





# Expert evaluation network delivering policy analysis on the performance of Cohesion policy 2007-2013 Year 3 - 2013

## Task 1: Job creation as an indicator of outcomes in ERDF programmes

#### Hungary

**Version: Final** 

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A report to the European Commission

Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy

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#### **List of abbreviations**

•	AIR	Annual Implementation Report
•	CMD	Central Monitoring Department
•	СНОР	Central Hungary Operational Programme
•	CTOP	Central Transdanubia Operational Programme
•	EC	European Commission
•	ECOP	<b>Economic Competitiveness Operational Programme</b>
•	EDOP	Economic Development Operational Programme
•	EEOP	Environment and Energy Operational Programme
•	FTE	Full-time Equivalent
•	HIOP	Human Infrastructure Operational Programme
•	MA	Managing Authority
•	NDA	National Development Agency
•	NGOP	North Great Plain Operational Programme
•	NHOP	North Hungary Operational Programme
•	NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
•	OP	Operational Programme
•	PMR	Project Maintenance Report
•	ROP	Regional Operational Programme
•	RDOP	Regional Development Operational Programme
•	SGOP	South Great Plain Operational Programme
•	STOP	South Transdanubia Operational Programme
•	TOP	Transport Operational Programme
•	WTOP	West Transdanubia Operational Programme

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#### **Executive summary**

The target of the Hungarian National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) Operational Programmes (OPs) financed by the ERDF is to create approximately 100,000 new jobs by the end of 2015. The Economic Development OP (EDOP) and the 7 Regional Development OPs (RDOP) have target values for job creation and approximately 1/3 of the targets were achieved by the end of 2011. At the same date, 37% of the ERDF resources were paid to the beneficiaries.

The two Managing Authorities (EDOP MA and RDOP MA) adopted a similar definition and methodology of the indicator thus assuring the consistency of the data reported. The content of the data is well defined and well documented. The main data source for the "number of gross jobs created" indicator is provided by beneficiaries. Its value is determined in the Project Maintenance Reports (PMRs) included in the central monitoring IT system (called EMIR).

In Hungary, the indicators are mostly used for communication purposes.

The Central Monitoring Department (CMD) of the National Development Agency (NDA) has attempted to calculate the unit costs of the different interventions, though faced with serious methodological problems. Two evaluations from the previous programming period estimated the cost of job creation in two measures that are still relevant in the current period.

Given the difficulties, few attempts to estimate net job creation have been made. As the relevant reports were finished in the end of 2012 and early 2013 the findings are still not reflected in the 2011 Annual Implementation Report (AIRs) but they are expected to be available on the website of the NDA in June.

MAs are familiar with the Common Indicators 2014-2020 and do not foresee any particular problem applying the definitions. However, the expected change in the structure of the programmes for the next programming period and the change in the people dealing with monitoring can increase the risk of losing institutional knowledge built up in the past.

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#### 1. The use of the indicator to assess outcomes in policy areas

The target of the Hungarian NSRF OPs financed by ERDF is to create approximately 100,000 new jobs by the end of 2015. The EDOP and the 7 RDOPs have target values for job creation, while the other 5 ERDF OPs do not have a target of new jobs.

By the end of 2011, approximately one third of the target was achieved.

The following two tables show the total planned expenditure, the actual expenditure, the job creation target and the actual indicator value by broad policy areas and by OPs.

Table 1 - Total planned expenditure, actual expenditure, job creation target and the actual indicator value by broad policy areas

Broad policy areas	Name of OP that finances the policy area	Total planned expenditure 2007-2013 (EUR million)	Actual expenditure - end of 2011 cumulated data (EUR million)*	Job creation target	Job creation actual outcome - end of 2011	Expenditure (actual/total) (%)	Job creation (actual/target) (%)
RTDI support	EDOP 1 <sup>st</sup> priority (GOP 1 prioritás)	990	184		1,950	19	
Enterprise support including ICT	EDOP 2nd, 3rd, 4th priorities (GOP 2, 3, 4 prioritások)	2,266	832	66,000	14,723	37	25
Human resources	HIOP (TIOP)	2,013	541	0	0	27	
Transport	TOP 3 <sup>rd</sup> priority (KÖZOP 3 prioritás)	1,744	369	0	0	21	
Environment	EEOP 3rd, 6th priority (KEOP 3, 6 prioritások)	212	43	0	0	21	
Energy and territorial development	EEOP 4th priority (KEOP 4 prioritás) and ROPs** (ROP-ok)	6,798	2,700	30,850	14,670	40	48
TOTAL		14,027	4,673	96,850	31,343	33	32

Notes:

On the basis of the above table, we can conclude that approximately 72% of the ERDF resources contributed to the target of 100,000 new jobs created. 37% of the related ERDF resources are have been paid to the beneficiaries, while the actual job creation outcome value is 32%.

