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EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund

RAMBOLL

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Contact: Ann-Kerstin Myleus, Denisa Perrin

E-mail: REGIO-E1-ADMINISTRATIVE-CAPACITY@ec.europa.eu

European Commission
B-1049 Brussels

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Abstract

The implementation of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund Programmes requires strong administrative capacity. This study addresses the competencies of employees involved in the management of the funds. The main result of the study is a set of practical tools that support human resources development:

- the Competency Framework covering all institutions involved in the management of the funds.
- the competency Self-Assessment Tool based on the Competency Framework.
- a recommended training Blueprint.

The Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool are job-aids to help institutions managing the funds in strengthening their human resources capacity. The Competency Framework and Self-Assessment are flexible and customizable, so that they apply to the different organisational structures in the Member States. The Self-Assessment Tool allows for a competency assessment on individual and institutional level. The outcomes of the assessment provide an important base for individual development plans, overarching human resources strategies and training plans. The recommended Blueprint for a European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund training provides guidance on the structure of a learning offer, which is functional to strengthening the competencies defined in the Competency Framework.

Key phrases

Competency framework for ERDF and CF, self-assessment tool, assessment of competencies, professional competencies, operational competencies, management competencies, core values, inventory of education and training programmes, blueprint of curricula for ERDF and CF training, models for managing ERDF and CF, administrative capacity building.

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[1] Available on demand

[2] Available on demand

List of abbreviations used

Abbreviation	Description
AA	Audit Authority
CA	Certifying Authority
CB	Coordinating Body
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community-led Local Development
CPR	Common Provisions Regulation
DG REGIO	Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EIPA	European Institute of Public Administration
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESI funds	European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD, EMFF)
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
HR	Human resources
IB	Intermediate Body
JS	Joint Secretariat
MA	Managing Authority
MS	Member State
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Partnership Agreement
TA	Technical Assistance

Glossary of terms used in the Report

Term	Description
Administrative capacity for ERDF and CF	Management results from Member States choices in terms of governance, structures, human resources, systems and tools.
Authority (Institution)	A national, regional or local public authority or a private body designated by the Member State to carry out National Coordination level, Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Intermediate Body, Audit Authority or Joint Secretariat functions.
Beneficiary	Public or private body responsible for initiating, or both initiating and implementing operations; and in the context of State aid schemes, the body which receives the aid; and in the context of financial instruments the body that implements the financial instrument.
Coaching	Individual support at the workplace regarding technical and/or personal issues.
Competency	Capability of applying or using knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, and personal characteristics to successfully perform critical work tasks, specific functions, or operate in a given role or position.
Competency framework	An instrument for managing human resources which includes core values and sets of competencies, relevant for the development of both organisations and employees.
Core values	Values that underpin the goals and believes of the different actors of the management and control system, as well as underlie the behaviours of public administration professionals and match their personal beliefs thereby making them their own.
Decision making experts	This is the head of the organisation or persons that act on relatively high strategic management levels
ERDF and CF management and implementation models	The approaches adopted for the coordination, management and implementation of programmes co-financed by the ERDF and CF.
Gamification	The process of applying gaming designs and concepts to trainings in order to make them more engaging for the learner. Learners compete directly against one or more individuals or participate individually in an interactive experience that rewards learning performance in some way.
Governance	The characteristics of the administrative system at Member States or regional level in terms of accountability, transparency, political influence on staff appointment and project selection and empowerment.
Groups assignments	A group of employees receives an assignment, which they collectively have to complete.
Groups of Job Roles	Three clusters of Job Roles (operational, supervisory, and decision making) developed considering tasks, sub-tasks and responsibilities carried out by each level.

Term	Description
Human resources	In the context of ERDF and CF implementation: the personnel of an institution, its adequacy in terms of number; turnover level; experience, skills, and motivation.
Institution/organisation	Body involved in ERDF/CF implementation
Intervision	Self-help method used among peers or colleagues to help each other deal with technical' or personal functioning challenges during the job. Sometimes there is a moderator available.
Job Description	A document that summarises the main responsibilities, functions and principal duties, competencies and required proficiency levels.
Job Role	Brief description of a position held by an employee responsible for management of the ERDF and CF.
Knowledge sharing	Interactive process between the ERDF and CF stakeholders at different levels encouraging the sharing of experiences, approaches, skills, knowledge related to the management of ERDF and CF.
Management and control system	The bodies involved in management and control, their functions, procedures and tools as defined in Art. 72 of the CPR.
Management competencies	Competencies covering a managerial function and based on gained knowledge, abilities, skills, and set of values.
Member States	28 countries that are members of the European Union
Moderated discussion involving experts	An event where employees have the opportunity to address technical challenges at their job, and receive guidance, tips and tricks and solutions for these challenges.
On the job learning	An individual "learning by doing" approach where the employee learns new competencies in the regular work situation. The employee receives direct feedback while executing tasks. The person who coaches the employee observes, instructs and provides feedback.
Operational competencies	Competencies required for staff to successfully manage the assigned functions related to ERDF and CF management.
Operational level experts	These are the experts that are directly working on the different tasks and sub-tasks within the organisation.
Professional competencies	Competencies required for the execution of specific professional functions and based on gained knowledge, abilities, skills, and set of values.
Self-assessment	An evaluation of one's own proficiency level in the competencies required for the effective and efficient performance of assigned functions.
Self-Assessment Tool	The MS Excel based semi-automated tool used to evaluate the user's proficiency level of competencies and identifying the competencies that need upgrading.
Structures	In the context of ERDF and CF implementation: the bodies assigned for the different tasks related to the management and implementation of ERDF and CF programmes.
Sub-task	An action performed by an authority (institution) or person that produces a result related to management of the ERDF and CF.
Supervision	A method where a small group of employees (peers/colleagues) come together to discuss challenges they face at performing. They are led by a senior person inside the organisation who helps the group based on his/her extended level of experience.
Supervisory level experts	This is the middle management level, responsible for a group of people and not directly involved in operational implementation of the programme.

Term	Description
Systems and Tools	Systems used for ESIF knowledge management (e.g. IT systems that store and retrieve knowledge) and tools aimed at improving the efficiency of Management and Control Systems (e.g. methods, guidelines, manuals, procedures and forms); IT systems (e.g. monitoring and information systems) used for managing ESIF.
Task	Group of sub-tasks clustered by the purpose of the task and performed by a person or group of persons in their everyday activities to ensure management of ERDF and CF
(Virtual) Classroom assignments	A group of employees who want to learn more about certain competencies. They can come together physically in one space or meet virtually.
Vocational Training programme	Short-term training programme addressing knowledge and skills related to ESIF management.
Web based learning	An executable course file than can be emailed and run standalone on a PC or uploaded to a suitably configured Learning Management System. It allows for self-paced learning featuring textual contents, static graphics, animations and periodic interactions for motivation/recall.

Executive Summary

This study "EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund", is delivered by the Consortium Ernst & Young Special Business Services (leader) and Ramboll Management Consulting/SA for the European Commission, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy under the Competitive Framework Service Contract for the provision of Studies on administrative costs, administrative capacities, IT systems and fraud prevention and detection measures (Lot 4).

The study has the following objectives:

- Providing a Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool for efficient management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund.
- Taking stock of approaches and models used in Member States for managing the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund.
- Providing recommendations on how competencies can be enhanced (Blueprint for Training).

The three objectives are interlinked. The development of the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool take into account the approaches and models used in Member States for managing and implementing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) financed programmes. The purpose of the training Blueprint is to ensure the availability of a training offer adequate to enhance the competencies identified in the Competency Framework through the application of the Self-Assessment Tool.

The deliverables of the study are a set of practical tools that support the human resources development:

- A Competency Framework covering all institutions involved in the implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, based on the different practices in terms of structures.
- A competency Self-Assessment Tool based on the Competency Framework. The tool allows for individual assessments of competencies, as well as an analysis on institution level by aggregating the individual assessments. The tool provides an important base for individual development plans and overarching human resources strategies, which can be used for identifying and addressing competency gaps at individual and institutional level.
- The results of the stock taking exercise in terms of the organisation of structures as an important base for the Competency Framework and the good practices in competency management in the eight Member States studied.
- In terms of recommendations, a Blueprint for Training to address the identified competency gaps. The Blueprint is based on the groups of competencies needed within the different institutions, covering all job roles and proficiency levels. The Blueprint is accompanied by an inventory of the vocational trainings and academic curricula already available in the market as well as on existing knowledge exchange networks and platforms, analysed according to the groups of competencies defined for the Blueprint. Next to this, the study concludes with recommendations on the implementation of the Competency Framework.

The Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool

A Competency Framework is an instrument for managing human resources, which defines the competencies relevant for the development of both organisations and employees. A Self-Assessment Tool is an instrument used to evaluate the user's proficiency level of competencies, and identifies those that need upgrading.

The evidence collected within this study shows that within the public bodies involved in the implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund, there are often competency frameworks applicable to all civil servants or relating to a specific authority. However, specific frameworks for ERDF and CF management are in most cases not in place, although there are a few examples in the eight countries covered by this study (Lithuania and Latvia).

There is a need for a Competency Framework as the current programme period introduced changes in the regulations, implying new competencies needed. Furthermore, effective management of the funds calls for a mix of competencies that go beyond the requirements of the regulations. High turnover rates and the assigning of management functions to new institutions require systemic capacity building. Furthermore, building capacities of new staff requires a structured approach in competency development.

The Competency Framework and the related Self-Assessment Tool provide a standardised, yet flexible approach towards the development of competencies within the authorities involved in the implementation of programmes financed by the funds.

The Competency Framework is customized and applicable to all key authorities involved in the management of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund financed programmes (Coordinating Body, Managing Authority, Intermediate Body, Joint Secretariat, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority).

The Competency Framework includes the different mixes of tasks and sub-tasks that can be assigned to programme authorities. Furthermore, it covers 3 groups of job roles: decision making level, supervisory level and operational level. For each of the identified tasks and sub-tasks, sets of competencies that are relevant for each job role are assigned with an indication of the proficiency levels (level of knowledge and ability) needed for these competencies and job role.

The Competency Framework includes management competencies, professional competencies required for employees to efficiently perform specific professional functions and operational competencies tailored to the tasks relating to the implementation of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund financed programmes. The operational competencies are particularly important for the operational staff. For each of the competencies related to tasks, proficiency levels have been set within the Competency Framework. Within the Competency Framework the proficiency levels per competence are further explained by providing a description of the different levels.

Furthermore, core values underpinning the goals and beliefs of different actors involved in the management and implementation of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund financed programmes have been identified.

The Self-Assessment Tool is built on the Competency Framework and its purpose is to assess the available individual competencies, and to identify competencies that are lacking or need upgrading at individual and authority level. This Self-Assessment Tool is meant as a job-aid to the authorities involved in the management and implementation of the funds. It is a tool that is meant for internal use only, as an instrument that is part of the human resources policy relating to European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund programme management and implementation.

This means that the use of the tool is not mandatory, nor will it be used for reporting towards other organisations, such as the European Commission. The tool is also not meant for a cross comparison of institutions within a country or across countries. On the contrary, as a human resources tool the outcomes of the individual assessments are to be treated as any other human resources instrument: with care and confidentiality.

As the tool is meant for identifying development needs, it is also not meant for appraisal purposes. If it were to be used for appraisal, employees will tend to provide desirable answers and assess their proficiency levels higher than in actuality.

The Self-Assessment Tool has a high level of flexibility in order to conduct tailor made assessments for the employee, based on the tasks and subtasks he/she performs in a specific authority. Hence, the tool allows for selecting the relevant authority, job profile and tasks and sub-tasks relevant to the employee. Based on this selection, the tool generates the relevant competencies and proficiency levels to be assessed. Hence, the tool allows for a tailor made assessment per employee.

The actual assessment is based on the self-assessment of the individual employee, and the assessment of the competencies of this employee by its supervisor or manager. The reason for the involvement of a second person in the assessment is to ensure that biases towards the own competencies are identified and discussed. This process allows the identification of the key competencies that are missing or need upgrading and linking competency gaps with developmental options (training or other activities) both at individual and authority levels.

Based on the assessment the tool generates automatically a development plan for the employee, forming the basis for the identification of further development activities and an individual training plan.

Next to the assessment on individual level, the tool allows for an aggregation of data on authority level. These aggregated assessment results can be used for the strategic decisions and actions aimed at the development of competencies required for efficient management and implementation of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund financed programmes, such as setting priorities for development of employees or recruitment of new employees with specific competencies.

Lastly, the Competency Framework and the Self-Assessment Tool are developed in such a way that they can be used by authorities responsible for managing European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund financed programmes to prepare job profiles for the different functions and tasks of employees.

By using the Competency Framework, the Self-Assessment Tool and the implementation of development plans, the authorities will increase their capacity in effective and efficient implementation of the programmes.

Structures for the implementation of the programmes

The programmes financed by the ERDF and CF are implemented under shared management between the European Commission and Member States. Member States have a main role in the implementation of the programmes, and their efficient and effective implementation requires a strong administrative capacity.

Administrative capacity is determined by: the structures, human resources, systems and tools, and the broader governance aspects. These elements are interrelated and their individual quality influences the overall administrative capacity through mutual influence.

Structures are one of the important elements of the administrative capacity that determines the efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the funds. Important elements for their effectiveness and efficiency are the mandates they have, including the clarity of the division of tasks between institutions, and the quality of their cooperation and coordination.

