m and <= €100m			460 (5)	238 (5)	164 (6)	140 (5)	173 (2)	248 (26)	329 (4)	374 (4)	259 (57)
> €100m and <= €150m	448 (1)	371 (1)	410 (3)	260 (8)	160 (1)	146 (1)	568 (1)	173 (18)	396 (4)		255 (38)
> €150m and <= €200m			494 (3)	298 (3)	138 (1)		436 (1)	125 (4)	268 (3)	125 (1)	274 (16)
> €200m			384 (10)	349 (18)	270 (3)			199 (3)	287 (2)		336 (36)
All	448 (1)	371 (1)	422 (21)	307 (34)	190 (11)	141 (6)	215 (17)	220 (58)	337 (14)	324 (5)	272 (168)

Annex 3.6: Analysis of Timeline Durations - Major Projects Not in Receipt of JASPERS Assistance

Table 1: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by Member State and Project Size

	<= €50m (n)	> €50m and <= €100m (n)	> €100m and <= €150m (n)	> €150m and <= €200m (n)	> €200m (n)	All (n)
Czech Republic		419 (2)	660 (1)			499 (3)
Estonia	118 (2)	273 (2)				195 (4)
Poland	(431) (2)	506 (18)	744 (1)	269 (1)	939 (1)	518 (23)
Romania	90 (2)	86 (2)	91 (4)	92 (1)		90 (9)
Slovenia					423 (1)	423 (1)
All	213 (6)	444 (24)	295 (6)	181 (2)	681 (2)	386 (40)

Table 2: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by Member State and Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
Czech Republic	499 (3)										499 (3)
Estonia			344 (1)				138 (1)	150 (2)			195 (4)
Poland			660 (2)	365 (4)	421 (1)		580 (1)	454 (6)	484 (3)	661 (6)	518 (23)
Romania							78 (2)	93 (7)			90 (9)
Slovenia				423 (1)							423 (1)
All			527 (1)	376 (5)	421 (1)		219 (4)	245 (15)	484 (3)	661 (6)	386 (40)

Table 3: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by Project Size and by Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
<= €50m							113 (2)	263 (4)			213 (6)
> €50m and <= €100m			391 (4)	397 (3)	421 (1)		324 (2)	361 (6)	484 (3)	644 (5)	444 (24)
> €100m and <= €150m			660 (1)					91 (4)		744 (1)	295 (6)
> €150m and <= €200m				269 (1)				92 (1)			181 (2)
> €200m			939 (1)	423 (1)							681 (2)
All			527 (6)	376 (5)	421 (1)		219 (4)	245 (15)	484 (3)	661 (6)	386 (40)

Annex 3.7: Analysis of Timeline Durations - JASPERS Horizontal Assignments

Table 1: Average JASPERS Duration by Member State and Project Sector

Table 2: Average JASPERS Duration by JASPERS Office and Project Sector

	Ports and Waterways (n)	Airports (n)	Railways (n)	Roads (n)	Urban Transport (n)	Energy (n)	Solid Waste (n)	Water and Wastewater (n)	Knowledge Economy (n)	Other (n)	Total (n)
Bucharest					394 (1)	(258) (10)	154 (5)	383 (8)	529 (1)	409 (12)	331 (37)
Luxembourg			253 (1)		1340 (1)		228 (1)			515 (96)	545 (9)
Vienna						167 (1)		409 (2)	384 (1)	786 (5)	589 (9)
Warsaw		156 (1)	645 (1)	108 (1)	1078 (1)	346 (4)	150 (6)	423 (8)	103 (1)	397 (9)	354 (32)
Total		156 (1)	449 (2)	108 (1)	937 (3)	275 (15)	158 (12)	404 (18)	339 (3)	484 (32)	388 (87)
Latvia					1078 (1)			1001 (1)		577 (1)	620 (3)
Lithuania						237 (1)	145 (2)			115 (2)	151 (5)
Malta							228 (1)			388 (2)	335 (3)
Multi			253 (1)							648 (3)	549 (4)
Poland		158 (1)	645 (1)			383 (3)	152 (4)	408 (5)		557 (4)	365 (19)
Romania						245 (9)	154 (5)	371 (5)	529 (1)	370 (9)	300 (29)
Slovakia								601 (1)		1461 (1)	1031 (2)
Slovenia										412 (2)	412 (2)
Total		156 (1)	449 (2)	108 (1)	937 (3)	275 (15)	158 (12)	404 (18)	339 (3)	484 (32)	388 (87)