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<sup>\*</sup> Exchange rate: 280 HUF/EUR.

<sup>\*\*</sup> HIOP: Human Infrastructure; TOP: Transport OP; EEOP: Environment and Energy OP; ROPs: Regional OPs.

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ОР	Total planned expenditure 2007-2013 (EUR million)	Actual expenditure - end of 2011 cumulated data (EUR million)*	Job creation target	Job creation actual outcome – end of 2011	Expenditure (actual/planned) (%)	Job creation (actual/target) (%)		
EDOP (GOP)	3,257	1,017	66,000	16,673	31	25		
NGOP (ÉAOP)	1,105	355	3,500	1,367	32	39		
NHOP (ÉMOP)	1,024	358	4,000	892	35	22		
SGOP (DAOP)	849	328	7,400	3,881	39	52		
STOP (DDOP)	799	338	4,400	2,571	42	58		
WTOP (NYDOP)	525	212	3,150	1,229	40	39		
CTOP (KDOP)	576	198	2,400	246	34	10		
СНОР (КМОР)	1,663	773	6,000	4,484	46	75		
TOTAL	9,803	3,583	96,850	31,343	37	32		

Table 2 - Total planned expenditure, actual expenditure, job creation target and the actual indicator value by OPs

Notes:

NGOP: North Great Plain; NHOP: North Hungary; SGOP: South Great Plain OP; STOP: South Transdanubia OP; WTOP: West Transdanubia OP; CTOP: Central Transdanubia OP; CHOP: Central Hungary OP. \* Exchange rate: 280 HUF/EUR.

When analysing the expenditure and indicator values by OPs, the CTOP and the CHOP may be considered as outliers. In the CTOP with 34% of expenditure, only 10% of the indicator target was reached. According to the MA, this underperformance of the indicator value is due to the fact that indicator data arrived late. At the end of 2012, the actual outcome value of job creation was 1,700, while the CHOP with 46% of expenditure, achieved 75% of its job creation target. Achievement values for expenditure and indicator are similar for the other OPs.

We can conclude that the number of jobs created is used as an indicator of outcomes in three policy areas: RTDI support; enterprise support including ICT; energy and territorial development. The relative importance of these policy areas in terms of planned ERDF expenditure and actual expenditure is as follows:

- planned ERDF expenditure of the three policy areas amounts to approximately 70% of the total;
- actual expenditure of the three policy areas amounts to approximately 80% of the total.

The relative importance of each of these policy areas for the overall number of jobs created by ERDF is as follows:

- in terms of the targets set:
  - o RTDI support and enterprise support including ICT: 68% of the total
  - energy and territorial development: 32% of the total
- in terms of the outcomes:
  - o RTDI support: 6% of the total outcome
  - o enterprise support including ICT: 47% of the total outcome
  - o energy and territorial development: 47% of the total outcome.

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### 2. Definition, methodology, data reporting and wider use of the indicator

#### **Definition and methodology**

As mentioned before, 8 OPs in Hungary, the EDOP and the 7 RDOPs, use job creation as an indicator to measure the results of the OP. While the calls for proposals of the RDOPs have common guidelines on the indicators (there is 1 MA for the 7 RDOPs), the EDOP has its own detailed guidelines. This means that there are 2 guidelines that deal with the indicator. Last year there was a change in the indicator system of the RDOPs, and currently the definition and the methodology presented in the guidelines do not differ; this ensures consistency of the data reported.

The main source of the "number of gross jobs created" indicator is provided by declarations of the beneficiaries. Its value is reported in the PMRs included in the central monitoring IT system (called EMIR). The value of the indicator is determined by the difference of average statistical headcount data in such a way that starting from the first full business year following the closure of the project, the data of the year preceding the project launch are subtracted from the data of the current year. The attribute "gross" refers to the fact that average statistical data concern the beneficiary enterprise or organization as a whole. Independently of its resource, the monitoring system defines job creation in the supported firm as an outcome of the grant. Thus, in some cases, monitoring may either under– or over-estimate the impact of the project, depending on whether jobs at the enterprise were lost or created as a result of other factors.