At the same time, the structures influence the competencies needed within an organisation, as the division of tasks determines which competencies are needed and also may influence the proficiency levels needed for these competencies. For instance, in case of the involvement of many institutions, coordinating skills within the Coordinating Body or the Managing Authority need to be stronger. In smaller institutions an individual employee might need to cover more competencies than an employee working in a larger organisation allowing for more specialisation, etc.

In light of this, for the development of the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool it was important to have a view on how the structures are shaped in the different countries. For this reason, the stock taking exercise covers an inventory of the different models in the eight countries studied.

Although the Common Provisions Regulation provides the general framework for the authorities and tasks involved in the implementation of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund, the stock taking exercise on structures in the eight selected Member States shows that organisational set-ups vary considerably. Next to this, the size of the authorities involved and their level of experience influences the range of competencies that need to be covered by an individual employee.

In the majority of the cases, the authorities are set up in existing administrative structures, in organisational units that are fully dedicated to the management of the funds, or combining it with other tasks. In some cases, new administrative structures have been created for the implementation of the funds. In most cases, the implementation is in the hands of public authorities, but in a few cases private bodies or non-governmental institutions are involved.

The differences in the set-up of Member States, is a result of several factors. These factors include: existing administrative structures and their related mandates, administrative capacity and available competencies within an institution, the types of investment and thematic knowledge needed as well as the size of the programme.

As a result, the Competency Framework needs to be flexible to cover the different situations.

The relevance of a competency based approach for the development of administrative capacity is confirmed by a number of good practices adopted or planned in Member States. The good practices vary in term of complexity and linkages with the broader human resources strategies and scope of application within the ERDF and CF system. For example, in Lithuania and Latvia competency based approaches are specific to the ERDF and CF. Competency based approaches have been used for the incorporation of new institutions in the management system. Knowledge sharing initiatives have been taken up in several countries by establishing working groups and coordination meetings. In an effort to retain competencies, several Member States have been paying salary top-ups and bonuses.

Recommended Blueprint for a European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund Training

The purpose of the Blueprint for "Training programmes on coordination, management and implementation of European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund 2014-2020" is to provide guidance on the structure of a learning and development offer, which is to be used to strengthen the competencies defined in the Competency Framework.

The Blueprint is based on the competencies identified in the Competency Framework and provides an input for addressing these gaps. In order to make the Blueprint a practical and usable instrument based on a manageable number of training modules, the competencies have been aggregated into broader groups, each representing a training module. The total number of proposed modules is 24, out of which 19 are related to the operational competencies and 5 to management and professional competencies.
Addressing the different proficiency levels included in the Competency Framework requires the identification of different learning methods for each module. Four different training programmes have been defined according to the learning outcome:

- The "Knowledge development" training programme aiming at providing a basic understanding of all competencies through Web-Based Learning with knowledge checks.
- The "Skills and capabilities development" training programme, aiming at the ability to apply relevant skills and the capability of making decisions in relation to all competencies. This learning outcome requires more interactive teaching methods such as (virtual) classrooms and moderated discussions.
- The "High level experts master class" aimed at equipping participants with an advanced learning outcome in relation to a limited set of complex operational competencies, and creating informal national and transnational competency networks. It targets experts that are required to possess vertical knowledge on a subject matter that are in an operational or supervisory role.
- The "Decision makers master class" aimed at equipping decision makers with an advanced learning outcome in relation to professional and management competencies required in the context of ERDF and CF systems, and creating informal national and transnational competency networks.

The developed Blueprint provides recommendations for the geographical level (EU or Member State) the training should be organised on, the target groups and learning methods. The Blueprint is completed with an inventory of vocational training programmes and master level programmes available on the market relevant to the modules defined in the Blueprint.

Recommendations

In order to ensure the widespread use of the Competency Framework, Self-Assessment Tool and Blueprint for Training, it is recommended to DG REGIO to draft a road map to promote the use of these tools. Furthermore, it is recommended to support the further use of the Self-Assessment Tool by establishing a help desk, and to provide an update of the tool after the first experiences. As the tool is designed in Excel, with its own technical limitations, it is recommended to develop a web-based instrument to improve the stability of the tool.

For Member States or authorities it is recommended to use the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment tool as a part of the human resources strategy, relating to recruitment and training plans. By using the tool on a yearly basis, the development of the employees and the organisation as a whole can be monitored and improved. Furthermore, it is recommended to the authorities to leverage on existing knowledge. For instance, by providing a map of staff's competencies that allows for searching the required knowledge, additionally, social media and wikis can stimulate knowledge exchange between staff and the uptake of competencies.

Finally a number of good practice approaches for competency development may be implemented along with the Competency Framework. Authorities may consider the integration of highly specialized structures in the ESIF system or the creation of new ones with the same characteristics, inter-institutional cooperation agreements, working groups, a strategic approach to human resources planning and a cross-competency approach to team work.

Résumé

Cette étude «cadre de compétences de l'UE pour la gestion et la mise en œuvre du Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion", est délivrée par le Consortium Ernst & Young Special Business Services (leader) et Ramboll Management Consulting / SA pour la Commission européenne, Direction-Générale de la politique régionale et urbaine, et dans le cadre du contrat-cadre multiple de services avec mise en concurrence pour Etudes, rapports et évaluations d'impact pour la réalisation d'études relatives aux coûts administratifs, aux capacités administratives, aux systèmes informatiques (TI) et aux mesures de prévention et de détection des fraudes (lot 4).

L'étude a les objectifs suivants:

- Fournir un cadre de compétences et un Outil d'autoévaluation pour la gestion efficace et la mise en œuvre du Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion.
- Répertorier les approches et les modèles utilisés dans les États membres pour la gestion du Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion.
- Fournir des recommandations sur la façon dont les compétences peuvent être améliorées (Plan d'Action pour la formation).

Les trois objectifs sont liés entre eux. L'élaboration du Cadre de compétences et de l'Outil d'autoévaluation prend en compte les approches et les modèles utilisés dans les États membres pour la gestion et la mise en œuvre des programmes financés par le Fonds européen de développement régional (FEDER) et le Fonds de cohésion (FC). Le but du Plan d'Action pour la formation est d'assurer la disponibilité d'une offre de formation adéquate afin d'améliorer les compétences identifiées dans le Cadre de Compétences grâce à l'application de l'outil d'auto-évaluation.

Les livrables de l'étude sont un ensemble d'outils pratiques qui soutiennent le développement des ressources humaines:

- Un Cadre de Compétences couvrant l'ensemble des institutions impliquées dans la mise en œuvre du Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion, sur la base des différentes pratiques en termes de structures.
- Un Outil d'autoévaluation des compétences sur la base du Cadre de Compétences. L'outil permettra les évaluations individuelles des compétences, ainsi qu'une analyse au niveau de l'institution en compilant les évaluations individuelles. L'outil fournit une base importante pour les plans de développement individuels, et des stratégies de ressources humaines globales, qui peuvent être utilisées pour identifier et combler des lacunes dans les compétences au niveau individuel et institutionnel.
- Les résultats de l'exercice d'inventaire, en termes de l'organisation des structures en tant que base importante pour le Cadre de compétences et les bonnes pratiques dans la gestion des compétences dans les huit États membres étudiés.
- En termes de recommandations, il sera produit un Plan d'Action pour la formation pour combler les lacunes de compétences identifiées. Le Plan d'action est basé sur les groupes de compétences nécessaires au sein des différentes institutions, couvrant tous les postes et niveaux de compétence. Le Plan d'action est accompagné d'un inventaire des formations professionnelles et des programmes scolaires déjà disponibles sur le marché ainsi que sur les réseaux d'échange de connaissances et les plates-formes existants, analysés selon les groupes de compétences définies pour le Plan directeur. Par ailleurs, l'étude conclut par des recommandations sur la mise en œuvre du Cadre de Compétences.

Le Cadre de Compétences et l'Outil d'autoévaluation

Un Cadre de Compétences est un instrument de gestion des ressources humaines, qui définit les compétences pertinentes pour le développement des organisations ainsi que des employés. Un outil d'auto-évaluation est un instrument utilisé pour évaluer le niveau de maîtrise des compétences de l'utilisateur, et identifie celles qui ont besoin d'une mise à niveau.

Les témoignages recueillis dans cette étude montrent que dans les organismes publics impliqués dans la mise en œuvre du Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion, il y a souvent des cadres de compétences applicables à tous les fonctionnaires, ou encore liés à une autorité spécifique. Cependant, les cadres spécifiques pour la gestion du FEDER et des FC ne sont pas en place, dans la plupart des cas, bien qu'il en existe quelques exemples dans les huit pays couverts par cette étude (Lituanie et Lettonie).

Le besoin du Cadre de Compétences résulte des modifications à la réglementation que la période de programmation actuelle a apportées, ce qui entraîne la nécessité pour de nouvelles compétences. En outre, la gestion efficace des fonds exige une combinaison de compétences qui vont au-delà des exigences des réglementations. Un taux de rotation élevé et l'attribution des fonctions de gestion à de nouvelles institutions ont eu pour résultat de créer le besoin de renforcer la capacité de celles-ci de manière systémique. En outre, le renforcement des capacités des nouveaux membres du personnel nécessite une approche structurée en matière de développement des compétences.

Le Cadre de Compétences et l'outil d'autoévaluation connexe fournissent une approche standardisée mais flexible envers le développement des compétences au sein des autorités impliquées dans la mise en œuvre des programmes financés par les fonds.

Le Cadre de Compétences est personnalisable et applicable à toutes les autorités impliquées de façon significative dans la gestion des programmes financés par le Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion (Coordination, autorité de gestion, organisme intermédiaire, Secrétariat conjoint, autorité de certification et autorité de contrôle).

Le Cadre de Compétences comprend les différentes combinaisons de tâches et sous-tâches qui peuvent être assignées aux autorités du programme. En outre, elle couvre 3 groupes de postes: au niveau prise de décisions, au niveau supervision et au niveau opérationnel. Pour chacune des tâches et sous-tâches identifiées, des ensembles de compétences pertinentes pour chaque poste sont affectés, avec une indication des niveaux de compétence (niveau de connaissances et la capacité) nécessaires à ces compétences et le poste.

Le Cadre de Compétences englobe les compétences de gestion, les compétences professionnelles requises pour que les employés effectuent efficacement des fonctions professionnelles spécifiques et les compétences opérationnelles adaptées aux tâches relatives à la mise en œuvre des programmes financés par le Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion. Les compétences opérationnelles sont particulièrement importantes pour le personnel opérationnel. Pour chacune des compétences liées aux tâches, des niveaux de maîtrise de compétence ont été créés dans le cadre des compétences. Des niveaux de maîtrise par compétence sont expliqués plus en détail dans le cadre des compétences, et sont accompagnés par une description des différents niveaux.

En outre, les valeurs fondamentales qui étayent les objectifs et les convictions des différents acteurs impliqués dans la gestion et la mise en œuvre des programmes financés par le Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion ont été identifiées.

L'outil d'auto-évaluation est basé sur le Cadre de Compétences et son but est d'évaluer les compétences individuelles disponibles, d'identifier les compétences qui font défaut ou ont besoin d'être mises à niveau, aussi bien pour l'individu que pour l'autorité. Cet outil d'auto-évaluation est conçu comme une assistance apportée aux autorités impliquées dans la gestion et la mise en œuvre des fonds. C'est un outil qui est destiné uniquement à un usage interne, comme un instrument qui ferait partie de la politique des ressources humaines en matière de gestion et de mise en œuvre du programme du Fonds européen de développement régional et du Fonds de cohésion.

Cela signifie que l'utilisation de cet outil n'est pas obligatoire ou qu'il sera utilisé pour activités de rapport envers d'autres organisations, telles que la Commission européenne. Cet outil n'est également pas développé pour permettre une comparaison entre des institutions d'un pays ou entre les institutions de différents pays. Au contraire, en tant qu'outil de ressources humaines, les résultats des évaluations individuelles doivent être traités comme tout autre instrument de ressources humaines: avec attention et confidentialité.

Comme cet outil est destiné à identifier les besoins de développement, il n'est pas non plus destiné à des fins d'évaluation de performance. S'il devait être utilisé pour l'évaluation, les employés auraient tendance à fournir des réponses donnant un angle favorable à leur niveau de compétence, qui serait plus élevé qu'en réalité.

L'outil d'auto-évaluation a un haut niveau de flexibilité afin de procéder à des évaluations précises pour l'employé, en fonction des tâches et sous-tâches qu'il / elle effectue dans une autorité spécifique. Par conséquent, l'outil permet de sélectionner l'autorité compétente, le profil de l'emploi et les tâches et sous-tâches pertinentes pour l'employé. Sur la base de cette sélection, l'outil génère les compétences pertinentes et leurs niveaux à évaluer. Par conséquent, l'outil permet une évaluation sur mesure par employé.

L'évaluation proprement dite est basée sur l'auto-évaluation de l'employé ainsi que l'évaluation des compétences de cet employé par son superviseur ou le gestionnaire. La raison de l'implication d'une deuxième personne dans l'évaluation est de veiller à ce que les avis biaisés envers leurs propres compétences soient identifiés et discutés. Ce processus permet d'identifier les compétences clés qui sont manquantes ou ayant besoin de mise à niveau et de combler les discordances de compétences avec des options de développement (formation ou d'autres activités) à la fois au niveau individuel et de l'autorité.

Sur la base de l'évaluation, l'outil génère automatiquement un plan de développement pour l'employé, qui sera le socle de l'identification de nouvelles activités de développement et d'un plan de formation individuel.