Annex 3.8: Change in Timeline Durations over Time - Major Projects in Receipt of JASPERS Assistance

Table 1: Average Project Planning Duration by the JASPERS Start Year

JASPERS Start Year	Average Project Planning Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2006	1063	16
2007	968	36
2008	718	41
2009	579	59
2010	492	16
All Years	734	168

Table 2: Average JASPERS Duration by the JASPERS Start Year

JASPERS Start Year	Average JASPERS Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2006	861	16
2007	630	36
2008	429	41
2009	311	59
2010	261	16
All Years	456	168

Table 3: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by JASPERS Start Date

JASPERS Start Year	Average DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2006	219	16
2007	317	36
2008	287	41
2009	259	59
2010	237	16
All Years	272	168

Table 4: Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration by JASPERS Start Date

JASPERS Start Year	Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2006	109	16
2007	155	36
2008	155	41
2009	158	59
2010	140	15
All Years	150	167

Table 5: Average Interruption Duration by JASPERS Start Date

JASPERS Start Year	Average Interruption Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2006	110	16
2007	163	36
2008	132	41
2009	101	59
2010	76	15
All Years	120	167

Table 6: Average Project Planning Timelines by the DG Decision Year

DG Decision Year	Average Project Planning Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2008	677	10
2009	641	35
2010	714	58
2011	809	64
2012	922	1
All Years	734	168

Table 7: Average JASPERS Duration Timelines by DG Decision Year

DG Decision Year	Average JASPERS Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2008	635	10
2009	432	35
2010	411	58
2011	483	64
2012	381	1
All Years	456	168

Table 8: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by DG Decision Date

DG Decision Year	Average DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2008	142	10
2009	264	35
2010	260	58
2011	304	64
2012	540	1
All Years	272	168

Table 9: Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration by DG Decision Date

DG Decision Year	Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2008	86	10
2009	112	35
2010	153	58
2011	179	64
All Years	150	167

Table 10: Average Interruption Duration by DG Decision Date

DG Decision Year	Average Interruption Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2008	55	10
2009	152	35
2010	107	58
2011	125	64
All Years	120	167

Table 11: Average Project Planning Timelines by the DG Application Year

DG Decision Year	Average Project Planning Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2007	618	5
2008	663	30
2009	767	55
2010	745	62
2011	746	16
All Years	734.02	168

Table 12: Average JASPERS Duration Timelines by DG Application Year

DG Decision Year	Average JASPERS Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2007	525	5
2008	432	30
2009	442	55
2010	446	62
2011	567	16
All Years	456	168

Table 13: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by DG Application Date

DG Decision Year	Average DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2007	249	5
2008	282	30
2009	301	55
2010	275	62
2011	155	16
All Years	272	168

Table 14: Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration by DG Application Date

DG Decision Year	Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2007	85	5
2008	116	30
2009	163	55
2010	171	62
2011	111	15
All Years	150	167

Table 15: Average Interruption Duration by DG Application Date

DG Decision Year	Average Interruption Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2007	164	5
2008	167	30
2009	138	55
2010	104	62
2011	18	15
All Years	120	167

Annex 3.9: Results of Multivariate Regression Analysis

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.729 ^a	.531	.478	129.588

a. Predictors: (Constant), Dummy Hungary, Dummy Ports, Dummy Airports, Dummy Lithuania, Dummy Malta, Dummy Slovakia, Dummy Energy , Dummy Estonia, Dummy Bulgaria, Dummy Slovenia , Total_Cost_DG, Dummy Other , Dummy Solid Waste, Dummy Rail, Dummy Urban Trans, Dummy Jaspers, Dummy Knowledge, Dummy Latvia, Dummy Czech, Dummy Roads, Dummy Poland