A job is considered to be a new job, if it is created within the period set in the Call for Proposals, after the project launch and in the framework of the project. Safeguarded jobs are not taken into account when calculating the number of new jobs.

The base headcount is the average statistical headcount of the business year that precedes the submission of the proposal (documented by the tax return declaration with statistical headcount or internal labour records). One of the main changes in the indicator's definition in RDOPs last year was that only verified tax declarations and labour records can be used to report jobs created. This improved the reliance of the indicator and led to a significant reduction of the estimate of jobs created by public institutions.

The number of employees in newly created jobs is the net increase of full-time persons employed by the beneficiary directly in the project, compared to the base headcount, employees in seasonal employment cannot be taken into consideration. The number of part-time employees is estimated as the total working hours of such employees in percentage to the total working hours of all employees. The applied methodology can be considered conservative since it measures Full-time Equivalent (FTE) jobs in terms of only permanent jobs. Thus, it mitigates data risks arising from self-assessment. At the same time, some experts said that sometimes the owners of several small enterprises fulfil the obligations of one of their enterprises by cross-employing people from another enterprise within their company group.

It is worth noting that the difference between average statistical headcount data before and after the project is less meaningful in case of public institutions, where statistical headcount is administratively determined rather than linked to economic decisions/investments. This was

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one of the reasons to dismiss the use of this indicator in relation to the priorities of the RDOPs, where only public bodies are supported (this is not an issue in EDOP, where only enterprises are supported.). As a consequence, the data reported on job creation mainly consists of jobs created in enterprise (mostly SMEs).

It is also worth noting that the on-going public sector reforms often imply a reduction in the total number of employees. The jobs created, reported in the public sector, are usually fulfilled by the employees made redundant as a consequence of the reforms. Therefore, the employment creation in the public sector mostly consists of safeguarded jobs.

#### **Content of data**

The job creation indicator is defined in FTE and not simply in terms of the number of jobs. The number of persons employed less than a full year has to be converted into FTE, based on the number of yearly working hours of full-time employees. The number of employees in FTE thereby includes those who do not work a full day or work less than a full-time week/month. As a benchmark, only working days must be taken into consideration (that is, excluding weekends, vacations, holidays, etc.).

Persons employed in jobs created include:

- 1. Employees: they work for the employer on a basis of a legal contract (employment contract or service contract) and receive compensation (wages) for fulfilling their employment obligations.
- 2. Proprietors, managers: a) remuneration received for the personal contribution of an individual member of a joint business venture, if it is accounted for in the costs of the company. b) executive or elected officer of a business company, if he conducts his activities not as an entrepreneur; that is, he receives a salary for his work.
- 3. Family workers: family members of the owner of the enterprise, if the company pays wages for their activities.

In the Hungarian legal system there are a number of legal forms that regulate work, and the choice between them depends on the flexibility of employment and tax conditions. The monitoring system takes all these forms into account in the case of jobs created, provided that they fulfil the following three criteria: 1. a long-term legal relationship between the company and the individual; 2. the remuneration received is associated with work obligations; and 3. work obligations amount to 60 hours per month. Employees need to be considered on the basis of the average statistical headcount. The calculation of the average statistical headcount is set out in FTE.

Jobs created during the construction stage of a project are not included in the data reported.

The data reported relate to actual outcomes in all OPs, and not to expected or planned outcomes. The data are derived from PMRs, in which beneficiaries report actual outcomes.

For the PMR: after the closure of the project, the beneficiary is obliged to make an annual report for the subsequent 3-5 years, the so-called maintenance period, on the results of the projects.

The planned value of the indicator is based on application forms. These values are available from the central information system.

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Data reported relate to jobs created directly, jobs created indirectly are not included. However, there are models attempting to forecast indirect employment effects.

No efforts are made to avoid double-counting. The Hungarian tax authority is investigating this problem. The controls have not come across this type of fraud.

No efforts are made to capture the quality of jobs. However, there are different job creation indicators for SMEs, in the RTDI sector, and in the most disadvantaged regions.

Jobs created are distinct from safeguarded or maintained jobs, which are not included in the calculation of "new jobs created".

There is a distinction between jobs created by the ERDF and those created by the ESF as the unified monitoring and information system separates the data.

The NDA does not collect data on jobs created as a result of projects supported by means of financial engineering instruments.