A côté de l'évaluation au niveau individuel, l'outil permet une agrégation des données au niveau de l'autorité. Ces résultats des évaluations agrégées peuvent être utilisés pour la prise de décisions stratégiques et établir les actions visant le développement des compétences nécessaires à la gestion efficace de la mise en œuvre des programmes financés par le Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion, comme par exemple, établir des priorités pour le développement des employés ou le recrutement de nouveaux employés ayant des compétences spécifiques.

Enfin, le Cadre de Compétences et l'outil d'auto-évaluation sont développés de manière à ce qu'ils puissent être utilisés par les autorités chargées de la gestion des programmes financés par le Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion, pour préparer des profils d'emploi pour les différentes fonctions et les tâches que les employés auront à exécuter.

En utilisant le Cadre de Compétences, l'outil d'auto-évaluation et la mise en œuvre des plans de développement, les autorités vont accroître leur capacité de mise en œuvre efficace et efficiente des programmes.

Structures pour la mise en œuvre des programmes

Les programmes financés par le FEDER et le FC sont mis en œuvre par gestion partagée entre la Commission européenne et les États membres. Les États membres ont un rôle principal dans la mise en œuvre des programmes dont la mise en œuvre efficace et efficiente exige une forte capacité administrative.
La capacité administrative est déterminée par: les structures, les ressources humaines, les systèmes et les outils, ainsi que les aspects plus larges de gouvernance. Ces éléments sont liés entre eux et leur qualité propre influe sur la capacité administrative globale, ils s'influencent mutuellement.

Les structures sont l'un des éléments importants de la capacité administrative qui déterminent l'efficacité et l'efficience de la mise en œuvre des Fonds. Les mandats donnés à ces structures sont également des éléments importants pour leur efficacité et leur efficience, y compris la clarté de la répartition des tâches entre les institutions et la qualité de leur coopération et coordination.
Dans le même temps, les structures influencent les compétences nécessaires au sein d'une organisation, tout comme la répartition des tâches détermine quelles compétences sont nécessaires et peuvent également influer sur les niveaux de maîtrise nécessaires à ces compétences. Par exemple, dans le cas de l'intervention de nombreuses institutions, les compétences de coordination au sein de l'organe de coordination ou de l'autorité de gestion doivent être plus fortes. Dans les plus petites institutions, un employé pourrait avoir besoin de couvrir un champ de compétences plus vaste qu'un employé travaillant dans une organisation plus grande permettant une plus grande spécialisation.

À la lumière de cela, pour élaborer le Cadre de Compétences et l'Outil d'autoévaluation, il était important de connaître les structures créées dans les différents pays. Pour cette raison, l'exercice de bilan couvre l'inventaire des différents modèles dans les huit pays étudiés.

Bien que le règlement de Dispositions Communes fournisse le cadre général pour les autorités et les tâches impliquées dans la mise en œuvre du Fonds européen de développement régional et du Fonds de cohésion, l'exercice de bilan des structures dans les huit États membres sélectionnés montre que l'organisation mise en place varie considérablement. En plus de cela, la taille des autorités concernées et leur niveau d'expérience, influe sur les champs de compétences qui doivent être couverts par un employé.

Dans la majorité des cas, les autorités sont mises en place au sein de structures administratives existantes, dans les unités administratives qui sont entièrement dédiées à la gestion des fonds, ou sont combinées avec d'autres tâches. Dans certains des cas, de nouvelles structures administratives ont été créées pour la mise en œuvre des fonds. Dans la plupart des cas, la mise en œuvre est entre les mains des pouvoirs publics, mais dans quelques cas, des organismes privés ou des institutions non gouvernementales sont impliquées.

Les différences dans les organisations mises en place dans les États membres, est le résultat de plusieurs facteurs. Ces facteurs englobent: des structures administratives existantes et leurs mandats connexes, la capacité administrative et les compétences disponibles au sein d'une institution, les types d'investissements et de connaissances thématiques nécessaires ainsi que la taille du programme.

En conséquence, le cadre de compétences doit être souple pour couvrir les différentes situations.

La pertinence d'une approche axée sur les compétences pour le développement de la capacité administrative est confirmée par un certain nombre de bonnes pratiques adoptées ou envisagées dans les États membres. Les bonnes pratiques varient en termes de complexité et par la nature des liens avec les stratégies de ressources humaines plus globales et de leur champ d'application au sein du système FEDER et FC. Par exemple, les approches en Lituanie et en Lettonie sont spécifiques au FEDER et au FC. L'approche axée sur les compétences a été utilisée pour l'incorporation de nouvelles institutions dans le système de gestion. Les initiatives de partage des connaissances ont été lancées dans plusieurs pays par la création de groupes de travail et des réunions de coordination. Dans un effort pour retenir les compétences, plusieurs États membres ont payé des bonus et autres avantages en plus des salaires de base.

Plan d'Action recommandé pour une formation sur le Fonds européen de développement régional et le Fonds de cohésion

L'objectif du Plan de «programmes de formation sur la coordination, la gestion et la mise en œuvre du Fonds européen de développement régional et du Fonds de cohésion 2014-2020" est de fournir des indications sur la structure d'une offre d'apprentissage et de développement, qui sont utilisées pour renforcer les compétences définies dans le cadre de compétences.

Le Plan d'action est basé sur les savoir-faire identifiés dans le Cadre de Compétences et fournit des éléments pour combler ces lacunes. Afin de faire du Plan d'Action un instrument pratique et utilisable, basé sur un nombre gérable de modules de formation, les compétences ont été regroupées en groupes plus larges, chacun représentant un module de formation. Le nombre total de modules proposés est de 24, dont 19 sont liées aux compétences opérationnelles et 5 à la gestion et les compétences professionnelles.
Répondre aux différents niveaux de compétence inclus dans le Cadre de Compétences nécessite l'identification des différentes méthodes d'apprentissage pour chaque module. Quatre programmes de formation différents ont été définis en fonction du résultat de l'apprentissage:

- Le programme de formation «développement des connaissances» visant à fournir une compréhension de base de l'ensemble des compétences par avec des contrôles de connaissances basés sur un outil en ligne.
- Le programme de formation «Compétences et capacités de développement", visant à acquérir la capacité de mobiliser les compétences nécessaires et la capacité de prendre des décisions se rapportant à toutes les compétences. Ce résultat d'apprentissage nécessite des méthodes d'enseignement plus interactives telles que les salles de classe (virtuelles) et des discussions animées.
- Le cours magistral "experts de haut niveau" visant à fournir aux participants un apprentissage de pointe par rapport à un ensemble de compétences opérationnelles complexes définies, et avec la création de réseaux de compétences nationaux et transnationaux informels. Il vise les experts devant posséder des connaissances verticales sur un sujet et qui occupent un rôle opérationnel ou de supervision.
- Le cours magistral "décideurs" visant à équiper les décideurs d'une formation de pointe en matière de compétences professionnelles et de gestion nécessaires dans le contexte des systèmes des FC et FEDER, et la création de réseaux de compétences nationaux et transnationaux informels.

Le Plan d'Action ainsi mis au point donne des conseils sur le niveau géographique (UE ou État membre) auquel la formation devrait être organisée, les groupes cibles et les méthodes d'apprentissage. Le Plan d'action est complété par un inventaire des programmes de formation professionnelle et des programmes de niveau master disponibles sur le marché et pertinents pour les modules définis dans le Plan d’Action.

Recommandations

Afin d'assurer l'utilisation généralisée du Cadre de Compétences, de l’outil d'auto-évaluation et du Plan d'action pour la formation, il est recommandé à la DG REGIO de rédiger une feuille de route pour promouvoir l'utilisation de ces outils. En outre, il est recommandé de soutenir l'utilisation ultérieure de l'outil d'auto-évaluation par la création d'un service d'assistance, et de procéder à une mise à jour de l'outil après les premières expériences. Puisque l'outil est conçu sous Excel, avec ses propres limitations techniques, il est recommandé de mettre au point un instrument basé sur le Web pour améliorer la stabilité de l'outil.
Pour les États membres ou les autorités, il est recommandé d'utiliser le cadre des compétences et l'outil d'auto-évaluation dans le cadre de la stratégie des ressources humaines, liés aux plans de recrutement et de formation. En utilisant l'outil sur une base annuelle, le développement des employés et de l'organisation dans son ensemble peuvent être surveillés et améliorés. En outre, il est recommandé aux autorités de bâtir sur les connaissances actuelles. Par exemple, en fournissant une carte des compétences du personnel qui permet de chercher les connaissances nécessaires, en outre, les médias sociaux et les wikis peuvent stimuler l'échange de connaissances entre le personnel et l'absorption des compétences.

Enfin, un certain nombre de bonnes approches pratiques pour le développement des compétences peuvent être mises en œuvre avec le Cadre de compétences. Les autorités peuvent envisager l'intégration des structures hautement spécialisées dans le système ESIF ou la création de nouvelles structures avec les mêmes caractéristiques, ou encore des accords de coopération interinstitutionnels, groupes de travail, une approche stratégique de la planification des ressources humaines et enfin une approche transversale des compétences au travail d'équipe.

1 Study objectives, methodology and structure

1.1 *Study Objectives and deliverables*

The European Commission, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy, has selected the Consortium Ernst & Young Special Business Services (leader) and Ramboll Management Consulting/SA, for the study "EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund", under the Competitive Framework Service Contract for the provision of Studies on administrative costs, administrative capacities, IT systems and fraud prevention and detection measures (Lot 4). This final report presents the results of this study, which has the following objectives:

- Providing a Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool for efficient management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Cohesion Fund (CF).
- Taking stock of approaches and models used in Member States for managing the ERDF and CF.
- Providing recommendations on how competencies can be enhanced.

The Competency Framework and the Self-Assessment Tool based on the Competency Framework help to identify the gaps in competencies of individuals and within the organisations. The Blueprint for Training, which is based on the competencies identified in the Competency Framework, provides an input for addressing these gaps. Furthermore, as part of the stock taking, an inventory of existing training is made to assist organisations in finding relevant trainings.

There is a need for a Competency Framework for ERDF and CF in particular as:

- The current programming period introduced changes in the regulations, which implies new competencies are needed. For example, for the further introduction of simplified cost options and the establishment of financial instruments.
- Efficient management of ERDF and CF calls for a mix of competencies that goes beyond what is necessary to comply with legislative requirements.
- Some of the Member States need to strengthen administrative capacity – the Competency Framework, Self-Assessment Tool and Blueprint for Training support the set-up of an integrated capacity building path.
- (high) Turn-over rates ask for sound definition of competencies needed for new staff.
- The Competency Framework and the Self-Assessment Tool allow for the identification of precise competency gaps at the individual and institutional level, which form the basis for the development of relevant training plans.

Structures, a concept which relates to the bodies assigned for the different tasks related to the management and implementation of ERDF and CF programmes, are an important element of the administrative capacity and contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of the Funds (see also section 2.1). The mandates of institutions, the clearness of the division of tasks between the institutions and the quality of their cooperation and coordination are important features determining their effectiveness. At the same time, the structures influence the competencies needed within an organisation, as the division of tasks determines which competencies are needed and also may influence the proficiency levels needed for these competencies.

For instance, in case of the involvement of many institutions, coordinating skills within the Coordinating Body or the Managing Authority need to be stronger, in smaller institutions an individual employee might need to cover more competencies than an employee working in a larger organisation allowing for more specialisation.

In light of this, it is important to have a view on how the structures are shaped in different countries. For this reason, the stock taking exercise covers the inventory of the different models in the eight countries studied. This shows that there are variations among these structures, which are the result of different factors. In order to have a sound base for the Competency Framework, it is important to take these differences in structure into account.

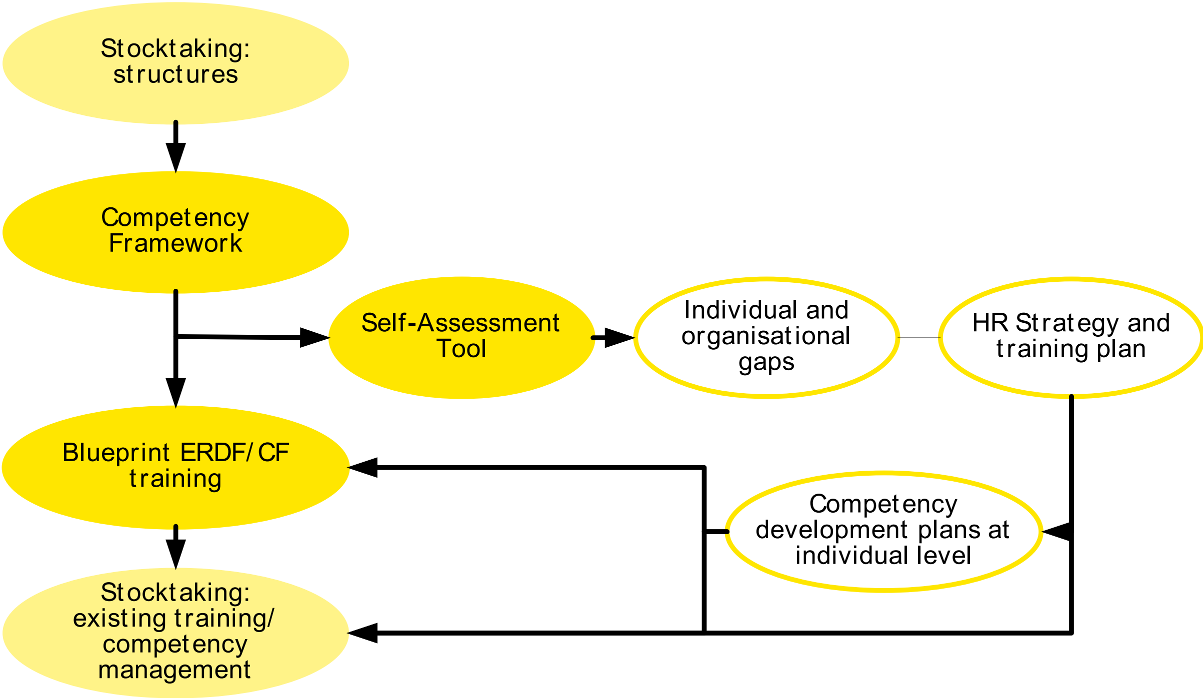
As this study is focussing on competency development, part of the stock taking exercise is an inventory of good practices related to competency development. These good practices can be used as inspiration for competency development and feed into the recommendations for capacity development. Furthermore, an important part of the recommendation is the Blueprint for Training, which is based on the Competency Framework.