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3517722.070	21	167510.575	9.975	.000 ^a
	Residual	3106706.365	185	16793.007		
	Total	6624428.435	206			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Dummy Hungary, Dummy Ports, Dummy Airports, Dummy Lithuania, Dummy Malta, Dummy Slovakia, Dummy Energy , Dummy Estonia, Dummy Bulgaria, Dummy Slovenia , Total_Cost_DG, Dummy Other , Dummy Solid Waste, Dummy Rail, Dummy Urban Trans, Dummy Jaspers, Dummy Knowledge, Dummy Latvia, Dummy Czech, Dummy Roads, Dummy Poland

b. Dependent Variable: DG Duration

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	196.279	28.892		6.794	.000
	Total_Cost_DG	6.807E-8	.000	.084	1.436	.153
	Dummy Jaspers	-86.721	25.905	-.191	-3.348	.001
	Dummy Airports	104.718	143.972	.041	.727	.468
	Dummy Energy	25.742	56.547	.024	.455	.649
	Dummy Knowledge	24.766	40.397	.038	.613	.541
	Dummy Ports	328.639	131.121	.127	2.506	.013
	Dummy Roads	37.495	30.027	.082	1.249	.213
	Dummy Rail	117.497	34.257	.221	3.430	.001
	Dummy Solid Waste	9.453	32.625	.016	.290	.772
	Dummy Urban Trans	-102.001	44.698	-.128	-2.282	.024
	Dummy Other	161.104	45.591	.202	3.534	.001
	Dummy Poland	200.000	29.112	.494	6.870	.000
	Dummy Czech	194.925	36.383	.355	5.358	.000
	Dummy Bulgaria	184.247	51.195	.199	3.599	.000
	Dummy Estonia	20.728	51.095	.022	.406	.685
	Dummy Latvia	148.877	63.281	.140	2.353	.020
	Dummy Lithuania	266.584	101.181	.146	2.635	.009
	Dummy Slovakia	291.748	59.595	.274	4.896	.000
	Dummy Slovenia	184.349	48.209	.210	3.824	.000
	Dummy Malta	-3.250	77.536	-.002	-.042	.967
	Dummy Hungary	168.623	33.459	.296	5.040	.000

a. Dependent Variable: DG Duration

Excluded Variables^b

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics
						Tolerance
1	Dummy Water/Waste Water	. ^a000
	Dummy Romania	. ^a000

a. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Dummy Hungary, Dummy Ports, Dummy Airports, Dummy Lithuania, Dummy Malta, Dummy Slovakia, Dummy Energy , Dummy Estonia, Dummy Bulgaria, Dummy Slovenia , Total_Cost_DG, Dummy Other , Dummy Solid Waste, Dummy Rail, Dummy Urban Trans, Dummy Jaspers, Dummy Knowledge, Dummy Latvia, Dummy Czech, Dummy Roads, Dummy Poland

b. Dependent Variable: DG Duration

Annex 3.10: Change in Timeline Durations over Time - Major Projects Not in Receipt of JASPERS Assistance

Table 1: Average DG REGIO Decision Duration by DG Application Date

DG Decision Year	Average DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2008	549	10
2009	478	14
2010	228	12
2011	130	4
All Years	386	40

Table 2: Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration by DG Application Date

DG Decision Year	Average Active DG REGIO Decision Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2007		
2008	203	10
2009	253	14
2010	149	12
2011	77	4
All Years	386	40

Table 3: Average Interruption Duration by DG Application Date

DG Decision Year	Average Interruption Duration (elapsed days)	No Projects (n)
2008	346	10
2009	225	14
2010	79	12
2011	53	4
All Years	194	40