#### Wider use of indicator

The CMD of the NDA aggregates the data across OPs to calculate a national figure for the number of jobs created. Plausibility checks on the data reported at project level are carried out and extreme values in the central information system are filtered out. Data is compared among the ROPs to avoid outlier values. These checks, which are not sample based, filter out negative or extremely high values. Once a problem has been detected, a procedure revises that specific data. However, quality checks to improve the overall reliability of the data have not yet been introduced.

The indicator of jobs created is not used to monitor or assess the outcomes of national programmes not co-financed by the ERDF. There are no national programmes aimed at increasing the number of jobs created and, when national programmes have been implemented, there was no monitoring system in place. According to experts, since the financial crisis and the consequent budgetary cuts, 95% of development programmes are financed by EU resources. According to the most recent data, at present the public employment financed from the domestic budget approximately amounts to 250,000 jobs.

Another scheme, the START card, ensures employment contribution benefits for career entrants. At June 2012, approximately 225,000 START cards were claimed by entrants in 6 months (in this latter case, the main objective and indicator is the employment of career entrants and not job creation.)

In Hungary, the job indicators are mostly used for communication purposes. The NDA has launched the "Huge numbers campaign", the main indicator values of the NSRF are reported¹. The reporting system of the development policy in Hungary includes the sum of all the interventions. NSRF-level reports are rare, and made only because of EU obligation (e.g. last year's strategic report).

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The goal of the campaign is to make the numbers of development and progress more tangible so that Hungarian people can be proud of the results achieved. The campaign emphasizes the positive effects of such development on the everyday lives of the citizens. For more information see the link below: <a href="http://ujszechenyiterv.gov.hu/oriasiszamok/">http://ujszechenyiterv.gov.hu/oriasiszamok/</a>

The CMD has decided to define unit cost calculation methodologies in the near future which will use simplified accounting instruments (e.g.: JAP) in the 2014-2020 programming period.

As mentioned before, job creation indicator values are derived from the beneficiaries' declarations recorded in the PMRs. One serious problem is that in some interventions where job creation could be a relevant outcome or impact indicator it is not recorded as it is not requested.

Hungarian policy decision making process lacked a strategic approach, aiming at result based policy implementation, prior to the ERDF allocations from the EU. Hungarian decision makers still focused primarily on financial indicators both on the OP and NSRF level. Outcome-type indicators play a role in the communication between the country and the European Commission (EC).

#### 3. Cost per job created

The CMD of the NDP faces several methodological problems when trying to calculate the unit costs of the different interventions. Several methodological problems invest the CMD's of the NDP calculating the unit costs of the different interventions. These problems and the methodology for unit cost calculation were discussed at a meeting with the EC in March 2013. So far, the unit costs vary from 6 to 222 million HUF (EUR 20,000 to EUR 800,000) in different interventions, this high variance reflects methodological shortcomings.

The basic dilemma is how to take into account the capital and work intensity of the supported sector when determining the unit cost. In the case of a large infrastructural development (e.g.: wastewater investment), managing the established infrastructure creates jobs but, due to the large capital demand, the cost of jobs created is extremely high. If the purchase of machinery is supported in a small enterprise, job creation results in a significantly lower unit cost.

In 2012 the State Audit Office of Hungary audited the national and EU funded programmes aimed at creating or maintaining jobs. The audit report calculated the cost per job created by the EDOP measures at 3.4 million HUF/year (approx. EUR 11,500 /year).

The evaluation for the 2004-2006 programming period of the development of business infrastructure measures of the Economic Competitiveness OP (ECOP 1.2 measure) estimates the cost per job created and safeguarded by this measure.

- The measure ECOP 1.2 carried out between 2004 and 2006 can be considered as the continuation of the national funded interventions implemented before 2004. The ECOP 1.2 measure consisted of two sub-measures: 1.2.1 "Development of industrial and innovation infrastructure" and 1.2.2 "Development of logistic centres". The total available funding of measure ECOP 1.2 was 5.1 billion HUF, of which 1.5 billion HUF was allocated to sub-measure 1.2.1, and 3.6 billion HUF to sub-measure 1.2.2. The utilizable area of the industrial parks and the storage capacity of the logistics companies increased and new incubator-houses were built.
- ECOP 1.2.1 called for proposals motivated particularly by the development concepts of the industrial parks close to Budapest. As in 2004 these parks hosted many innovation services and several manufacturing companies, they submitted most grant applications in the framework of this measure.