In summary, the deliverables of the study are a set of practical tools that support the human resources development:

- A Competency Framework covering all institutions involved in the implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund, based on the different practices in terms of structure.
- A competency Self-Assessment Tool based on the Competency Framework. The tool allows for individual assessments of competencies, as well as an analysis on the institution level, and provides an important base for individual development plans and an overarching human resources strategies, which can be used for the identification of competency gaps at individual and institutional level.
- The results of a stock taking exercise in terms of the organisation of structures as an important base for the Competency Framework and the good practices in competency management in the eight Member States studied.
- In terms of recommendations, a Blueprint for Training to address the identified competency gaps. The Blueprint is based on the groups of competencies needed within the different institutions, covering all job roles and proficiency levels. The Blueprint is accompanied by an inventory of the vocational trainings and academic curricula already available in the market, as well as of existing knowledge exchange networks and platforms, analysed according to the groups of competencies defined for the Blueprint. The study concludes with recommendations on the implementation of the Competency Framework.

The figure overleaf illustrates how the main deliverables are interlinked.

Figure 1: Interlinks between the Competency Framework, Self-Assessment Tool and Blueprint for Training



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The Competency Framework is the basis for the Self-Assessment Tool as well as for the Blueprint for Training. The outcomes of the Self-Assessment Tool include the individual and organisational gap identifications, forming a basis for the human resources strategy and competency development plans. These development plans link to the Blueprint for Training, through which the gaps identified can be addressed.

1.2 *Data sources and analysis*

Data sources used. The study is based on data sources relating to ERDF and CF management and competency development, as well as on specific data collected in eight selected Member States (Croatia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania Poland, Romania, Spain and Sweden) allowing for a more in-depth analysis.

The following data sources are used and have been cross-correlated in the preparation of the report and deliverables:

- Desk research (relevant regulations and guidelines, relevant strategic documents at national level, literature related to Competency Frameworks and reports on public administrative capacity, relevant ERDF and CF studies and reports, as well as web-based search on existing vocational training courses, master education programmes and knowledge sharing platforms and networks, see Annex 1 literature).
- Interviews with representatives of DG REGIO and representatives of all levels within Coordinating Bodies, Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, Joint Secretariats, Certifying Authorities and Audit Authorities in eight Member States (Croatia, Germany, Italy, Lithuania Poland, Romania, Spain and Sweden).

The list of interviewees is presented in Annex 2. Interviews addressed:
  - Organisation of ERDF and CF management for the Programming Period 2014-2020.
  - Approaches to competency management and job descriptions in institutions responsible for managing ERDF and CF.
  - Needs in relation to the competencies included in the Competency Framework, with specific focus on the operational competencies and availability of relevant vocational training programmes, academic master and knowledge sharing networks and platforms.
- A survey in the EU28 Member States, covering the different aspects of this study. Despite the use of all languages and several reminders, the response to the survey remained low and has been compensated by additional desk research and interviews.
- Focus groups in the eight selected Member States covering the aspects of ERDF and CF organisation, needs in relation to competencies and relevance of the existing learning options (the list of participants is presented in Annex 2).

Analysis and building of the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool.
For the building of the Competency Framework, the following main steps were taken:
- Identification of objectives, tasks and sub-tasks of the different organisations involved in the implementation and management of ERDF and CF, based on the 2014-2020 Regulations.
- Analysis of the distribution of tasks and organisations in place, in the 8 different countries covered by this study.
- Grouping of tasks and sub-tasks identified in logical groups, finding a balance between the level of detail needed to link the right competencies and the need of synthesis, at the same time keeping the framework transparent and user-friendly;
- Formulation of the mix of management, professional and operational competencies needed per sub-task and job role (operational, supervisory and decision making), which were discussed in focus groups and revised where needed.
- Formulation of proficiency level scales, generally for the management and professional competencies and specifically for the operational competencies.
- Setting of the proficiency levels required per competency related to the specific sub-task.

The resulting Competency Framework was translated into the Excel based Self-Assessment Tool, in which the Competency Framework is included. This excel tool allows for selecting the authority a person is working in, as well as the job role, tasks and sub-tasks on the basis of which the relevant competencies are generated for the self-assessment. This Competency Framework has been discussed in different Member States and the Self-Assessment Tool has been tested by employees of different functions and tasks within the different institutions in 7 countries (see Annex 3). It has taken place in different authorities in Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Italy, Lithuania, Romania and the UK and was aimed at receiving feedback on the completeness and relevance of the Competency Framework and the user-friendliness of the tool.

The people that tested the tool covered all different tasks and job roles (operational, supervisor and manager). Their valuable feedback has been processed in the final version of the Competency Framework and the Self-Assessment Tool.

Feedback on the Self-Assessment Tool

Generally the Self-Assessment tool was found useful and user friendly as it includes the main tasks and related competencies required for efficient management and implementation of the ERDF and CF. Institutions described the tool as a structured but flexible instrument that could be valuable in assessing competencies of individual employees, identifying knowledge gaps and preparing development plans linked with specific training activities.

In particular the fieldwork feedback confirmed the importance of developing the Self-Assessment tool as a flexible instrument both in relation to the tasks performed by institutions and the proficiency levels expected from individuals. These comments were taken on board in the further development of the Self-Assessment tool.

For instance, it was mentioned that Coordinating Bodies do not have predefined tasks and, as a consequence, there are deviations in tasks performed across Member States. According to the institutions interviewed, although the main tasks and competences were covered, it was indicated that the tool would further gain in relevance if tasks could be adjusted to the situation in the respective institution. This feedback was addressed in two ways: for the Coordinating Body a wide range of tasks were included from which users can choose the relevant ones. Secondly, the tool allows for making adjustments by adding tasks, sub-tasks and competencies.

Another relevant remark made was that institutions considerably differ in terms of size, and that this influences the level of specialisation people can have as in smaller institutions they need to cover more tasks. Due to this fact it is often impossible for them to cover all competencies with high proficiency levels. Under these circumstances, it is important to prioritise the competencies and to adjust less relevant ones to lower proficiency levels in order to make the tool useful for the identification of the main training needs. This feedback was taken into account and the tool allows for adjustments of the proficiency levels.

Positive feedback was also provided in relation to the input that the Self-Assessment tool provides in the development of training plans. Managers that have tested the tool referred to previous work experience when they, as being responsible for establishing training programmes, in many cases had to decide on who is to follow the different courses on the basis of very limited information. For this reason the Self-Assessment Tool and the assessment results were seen as a reliable source of information for improved identification and justification of training needs. Additionally, the possibility to aggregate individual assessment results at institutional level was found very useful, because it feeds the improvement of strategic institutional level decisions aimed at the development of competencies required for efficient management and implementation of the ERDF and CF.

Analysis of existing training courses and curricula and development of the Blueprint for Training. The analysis of the existing training courses and curricula and the development of the training Blueprint were built based on the competencies defined in the Competency Framework. For the Blueprint, these competencies are logically grouped in different modules.

The training methods and curricula have been defined based on the proficiency levels that are to be achieved through the training. For different proficiency levels, different learning methods that address the need the best are proposed.

The modules formulated for the Blueprint have been used as a framework for the mapping of the existing training courses and curricula, so that there is a clear link between what is already in place and what could be further developed.

Analysis of approaches and models used in Member States for managing the funds. The cross comparison of institutions covers eight Member States and is mainly used to better understand the different structures and delivery models to build the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool on. This proved to be very relevant, as for instance size of institutions in terms of staff influences the number of tasks assigned to one person, resulting in a need to cover more competencies. As a result, the Self-Assessment Tool has been designed in such a way that it provides flexibility in selecting tasks by an individual, and the ability to adjust the proficiency levels of the competencies to be covered.

The report, the Competency Framework and the Self-Assessment Tool have been discussed formally and informally with DG REGIO.

1.3 *Report structure*

The current Chapter explained the study objectives and deliverables, data sources and methodology. In Chapter 2 the general context of the study is presented, introducing the conceptual framework relating to the Competency Framework and its use. It describes how competency management relates to the overall administrative capacity development and the theoretical background for the building of a Competency Framework.

The development of the Competency Framework is based on the mission and tasks of organisations. This is why we introduce in Chapter 0 an overview of the tasks that the authorities involved in the implementation of ERDF and CF need to cover according to the 2014-2020 Cohesion Policy regulatory framework. The analysis shows that the structures chosen for the implementation differ across the countries and programmes, which demands for a high level of flexibility of Competency Framework as tasks assigned to institutions differentiate. Further details on how the implementation is organised in different Member States is presented in Chapter 5, where the situation in the 8 case study countries is presented as part of the stock taking exercise and as an input to the definition of the Competency Framework. Also as part of the stocktaking exercise, Chapter 2 concludes with a description of good practices for the development and consolidation of administrative capacity based on competencies (details in Annex 7:

Chapter 4 presents the actual Competency Framework. It first introduces the current state of affairs in using a structured approach to competencies in Member States, which is relatively limited, showing the need for a structured approach. This is followed by the introduction to the Competency Framework (details in Annex 4) and the Self-Assessment Tool (details in Annex 5 and Annex 6).

The use of the Self-Assessment Tool leads to the identification of competency gaps at individual level and can be aggregated at institution level. In order to address these gaps, Chapter 4 presents a Blueprint (details in Annex 8) for the development of competencies for the coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020 in Member States. Furthermore, the existing offer (details in Annex 9) of vocational training, master level education programmes, and knowledge exchange networks and platforms is presented in order to provide a quick guide to competency development opportunities.

The report concludes with Chapter 6, proposing recommendations for the European Commission for the roll-out and sustainable use of the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool. It also contains recommendations for Member States on the implementation of these instruments and how they can be embedded in a broader knowledge development approach at institution level.

2 Context of the study

Strong administrative capacity is essential for the effective and efficient implementation of the ERDF and CF and the competencies of the employees in the different institutions are an important element contributing to this administrative capacity. In this chapter the main concepts of a Competency Framework are introduced, as well as its place in the overall administrative capacity for the implementation of ERDF and CF.

2.1 *Administrative capacity and competencies*

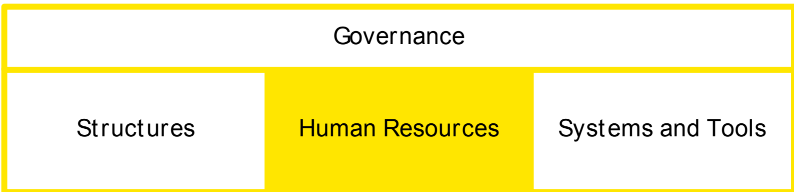
The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF) are implemented under shared management between the European Commission and Member States. Member States have a main role in the implementation of the programmes. The effective and efficient implementation of the ERDF and CF requires strong administrative capacity at the level of Member States and regions.

Although Member States have built capacity in key functional areas, including management, programming, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, financial management and control, the development of administrative capacity should remain a priority on the agenda of ERDF and CF authorities, in particular with regard to the novelties introduced by the ESIF regulatory framework 2014-2020.

These include areas such as Financial Instruments, ex ante conditionalities, fraud prevention strategies and risk based audit, Community-led Local Development, Macro-regional and Sea-basin strategies, Integrated Territorial Investments, Joint Action Plans, Simplified cost options, Performance Framework, e-Cohesion, Performance, Strategic and Result Oriented Monitoring.

As indicated in the Terms of Reference for this study, administrative capacity is determined by the structures, human resources and systems and tools, and the broader governance aspects, see the figure below. These elements are interrelated and their individual quality influences the overall administrative capacity through mutual influence.

Figure 2: Elements of administrative capacity



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Structures, in the context of ERDF and CF implementation, relate to the bodies assigned for the different tasks related to the management and implementation of ERDF and CF programmes. Based on the shared management principle, Member States assign the responsibility for management, control and audit obligations to respective authorities. While Members States organisational set-ups vary, a number of pre-requisites for effective management exist. These include the definition of sound coordination mechanisms and clarity in the assignment of tasks and responsibilities among authorities and within them.

Human resources policies determine the capacity and overall clarity in the allocation of staff tasks and responsibilities; turnover and availability of qualified, experienced and motivated staff; availability of competencies to comply with EU rules; capacity to fulfil recruitment needs and of retaining resources.

Systems and Tools strengthen administrative capacity through instruments such as methods, guidelines, manuals, procedures and forms for performing management and control functions; enhanced monitoring and information for funds management and control; and knowledge management used to transform tacit and implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge. These help authorities in becoming more resilient to staff and organisational changes.

Governance goes beyond the implementation system of ERDF and CF and refers to the broader characteristics of Member States administrative systems in terms of accountability, transparency, political influence on staff appointments, project selection and empowerment. These elements may have a substantial impact on operational programme performance and can be addressed by authorities to a limited extent, through strong procedures, leadership skills and for instance the availability of competencies in the field of fraud management.

This study concentrates on the human resources element of administrative capacity and in particular on the aspect of competencies given their central role in administrative capacity development. On one side, the options selected for the different elements of administrative capacity, determine specific requirements in terms of competencies, while on the other hand the development of competencies can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of structures, systems and tools. The interrelation between these elements is further explained in the following paragraphs.

As further detailed in section 2.3.2, Member States and authorities can make their own choices in terms of structures: the choice of the institutions to be involved in the management of ERDF and CF and the tasks assigned to these institutions. These choices translate into different requirements in terms of abilities and skills that should be possessed by employees, organisational units and institutions for the achievement of the respective objectives.

For instance, in a complex administrative structure, strong management, coordination and communication skills are particularly relevant for Coordinating Bodies. For smaller CF/ERDF implementing institutions, staff is required to carry out or supervise a broader number of tasks and is most likely to be less specialised than the staff in larger institutions, allowing for more specialisation of individual employees.

Yet, the issue is not restricted to the number and type of competencies that should be in place, but relates also to the level of proficiency that should be possessed by each employee, which differs in accordance to the job role covered (operational, supervisory or decision making, see also section 3.2). The proficiency level also depends on the overall experience of the respective structure; competencies may need to be built from the lowest level in new structures, while simply upgraded in older structures.

Governance issues are influencing the type of competencies that should be in place in an institution for ensuring the highest levels of administrative capacity. For instance in environments characterized by high levels of fraud and corruption, competencies functional for their management should be developed and the values of transparency and customer orientation promoted.

Additionally, in environments characterized by strong political influence, there should be adequate norms in place to ensure the independence of staff involved in management and implementation, which requires the capacity to translate regulatory requirements into formal procedures.

Furthermore, in politically unstable environments that trigger changes in the management levels of institutions, capacity building and knowledge management are particularly important. The same applies to environments characterized by high levels of turnover of staff due, for instance, to the lower level of attractiveness of salaries in the public sector.

As presented earlier Systems and Tools are mainly job aids and encompass manuals, guidelines, procedures, checklists, and also IT enabled monitoring and information systems. The development and use of the latter in particular requires the presence of technological abilities and of a sound knowledge of European and National regulatory aspects.

Conversely, adopting a competency based approach to the management of ERDF and CF can reap benefits under all the aspects of administrative capacity, which are maximized in presence of a competency based human resources policy. Stronger competencies lead to better definition of structures, clarity in the assignment of roles and responsibilities, and increased ability to develop and utilize procedures and tools. Competencies and values contribute to the development of a more engaged and committed workforce, increased transparency and fight against fraud and corruption.

2.2 *Competency Framework conceptual elements*

There are different ways to organise the competencies that are necessary within institutions responsible for the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF. The different ways to do this are called Competency Frameworks.

Competency Frameworks allow institutions to build the set of competencies required for specific roles in a standardized and integrated way, thus fostering greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness in the achievements of institutional objectives and adding value in terms of:

- **Strategic alignment** between strategy and objectives of institutions, namely effective and efficient ERDF and CF implementation.
- **Consistency of direction,** making sure that the strategic direction is followed across all dimensions of institutions. Having the model as a point of reference leads to more integrated and standardized competency management processes.
- **Stronger workforce** that knows what is expected from it, knows its role in the bigger picture and sees opportunities for development. This is a prerequisite for a strong organisation, and the effective and efficient implementation of the ERDF/CF programmes.

At the core of Competency Frameworks are the concepts competency, competency types and the respective proficiency levels, as detailed in the following table.

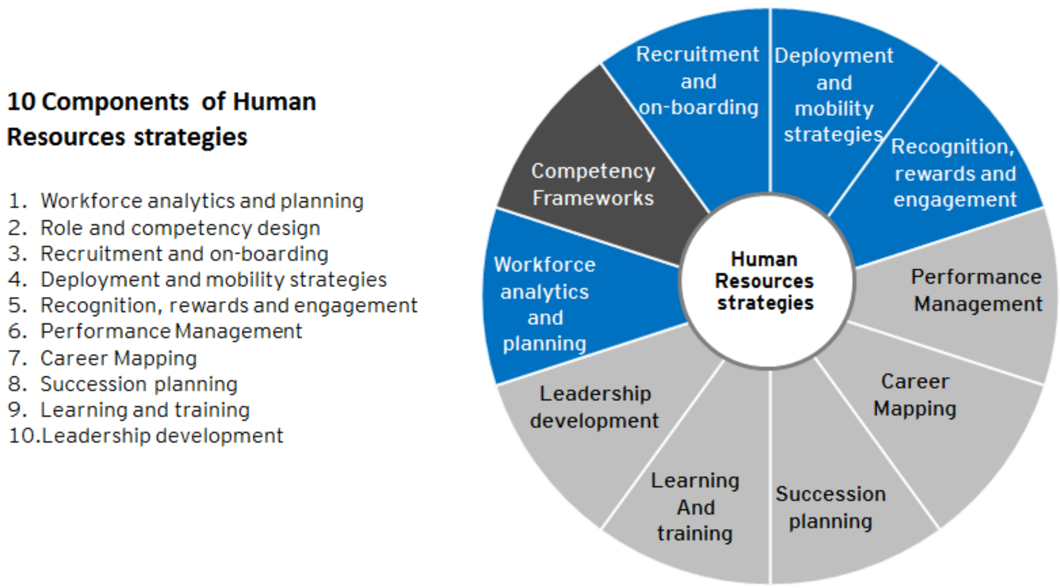
Table 1 Key concepts relating to competencies

Key concept	Details
Competency	Competency is the capability of applying or using knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, and personal characteristics to successfully perform critical work tasks, specific functions, or operate in a given role or position.

Key concept	Details
Competency types	• Management competencies: competencies covering a managerial function and based on gained knowledge, abilities, skills; • Professional competencies: competencies required for the execution of specific professional functions and based on gained knowledge, abilities, skills; • Operational competencies: competencies required for staff to successfully manage the assigned functions related to ERDF and CF management.
Proficiencies	Performance of people consists of different levels of expectations, and each is measured differently. Proficiency levels help to connect a competency with the right expectations. It can be measured though a Multi-level proficiency scale based on multiple levels, such as: No knowledge, Awareness, Trained, Intermediate, Expert

Competency Frameworks are a central element of integrated human resources strategies aimed at attracting, developing, motivating and retaining productive and engaged employees as presented in the Figure overleaf:

Figure 3: Talent Management components



Source: EY

In the context of ERDF and CF implementation, the application of Competency Frameworks supports institutions in ensuring that the right people are recruited for different tasks related to the implementation of ERDF and CF and in identifying learning gaps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the ERDF and CF implementation.

The roadmap for the implementation of a Competency Framework and human resources strategy based on competencies, starts in our approach with the identification of the organisational objectives as provided within the EU Regulatory Framework, determining the tasks, job roles, competencies and proficiency levels required for their achievement. Once this theoretical framework is in place it is necessary to execute an assessment of the existing competencies and their proficiency levels and close the identified gaps through training, recruitment, retention and succession planning instruments.

Table 2: Simplified roadmap to implement a Competency Framework in an organisation

Step 1 **Who are we?**	**Step 2** **What do we want next?**	**Step 3** **What do we have now?**	**Step 4** **How do we get there?**	**Step 5** **How do we manage it?**
• **What are the objectives** of the institutions based on the EU Regulatory Framework? • **What are the values** of the Institution?	• What are the **tasks** and sub-tasks of each institution? • What are the **job roles** required to deliver each task? • What are the **critical compe-tencies** that are needed for these tasks and roles? • What are the **different proficiency levels** that are required?	• Which competencies and proficiency levels do we have in the current situation? • **Execute assessments** • Where do we see gaps in competencies?	• Create a plan to generate the competencies through training, recruitment, retention and succession planning • Collaborate with teams helps to **create awareness,** commitment and acceptance in order to integrate the model	• Once everything is set in place, the organisation starts managing the competencies via Performance Management • Actively inform the people about the process, and changes to create trust and support for the change

Competency assessments play a central role in the implementation roadmap. They are aimed at measuring and evaluating the level of skills, knowledge and behaviour that the individual has. The outputs of these assessments give the organisation insight into whether the workforce has the skills and knowledge to do their work, and whether they behave in a way that is aligned with the objectives of the institution. There are different methods to conduct the assessments:

- Documentation: The results of formal education (diplomas, certificates etc.)
- Self-Assessment: The individual employee assesses his/her own level of skills knowledge and behaviour based on a questionnaire.
- Observation: Others (Managers and Sub-ordinates) can observe your behaviour on the job and provide feedback.
- Feedback: from managers, colleagues, subordinates or all of them (360 feedback).

Assessments lead, among others, to different training activities tailored to an individual, an organisational unit or relevant for the whole organisation-wide (e.g. a Value Workshop or anti-corruption training). Assessments based on a Competency Framework have multiple benefits:

- They support the targeted analysis of development needs, the detailed identification of competency gaps and the correct match via training curricula.

- They help tailoring the learning methods and offer diversity of activities based on the needs of the individual/organisational units.
- The support organisation to evaluate and measure the impact of the launched learning activities to see if they want to continue with it.
- They give individual employees a personalized learning curriculum based on the role, individual competencies and sometimes preferences.
- They provide clarity regarding the learning curve of the individual and a team, to see if there has been actual improvement.

There are different ways to develop competencies of employees. When it is clear what the purpose of the training is, the organisation can decide which learning method fits that person's needs and style. There are different learning methods, such as:

- Coaching/Mentoring: individual support, available internally (by a manager, or someone else within the organisation) or externally (external coach).
- On-the-job training: individual training in a regular work situation, the person will receive direct feedback from the person who's teaching the new skills.
- E-learning: virtual/online learning tools, available for individuals and for groups.
- Classroom session: Multiple people come physically together to learn more about a topic.
- Formal education: Attending courses at an institution.

Implementation roadmaps should nevertheless take into account existing elements of human resources strategies provided either by national legal frameworks or human resources policies already in place within the institutions.

For instance, different organisations and different countries (Member States) have different ways of working with job roles and profiles. Therefore, the human resources strategy has to be adjusted and adapted in accordance to the present status. Some countries might have a well-developed system for job roles and job profiles, so it is important to develop and adjust what is already in use instead of completely replacing them, as this will take much more time and effort, and might even have a negative effect on the organisation.

2.3 *Factors influencing the development of an ERDF and CF Competency Framework*

The objectives and tasks of the different institutions involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF are the basic input for the development of the Competency Framework. The competencies needed are directly related to the objectives and tasks of the authorities involved in the implementation of ERDF and CF.

Hence, it is important to know how ERDF and CF management and implementation structures are organised in Member States as these choices translate into different requirements in terms of abilities and skills within each institution. This section provides an overview of the differences in objectives and tasks of ERDF and CF institutions in the eight Member States studied.

2.3.1 Overview of objectives and tasks of ERDF and CF institutions

Based on the 2014-2020 Regulatory Framework, the objectives and key tasks of the different institutions involved in ERDF and CF management and implementation, relevant for the development of an ERDF and CF Competency Framework, can be summarised as follows:

- **Coordinating Bodies (CB).** According to Article 123 of the CPR, a Coordinating Body may be designated by a Member State with the responsibility to liaise with and provide information to the Commission*,* to coordinate activities of the other relevant designated bodies and to promote the harmonized application of relevant law. As the designation of this authority is not mandatory, the tasks to be performed are not defined. In general, the tasks of a Coordinating Body may include programming, coordination of the preparation and implementation process, system set-up, monitoring and evaluation and communication.

- **Managing Authorities (MA).** Managing Authorities bear the main responsibility for the effective and efficient implementation of co-funded programmes that are required to carry out each of the functions set out in Article 125 of the CPR. The achievement of these objectives is ensured through a number of tasks, which in accordance with Article 123(6)8 of the CPR, Managing Authorities (or Member States) may be delegated to one or more Intermediate Bodies. The MA covers groups of tasks such as programming, system set-up, project generation, monitoring on programme and project level, evaluation, financial management on project and programme level and communication.
- **Intermediate Bodies (IB).** According to Art. 123 of the CPR the Member State may designate one or more (public or private) Intermediate Bodies to carry out certain tasks of the Managing or Certifying Authority under the responsibility of that authority. The relevant arrangements between the Managing Authority or Certifying Authority and the Intermediate Bodies shall be formally recorded in writing.
- **Certifying Authorities (CA).** The functions of Certifying Authorities are established within Article 127 of the CPR and can be grouped as following: submitting payment applications to the Commission, drawing up the accounts and management of the accounts.
- **Audit Authorities (AA).** The main function of Audit Authorities is to carry out audits on systems, operations and on the accounts certified by the Certifying Authority (according to the provisions of Article 125 of the CPR). The Audit Authority covers the following tasks: preparation of an audit strategy, carrying out audits on systems, accreditation audit, selection of a sample operations, annual control reports, carrying out audits on operations and on the accounts certified by the Certifying Authority.
- **Joint Secretariats (JS).** According to Article 23 of the ETC Regulation, the Managing Authorities, after consultation with the Member States and third countries participating in a cooperation programme, shall set-up a Joint Secretariat assisting the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee in carrying out their respective functions. The Joint Secretariat shall also provide information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under cooperation programmes and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations. The scope of tasks carried out by Joint Secretariats is therefore assimilated to those described for Managing Authorities.