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According to data, on 6th June 2009, 109 applications were submitted for the proposals announced in the framework of the measure, 57 successful ECOP 1.2 projects were achieved. Altogether a 5,617 million HUF grant was disbursed. As a result 1,020 new workplaces were created or maintained. The average grant for creating a new workplace or maintaining a workplace was 5.5 million HUF (ca. EUR 18,000), which roughly equals the 2000-2006 grant (~ 4.5 million HUF).

In 2010, the NDA ordered an evaluation called "Effect of Cohesion policy on the employment level and quality of the Visegrad countries". As part of the evaluation, the external evaluators measured the cost of job creation in the ECOP (2004-2006). The EDOP of the NSRF can be regarded as the "successor" of the ECOP.

The evaluation estimated that the average grant for creating and maintaining a new workplace amounted to 11 million HUF (ca. EUR 47,000) for the whole ECOP.

#### 4. The indicator of job creation in evaluations and AIRs

In the current programming period, all the mid-term OP evaluations contain chapters on the indicators. These evaluations were prepared in 2010, when the actual indicator values were 0. The mid-term evaluation reports try to define the problems investing the indicator system. The 2007-13 RDOPs extensively reviewed the indicators in 2012, since the system was not uniform among the OPs and many indicator values could not be aggregated.

Ex-post evaluations applied counter factual methods (see previous chapter) to estimate the net job creation of the 2007-2013 programmes. Evaluation reports are not yet available publicly, but expected to be published soon.

The CMD analysed the employment data of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office and National Tax and Customs Administration of Hungary. They concluded that, despite the global economic crises, the average statistical headcount had increased in the supported companies. However, employment growth was lower than the number reported by the beneficiaries in the PMRs.

It can be concluded that there are only few attempts to estimate net job creation. The findings are still not reflected in AIRs or any other policy documents nor are they available on the website of the NDA as they were finalized in early 2013. Publicly available evaluations have not aimed to calculate net job creation so far. Our rough estimation for the total number of jobs created and maintained up to the end of 2011 is a maximum of 100,000 jobs. In the calculation we used the cost per job created and maintained in ECOP and the actual expenditure at the end of 2011.

The officially reported data on gross jobs created (31,343) can be considered reliable; the difference with our estimate reflects the strong job maintenance effect of the programmes in a period of economic crises.

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#### 5. Looking forward to the 2014-2020 programming period

Experts of the NDA are familiar with and welcome the new definition of the common indicator for the 2014-2020 period, which will be very similar to the one currently applied in Hungary.

It is worth noting that the people involved in the monitoring system may change in the period between the preparation of the ex-ante evaluation (2013-2014) and the publication of the first actual data (2016). This, together with the change in the structure of the programmes, may increase the risk of losing some of the institutional know-how built up in the past.

#### 6. Further remarks

In the 2004-2006 programming period, there were a few evaluations on indicators and job creation. While some of them were mentioned in chapter 3, here the less specific ones are described. Regarding the ECOP (the predecessor of EDOP 2007-2013), there were 2 evaluations related to the job creation indicator:

- the evaluation of the indicators of ECOP (2004-2006) found that in September 2009 only approximately 52% of the job creation indicator had been achieved;
- the evaluation of the "Development of the technological background of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises" measure (ECOP 2.1.1) found that, as a result of the support or presumably as a result of the administrative prescription related to the use of the support the number of employees of the granted enterprises and the (potential) efficiency of their production increased. However, the granted companies could not "cash in" on this improvement in efficiency (there is a decrease in sales revenue and/or added value per employee), which indicates that increasing the number of employees was not economically justified.

On the one hand, these evaluations showed that the indicators for the number of jobs created were under planned in the ECOP. On the other hand, this evaluation shows that OP level indicators exist also at project level, and this fact might introduce unintended incentives in the efficiency of the projects.

In the opinion of the MAs, the jobs created indicator is of great importance. However, they are very sceptical as to whether the collected indicators measure the real aim of the OP. So in the end, the MAs focused on the main objective of the OP (e.g.: the main indicator of the ECOP is the growth of GVA created by the corporate sector as a result of the programme).

Due to the ambiguous meaning of job creation in public institution it would be advisable to not aggregate these data with job creation in enterprises, in the next period.

All attempts to estimate the employment effects of ERDF support through models produce significantly lower figures than the number of jobs reported by beneficiaries. However, researchers think that, for monitoring purposes, there is no better information than the one based on beneficiaries' reports. Anyway there is an on-going debate on how to decrease administrative burdens of beneficiaries and avoid unintended distortions of project goals, caused by the need for feeding the indicator system.

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Anikó Kabai: head of unit at Economic Development OP MA (NDA).

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