2.3.2 Member States approaches to Structures

Based on the shared management principle, Member States are assigned the responsibility for management, control and audit obligations and the establishment of structures that can deliver the objectives and tasks defined in the Regulatory Framework.

In designating the institutions to be involved in the management of ERDF and CF, defining the tasks assigned to these institutions and in establishing coordination mechanisms, Member States make their own choices, which are influenced by the historical, institutional and legal context of the administration.

These choices translate into different requirements in terms of abilities and skills that should be possessed by employees, organisational units and institutions for the achievement of the respective objectives.

Therefore, the analysis of the Regulatory Framework has been complemented with a review of national legal acts laying down the rules and procedures for funding, management and implementation of projects and programmes from ERDF and CF and an inventory of the organisational models for ERDF and CF management across eight Member States (see Chapter 5 for more details on the situation in the individual countries). This is a necessary element for the design of a Competency Framework flexible enough to cover the different set-ups established for ERDF and CF implementation.

Our research has shown that in the majority of the cases, authorities are established in existing administrative structures within the countries, in organisational units that can be either fully dedicated to the management of ERDF and CF (e.g. in the case of large financial allocations) or performing other tasks (e.g. in the case of smaller financial allocations) related to the management of national and regional policies. In some countries new administrative structures are created, such as in Lithuania or Romania.

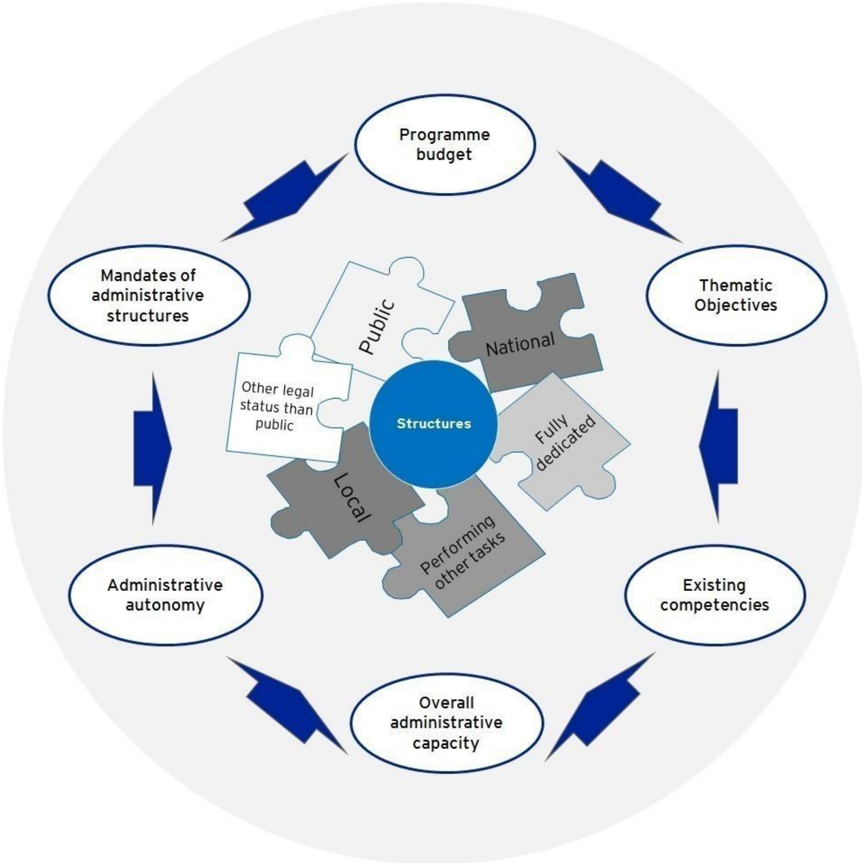
Where in most countries the implementation is in the hands of public institutions, there are exceptions to this general rule. Examples include the implementation by the Banks on Länder level in Germany, or the Regional Development Agencies in Romania, which are technical bodies with NGO status.

The choice for the assignment of ERDF and CF functions to certain administrations or institutions and the choice for delegation of tasks to IBs is determined by a range of different factors. In this section we address some important ones, without claiming to be exhaustive.

First of all, the **existing administrative structures, related mandates and the political playing field** are important factors in deciding in which organisations the body will be placed, either on national level or regional level. This results in the assignment of functions to certain Ministries or (State/Regional) Agencies.

The choice to involve regional structures for the implementation of the programmes, either as MA, IB (or even AA and CA) is often related to the **level of autonomy of a region** or local administration. For federal organised states, this level of autonomy is very high and policy making and implementation is the sole mandate of the regional authorities, but also in non-federal states, regions may have a high level of autonomy, depending on the division of tasks and mandates between national, regional and local level. The extent to which this is the case depends per Member State.

Figure 4: Simplified representation of factors that influence the shaping of the structures



Source: EY

Another reason for the involvement of regional bodies in the implementation of the funds, in formal (assigning the region a MA or IB) or less formal ways (need for approval of projects by the regional/local government without assigning it the MA or IB function), is the **proximity to the region**. Those bodies know better what the main challenges are in the region; they know the stakeholders and have good access to potential beneficiaries, which can be profitable for e.g. building a strong project pipeline and alignment with the local and regional policies.

A potential drawback of having MAs or IBs on regional level may be that the number of staff involved in the implementation of the funds can be relatively limited compared to institutions that manage a programme (or programme part) with a bigger budget. This may result in a generally lower level of competencies needed for the implementation of funds; as each employee is covering more tasks there is less room for specialization. A mitigating measure for this is the set-up of a strong national Coordinating Body and/or a helpdesk.

The **size of the programme** or the total budget available for a country can also be a determining factor for the choices made: for smaller programmes it is less likely that parts are delegated to IBs. Also, if the budget is relatively low this may also influence the establishment of regional MAs.

The availability of **thematic knowledge** within an institution and the relating **types of investment covered by the funds** may also influence the choice for the assignment of certain tasks to particular bodies. In some countries a part of a ministry or agency is responsible for the implementation of specific priority areas, relating to their specific policy field or thematic knowledge.

As shown in the Romanian and Croatian case (see section 5.3), concentration of the MA functions can also be based on the **competencies available** within a certain body. This is a rational choice, but needs to get the **(political) support** of those institutions that are responsible for the policy fields covered in the programmes.

The administrative capacity in a country may be another important factor for the choice of institutions. Having a lower administrative capacity and less experience in the implementation of Funds may lead to a choice for centralised implementation.

As administrative structures, mandates and political playfield, which are historically grown in the different Member States, strongly differ from each other, there is no single model applicable to all Member States. Furthermore, the choices for assignment of functions all have their advantages and disadvantages, which need to be balanced to choose the most efficient and effective solution for a given context.

For example, outsourcing a measure to a specialized department or agency has the advantage that in depth thematic knowledge is available and close coordination with the national policy is ensured. The drawback is higher coordination costs and possibly less knowledge and competencies on ERDF and CF related aspects. This balance between the different aspects differs case by case and depends on what the most important elements are for the specific situation.

The fact that there is no single implementation model applicable to all Member States and programmes, the Competency Framework needs to be designed in such a way, that tasks and sub-tasks can be selected for the specific situation of the authority. Furthermore, specific circumstances in the country or the differences between the programmes in relation to the types of investment and themes may result in the need for specific competencies or differentiated proficiency levels.

3 Competency Framework for ERDF and CF management and the Self-Assessment Tool

In this Chapter the current state of affairs in using competency frameworks in Member States relating to CF and ERDF is presented, which shows that these are mostly not specific for ERDF and CF management and implementation tasks. This Chapter continues the introduction to the Competency Framework for CF and ERDF (the full Competency Framework can be found in Annex 4) and the competency Self-Assessment Tool (Annex 5) that has been developed on the basis of the Competency Framework.

3.1 *Current situation of applying competency frameworks in Member States*

The management of ERDF and CF is a complex and dynamic process, and requires specific knowledge and abilities related to e.g. the Regulations of the funds and other relevant laws and regulations, and the specifics of programme management and thematic knowledge. Therefore technical and soft skills knowledge, and the ability to apply them are necessary pre-requisites to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of operations.

One of the means to help ensuring the availability of the required competencies as well as their improvement is the use of competency frameworks, which directly relate to the objectives and tasks of the organisations implementing the funds. When looking at the current situation in Member States on the use of competency frameworks, it can be concluded that there in most cases are no specific competency frameworks developed for the institutions involved in the implementation of funds.

The majority of the organisations that are implementing the Funds are public bodies. Within these public bodies, there are often competency frameworks that are either applicable to all public institutions in the country, or related to a specific authority. However, there are a limited number of competency frameworks specific to the bodies involved in the implementation of ERDF/CF.

The current situation in Member States is summarised further on in this section and examples related to each of the four most common practices are included in Annex 7. A distinction exists between competency frameworks available at national level (general and specific CF/ERDF) and competency frameworks available at institution level.

3.1.1 National level competency framework applicable to all public institutions

National level competency frameworks applicable for all public institutions are only partially relevant to authorities managing the ERDF and CF as such frameworks are usually not specific to ERDF and CF management. These frameworks provide an overall basis for competencies required for public institutions in a given Member State. Examples of national level competency frameworks or their elements were identified in these countries:

- Belgium: a competency framework covers different competency groups and categories applicable to civil servants.
- United Kingdom: the Civil Service competency framework introduced in 2013 as a part of the new performance management system.
- Spain: regulations related to management of human resources with a larger emphasis on Code of Conduct and Ethical Values are applied at national and regional levels.
- Sweden: core values and required groups of competencies are applied for civil servants.

3.1.2 ERDF and CF specific national level competency framework

An important practice related to ERDF and CF management is the application of the ERDF and CF specific competency frameworks at national level, as such frameworks allow application of the same requirements, principles and criteria to different authorities involved in managing the ERDF and CF. However, this practice is quite rare and the degree of implementation varies between different authorities: the most relevant example was identified in Lithuania.

3.1.3 Institution level competency framework (general)

There are many examples of competency frameworks developed at institution level (e.g. a ministry) and applicable to authorities within a particular institution (e.g. a department of Ministry of Finance acting as a Managing Authority), for instance, Germany, Lithuania and Sweden. These have been implemented either through the application and adjustment of national frameworks or through the development of authority specific frameworks.

3.1.4 Authority level ERDF and CF specific competency framework

There are very few examples of ERDF and CF specific competency frameworks developed and applied at authority level. One of the examples was identified in Lithuania where part of Intermediate Bodies developed competency frameworks by adopting national level ERDF and CF specific competency frameworks. Another example was identified in Latvia where an ERDF and CF specific competency framework was implemented at Intermediate Bodies level.

To conclude, the existing practices in Member States and authorities vary, but there is an overall increased tendency towards the identification of the required competencies and core values for the whole civil service or management of EU funds at national or authority levels.

However, many of the institutions involved in the implementation of the funds are looking for competency frameworks that are specific for their tasks, so that they can further improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their organisation. The tool presented in this report is a means to supply them with such a framework. The advantage is that it provides a standardized, but flexible instrument, which covers the main competencies needed in a structured way, and allows for linking specific training activities to increase the competencies of the staff involved where needed (for training modules, see next Chapter).

In summary, there is a need for a competency framework for ERDF and CF in particular as:

- The current programme period introduced changes in the regulations, which implies new competencies needed, for example for the further introduction of simplified cost options and the establishment of financial instruments.
- Efficient management of ERDF and CF calls for a mix of competencies that goes beyond what is necessary to comply with legislative requirements.
- Some of the Member States need to strengthen administrative capacity – the Competency Framework, Self-Assessment Tool and Blueprint for Training support the set-up of an integrated capacity building path.
- (high) Turn-over rates ask for sound definition of competencies needed for new staff.
- The Competency Framework is the basis for the identification of precise competency gaps at the individual and institutional level, which form the basis for the development of relevant training plans.

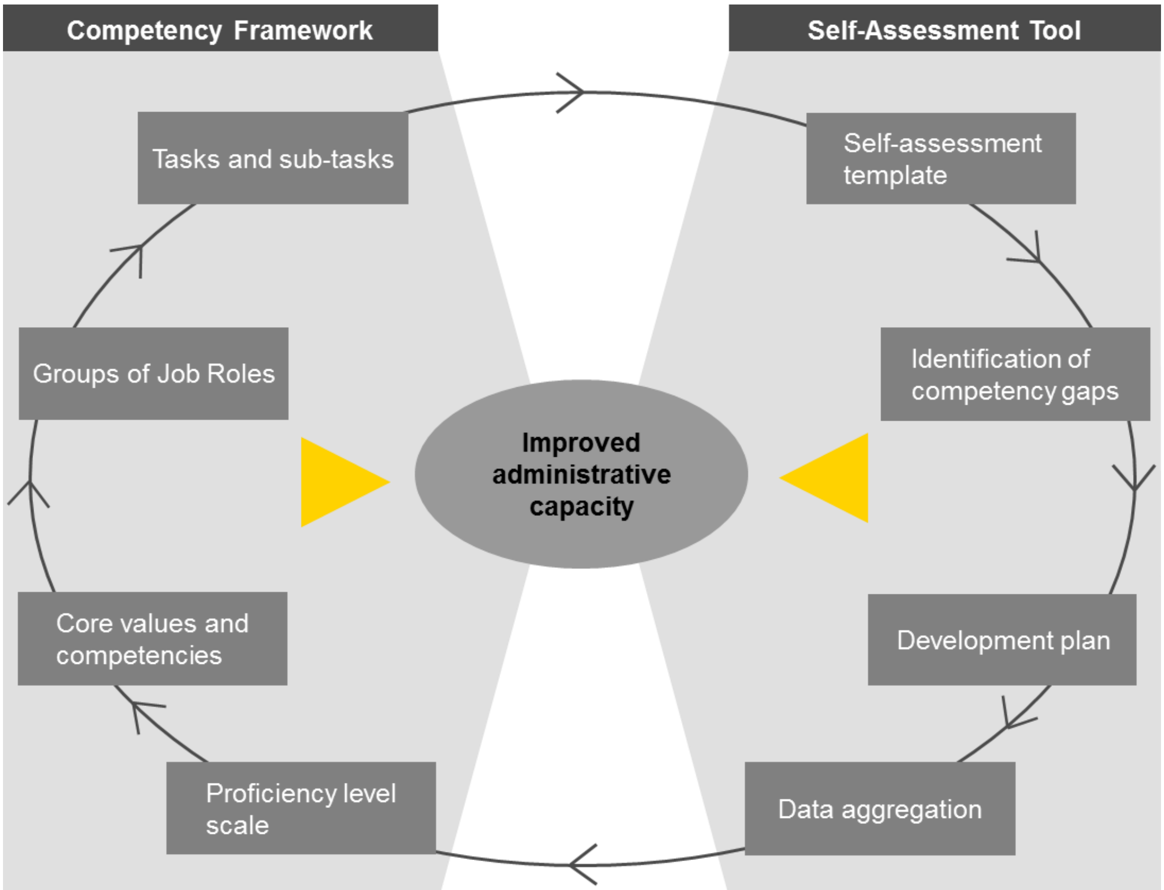
Therefore, in the context of this study, a Competency Framework and related Self-Assessment Tool have been developed, and are presented in the following sections.

3.2 *Presentation of the Competency Framework for ERDF and CF*

The Competency Framework for the management of the ERDF and CF is designed as a flexible instrument for building capacity in the context of the two funds. It enables competency and evidence-based strategic (institution level) and operational (individual level) planning and management of human resources.

The figure below demonstrates how the different elements of the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool interrelate, and allow institutions that use both tools to improve their administrative capacity.

Figure 5: Elements of the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool



Source: EY

The Competency Framework consists of 4 main elements:

1. Tasks and sub-tasks that are linked to specific authorities involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF. The list of task and sub-tasks was developed taking into account the 2014-2020 period ESIF Regulations, national legal acts and identified good practice examples derived from the experience of different Member States.
2. Groups of Job Roles (Decision making level, Supervisory level, Operational level) categorize employees considering the level of their responsibility while carrying out the tasks and sub-tasks relevant for specific authority.
3. Lists of core values and different types of competencies (management, professional and operational competencies) were set up linking them to the tasks and sub-tasks that are carried out by individual employees considering their Group of Job Roles.
4. Proficiency scales were developed assigning specific proficiency level requirements for each competency based on the tasks and sub-tasks that are carried out by individual employees considering their Group of Job Roles in a specific type of

authority. The developed proficiency scales are necessary to assess if individual employees have the required level of competencies and identify training needs.

The Self-Assessment Tool integrates all four key elements of the Competency Framework (tasks and sub-tasks, Groups of Job Roles, Core values and competencies and proficiency scales) and provides self-assessment templates. By using it, individual employees carry out an assessment evaluating their proficiency levels for relevant competencies against the set requirements, thereby identifying the competency gaps which can then be linked with individual development plans. In addition to that, the Self-Assessment Tool allows aggregating the assessment results of all individual staff members at institutional level. Aggregated assessment results can be further used for the strategic decisions and actions aimed at the development of competencies required for efficient management and implementation of the ERDF and/or CF.

The Competency Framework is customized and applicable for all key authorities involved in the management of the ERDF and CF:

- Coordinating Body.
- Managing Authority/Intermediate body[3].
- Joint Secretariat.
- Certifying Authority.
- Audit Authority.

3.2.5 Competency Framework based on ERDF and CF tasks

The Competency Framework is based on the ERDF and CF related tasks and sub-tasks performed by each of the authorities as identified above and in section 2.1 of this report. More specifically, sub-tasks are actions performed by an authority (institution) or person that produces a result related to management of the ERDF and CF, while tasks are groups of sub-tasks clustered by the purpose of the task To each of these specific tasks and sub-tasks related competencies which are needed to implement them have been identified (see also the Competency Framework as presented in Annex 4Annex 1:).

However, as indicated before, the division of tasks across institutions is not always straightforward. This applies especially for the Coordinating Bodies and Managing Authorities, which may delegate tasks to the Intermediate Bodies. Furthermore, there are big differences in the size of the institutions. In smaller institutions employees may need to cover more tasks and sub-tasks than in larger organisations that allow for more specialisation.

As a consequence the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool for ERDF and CF competencies needs to include different mixes of tasks and sub-tasks, requiring a certain degree of flexibility in the tool which takes these differentiations into account. As a result, a particular organisation in a particular country might find tasks assigned to the authority that do not relate to the specific situation. A sample of competencies and proficiency levels (extract from the Competency Framework) required for employees who work at a Managing Authority and are responsible for programming related task and sub-tasks is provided in the figure overleaf.

3 Tasks, sub-tasks and competencies required for Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies are provided is one set and not separated, because split of tasks among Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies varies in Member States significantly.

Figure 6: Example task and sub-tasks of Managing Authority and proficiency levels required for Groups of Job Roles

Joint Secretariat

Task: Programming

Competencies		Sub-tasks						
		Operational Level					Supervisory level	Decision making level
Code	Title	Inter-institutional coordination and stakeholder involvement	Preparation of the Programme	Management of the evaluation process (ex-ante)	Negotiation with the EC	Procurement of goods and services	Programming	Programming
Management Competences								
JS.M.C1	Developing others and people management						4	4
JS.M.C2	...	3	3		3		4	4
Professional Competences								
JS.P.C1	Analytical skills		4	4		4	4	4
JS.P.C2	...	3	4	4	3	4	4	4
Operational Competences								
JS.O.C1	ESIF EU/ National legal acts		3	2	3	2	2	2
JS.O.C2	...		3	2	3	1	2	2

Source: EY

Within the Self-Assessment Tool (see section 3.3 on the self-assessment tool), this is solved by providing the option to choose specific tasks and sub-tasks and to ignore tasks that are not relevant for the organisation or the individual employee. Furthermore, if there is a higher specialisation than the division of tasks and sub-tasks allows for, the related self-assessment tool will enable to ignore a competency that is not relevant to the individual person involved.

3.2.6 Job roles

The Competency Framework covers 3 Groups of Job Roles: decision making level, supervisory level and operational level. For each of the identified tasks and sub-tasks, sets of competencies that are relevant for each Group of Job Roles are assigned with an indication of the proficiency levels needed for these competencies per job role.

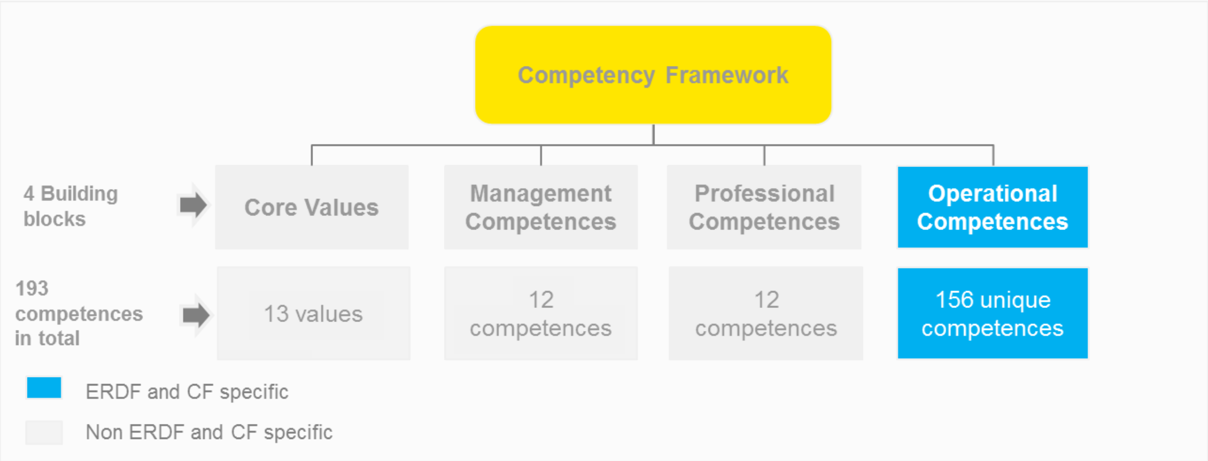
Again, the hierarchy in the different authorities implementing and managing ERDF and CF differs across the institutions. For this Competency Framework these three levels of job roles are included. In general, these cover the main distinction between the mix of competencies and related proficiency levels needed for a certain job role and tasks within the different institutions.

Although the 3 Groups of Job Roles allow for the selection of the right mix of competencies for an employee, it also should be taken into account that the proficiency levels might need adjustment. For instance on operational level a junior will need the same competencies as a more senior person, but their required proficiency levels will be lower. The Self-Assessment Tool will allow for building in these deviations.

3.2.7 Types of competencies and core values

The Competency Framework consists of 4 key building blocks.

Figure 7: Structure of the Competency Framework



Source: EY

Three building blocks cover the different types of competencies needed for ERDF and CF management and implementation: management, professional and operational competencies. Next to this there are the core values, that underpin the goals and beliefs of different actors involved in the management and implementation of ERDF and CF. These also underlie the behaviours of public administration professionals and should match their personal beliefs thereby making them their own. As core values are set beliefs that a person acts on, they differ from competencies, which related to knowledge and skills can be developed. Hence, while core values are part of the Competency Framework, they are not included in the competency Self-Assessment Tool, as these are not subject of development.

The ERDF and CF Competency Framework include 13 values. Depending on the organisation and its aims (for improvement), the values identified can be prioritised in different way. It is suggested that each authority that decides to implement the framework selects the values that are most important in relation to the context the authority operates in.

> ***Examples of core values***
>
> ***Professionalism*** - using a combination of competency, knowledge, diligence, initiative, self-discipline, polite behaviour, cooperation, dedication and image to perform specific functions.
>
> ***Objectivity and impartiality*** - basing decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence and carrying out responsibilities in a way that is fair, just and equitable.
>
> ***Customer service orientation*** - focusing attention and actions on meeting internal and external customers' needs and satisfying their priorities.

Management competencies are required for employees who perform managerial functions or tasks. However, in the context of ERDF and CF, these management competencies are for tasks not only relevant to managers (decision making level/supervisory level), but also to a certain extent, the staff at operational level, depending on their specific tasks. However, generally speaking, the proficiency levels needed on management competencies will be lower for operational level than on supervisory or decision making level.

> ***Examples of Management competencies***
>
> ***Decision making*** - demonstrating ability to apply efficient approaches for drawing conclusions or developing solutions and take timely action that is consistent with the available data and facts received from different sources, limitations, and potential consequences.
>
> ***Leadership*** - demonstrating ability to energize and inspire individuals to strive towards the vision of the future, as well as to present clearly, goals and objectives in order to create a sense of direction and purpose for employees and act as a catalyst for action.
>
> ***Strategic management*** - demonstrating ability to make decisions and take actions that lead to development and implementation of strategies aligned with the strategic direction of the organisation and achievement of objectives.

Professional competencies are required for employees to efficiently perform specific professional functions. These competencies encompass abilities needed to administer the ERDF and CF, and to carry out the other functions indicated in the relevant legal acts assigned to a particular employee. Professional competencies are generally relevant for all job roles: management, supervisory and operational level.

Examples of Professional competencies

Analytical thinking - building a logical approach to address complex problems or opportunities by splitting them into constituent parts to identify underlying issues, determine cause and effect relationships and arrive at conclusions or decisions.

Communicating in writing - demonstrating ability to present information and ideas in writing in a clear and convincing manner, selecting appropriate means of written communication and writing style to reach the audience, using correct spelling, grammar and punctuation, as well as demonstrating ability to communicate across cultures.

Communicating verbally - demonstrating ability to clearly express thoughts and ideas to individuals or groups using speech in a way that engages the audience, encourages two-way communication and helps them understand and retain the message, as well as demonstrating ability to communicate across cultures.

Team work - demonstrating ability to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other colleagues from different structural units and ranks in order to accomplish collective goals.

Operational competencies are required for employees to successfully perform the assigned functions according to the Regulations and obligations of the 2014-2020 programming period. These competencies are tailored to the tasks carried out by each type of authority and are specifically related to various aspects of management and implementation of the ERDF and CF. These competencies are particularly important for the operational staff and the highest proficiency levels needed are assigned to them.
However, at supervisory and management level, there is often a need for at least basic knowledge on these competencies. Hence, operational competencies are also included for those levels in the Competency Framework.

Examples for Operational competencies related to Programming

Knowledge on/ability to apply knowledge on:

- ESIF EU/national legal acts relevant for the function.
- National strategic documents (e.g. national development strategies, relevant thematic and sectorial policies).
- Relevant thematic knowledge (thematic legislation, costs, applicable standards, trends).
- Intervention logic.
- Input, output, results indicators.
- Budgeting and cost estimation.
- Horizontal issues (such as sustainable development, equality, etc.).
- Economic environment and reform processes (European Semester, National Reform Programmes and Country Specific Recommendations).

In conclusion, the competency related requirements depend on such aspects as the type of authority, tasks and sub-tasks performed by employees and the hierarchical level at which employees operate (decision making, supervisory, operational). These elements have all been taken into account in the definition of the CF/ERDF Competency Framework.

3.2.8 Proficiency levels for the competencies

The Competency Framework includes the required proficiency levels (level of knowledge/ability) that are set for each competency considering such aspects as the type authority, the assigned tasks and sub-tasks, and group of job roles. Proficiency levels can be used for the assessment of individual competencies and determining whether an employee has the right level of knowledge and skills needed to properly perform the assigned tasks and subtasks. They are also important in determining the type of development activities that are needed in order to improve competencies: e.g. when an employee has a low proficiency level there is first a need to develop knowledge and when higher proficiency levels are reached the focus should be put on specific abilities.

For the ERDF and CF Competency Framework two types of proficiency scales are used. The first one is a 5-point scale, running from 0-4. The lowest proficiency scale is "no knowledge" and the highest is "expert level". This scale is used for the management and professional competencies and the description of the scales is standard for all competencies included in the groups of competencies.

For the operational competencies, a 4-point scale is included, running from 0-3. The range of the scale is different as the scale is tailor made per competence. Although this is a 4-point scale only, the description allows for a precise assessment of the level due to the specific description.

Within the Competency Framework desired proficiency levels per competency for the different tasks and job roles are indicated. These desired proficiency levels serve to identify the main gaps in proficiency levels of individuals and the organisation as a whole (which related to the average proficiency levels of all employees). This analysis will be the basis for Human Resources (HR) management and training plans.

However, these proficiency levels should be treated with some care. First of all, as indicated before, it cannot be expected from junior experts, that they have the required proficiency levels. Also for smaller organisations, where people are assigned to multiple tasks, it might be impossible to possess all competencies at the required level. In these cases the desired proficiency levels might need to be adjusted. The Self-Assessment Tool allows for these adjustments.

The full Competency Framework can be found in Annex 1: . In the next section, the use of the competency Self-Assessment Tool developed in the context of this project is presented.

3.3 *Presentation of the Self-Assessment Tool*

The Self-Assessment Tool is based on the Competency Framework. The purpose of the Self-Assessment Tool is to assess the available individual competencies, identify competencies which are lacking or need upgrading (at individual and authority level) and to support authorities responsible for management and implementation of the ERDF and CF in building capacity through training and other activities.

The Self-Assessment Tool is meant as a job-aid to the relevant authorities within the different Member States involved in the management and implementation of funds. It is a tool for internal use only, as an instrument that is part of the human resources policy relating to ERDF and CF management and implementation. This means that the use of the tool is not mandatory, nor will it be used for reporting towards other organisations, such as the European Commission. The tool is also not meant for a cross comparison of institutions within a country or across countries. On the contrary, as a human resources tool the outcomes of the individual assessments are to be treated as any other human resources instrument: with care and confidentiality.

The tool is meant for identifying development needs, and not for appraisal purposes. If it would be used for appraisal, employees will tend to provide desirable answers and assess their proficiency level as higher than in actuality. Hence, it is important that the Self-Assessment Tool and the purpose of the self-assessment, is clearly introduced to the employees and their supervisors/managers involved.

3.3.1 The design of the tool

The Self-Assessment Tool is an Excel based semi-automated tool that includes:

- Functionality to perform individual assessment of competencies related to the tasks and sub-tasks assigned to the individual employee and to compare the assessed proficiency levels of competencies to the required (desired) levels.
- Functionality to aggregate individual assessment results at authority level, allowing for the identification of the main gaps in competencies for the organisations as a whole.
- Functionality to prepare development plans at both individual and organisational level.
- User guidelines and templates.

The Self-Assessment Tool integrates elements of the ERDF and CF Competency Framework (authorities, job-roles, related tasks and sub-tasks, related competencies, required proficiency levels) and templates for performing the self-assessment of competencies. Although most of the elements of the Self-Assessment Tool are standardised, the tool is customisable: authorities can amend lists of competencies and required proficiency levels considering the national context and their specific needs.

3.4 *Assessing competencies*

In order to identify the development needs of an individual person, it is important to assess the proficiency levels of required competencies. This assessment is based on the self-assessment by the individual employee and the assessment of the competencies of this employee by its supervisor or manager.

The reason for the involvement of a second person in the assessment is to ensure that biases towards the own competencies, are identified and discussed. Furthermore, a supervisor/manager has a helicopter view, allowing for comparison to others. The outcomes of both assessments will form the basis for discussion between the employee and supervisor or manager in order to set an agreed proficiency level.

This process allows the identification of the key competencies identified in the Competency Framework that are missing or need upgrading and linking competency gaps with developmental options (training or other activities) both at individual and authority levels.

3.4.1 How the tool works in practice

When using the ERDF/CF Self-Assessment Tool, the first step is to select in the tool the:

- Type of authority, i.e. authority in which the employee who performs the self-assessment works
- Group of Job Roles, i.e. group of job roles that includes a job role of the employee who performs the self-assessment

An example of preliminary information has to be provided by each individual employee, and the selection of tasks and sub-tasks is presented in the figure overleaf.

Figure 8: Input of primary information of individual employees

Competency Framework for managing ERDF and CF - Primary Information

Person's name	Name Surname
Type of Authority	Managing authority or Intermediate body
Group of Job roles	Operational Level
Programme	Name of the Programme

Done

Tasks	Please select tasks which are relevant for the job position	Sub-tasks	Please select sub-tasks which are relevant for the job position
Programming	☑	Inter-institutional coordination and stakeholder involvement	☑
		Preparation of the Programme	☐
		Management of the evaluation process (ex-ante)	☐
		Negotiation with the EC	☐
		Procurement of goods and services	☐

Source: EY

On the basis of the selection made, the Self-Assessment Tool automatically generates the templates that include lists of tasks and sub-tasks, required competencies (Professional, Operational, and Management), definitions for the proficiency levels and drop down menus for filling out the self-assessed proficiency levels per competency. An example assessment of the management competencies is presented in the figure below.

Figure 9: The assessment of proficiency levels of the management competencies

Competency Framework for managing ERDF and CF - Management Competencies

Type of authority	Coordinating Body
Group of Job roles	Operational Level
Person's name	Name Surname

Proficiency Levels
N/A = Not applicable
0 = No knowledge
1 = Awareness
2 = Trained
3 = Intermediate
4 = Expert

Done

Reference	Competences	Self-assessed Proficiency Level	Description	Supervisor assessed Proficiency Level	Description
CB.M.C2	Decision making	1	Basic knowledge of the competency (e.g. understands general concepts and processes, is familiar with related key terminology). Ability to demonstrate this competency after being given specific instructions and guidance.	2	Good working knowledge of the competency. Ability to apply that knowledge in daily work. Ability to perform standard activities with regards to this competency in an independent manner
CB.M.C6	Multi-level stakeholder management				
		N/A 0 1 2 3 4			

Source: EY

The templates are generated in Excel format and are used to document the self-assessment results in order to ensure automatic identification of competencies that are missing or need upgrading. The key Self-Assessment Tool components and principles of operation are described overleaf.

- ***1. Instructions for using the tool.*** Instructions for the application of the Self-Assessment Tool are provided along with self-assessment templates to ensure proper application of the Self-Assessment Tool and avoiding any misinterpretations.
- ***2. Type of Authority.*** All types of authorities responsible for ERDF and CF management are listed in the tool: Coordinating Body, Managing Authority/Intermediate body, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and Joint Secretariat.
- ***3. Group of Job Roles***. Job roles are grouped in three groups considering the level of responsibility: Decision making level, Supervisory level, and Operational level. Required competencies and their proficiency levels are set in the Competency Framework considering the selected Group of Job Roles.
- ***4. Tasks and 5. Sub-tasks***. Lists of standardised tasks and sub-tasks for each Type of Authority included in the Competency Framework are included in the Excel database. A list of tasks linked to the selected Type of Authority and Group of Job Roles is generated and displayed automatically and the user is allowed to manually select the relevant tasks and then, for the Operational level only, sub-tasks. The reason for including subtasks for operational level only is that on operational level there is a need for more specialisation than on supervisor or decision making level. The final list of relevant tasks and sub-tasks has to be mutually agreed by the employee and his/her supervisor. The selection of specific tasks and sub-tasks automatically provides lists of competencies and required proficiency levels.
- ***6. Assessment of proficiency levels for competencies***. Lists of all competencies (Management, Professional and Operational) that are required for all types of authorities responsible for managing the ERDF and CF and all groups of job roles are included in the Excel database. As defined in the Competency Framework, the different sets of competencies are directly linked to the sub-tasks. If the same competency is linked to more than one of the selected sub-tasks and only the required proficiency levels differ, the assessment is carried out on the basis of the highest required proficiency level for that particular competency. The Self-Assessment Tool eliminates duplication of competencies (if any) and the final self-assessment template includes a list of the unique required competencies.
- **Proficiency levels.** The proficiency scales as defined in the Competency Framework are included in the Self-Assessment Tool. There is a standardized five level proficiency scale for management and professional competencies with the following levels: 1) No knowledge, 2) Awareness, 3) Trained, 4) Intermediate, and 5) Expert, and specific four level proficiency scales for operational competencies with these levels: 1) No knowledge, 2) Awareness, 3) Trained, 4) Expert. If the levels do not meet the needs of the authority, these can be adapted to the specific situation of the organisation and employee; authorities are allowed to change the required proficiency levels before starting the self-assessment process if needed.

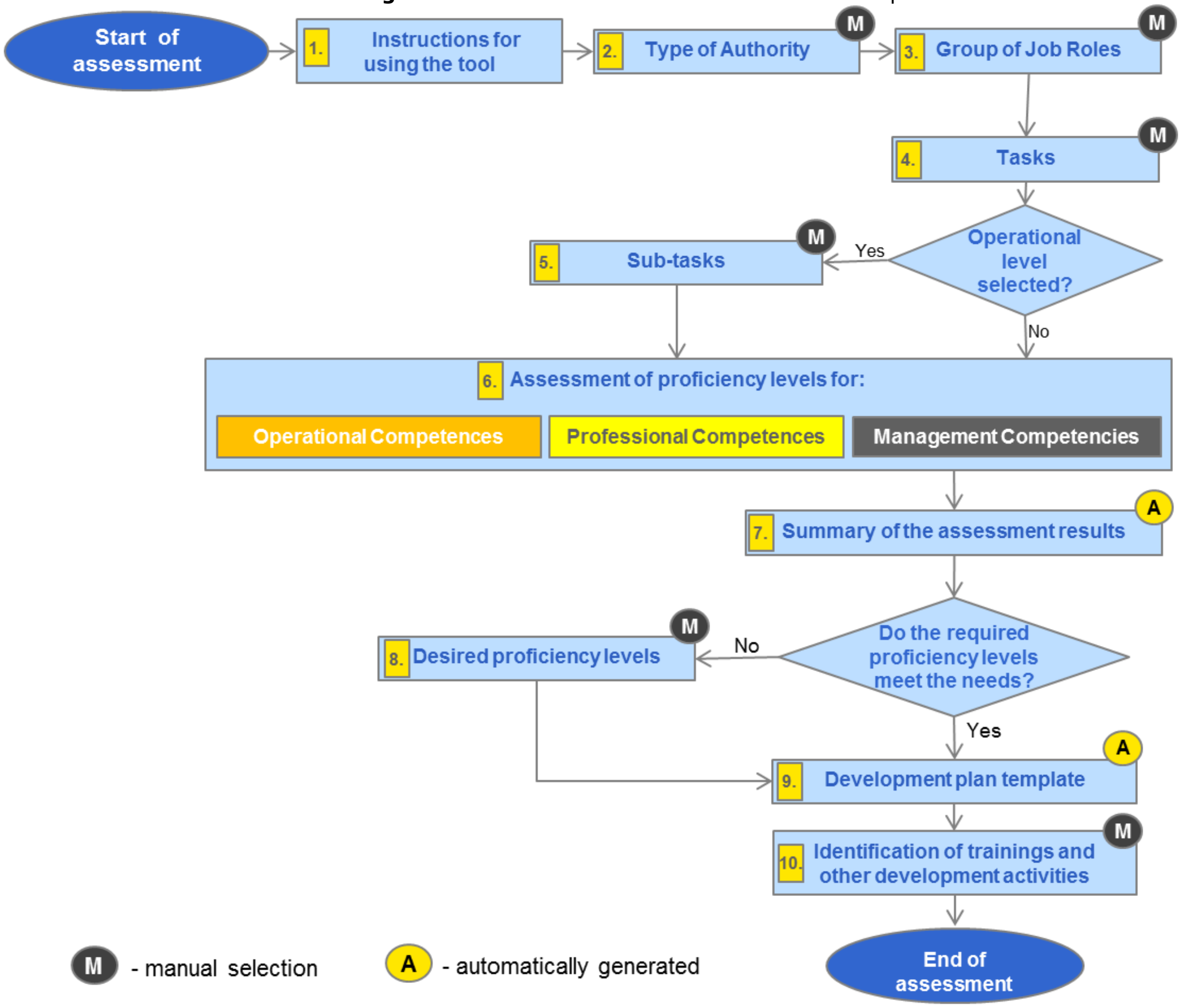
Once the required proficiency levels are set, an employee and respective supervisor carry out the assessment independently from each other and indicate the current proficiency levels based on the descriptions and definitions of the required competencies and proficiency levels. In order to make the assessment more objective, employees have to carry out their self-assessment without knowing the required proficiency levels in advance. When a supervisor performs the assessment, results are automatically generated next to the employee results within the same Excel template.

- ***7. Summary of the assessment results***. The self-assessment and assessment results are summarized in the "Summary" sheet automatically when the respective processes are completed and previous templates are filled. The required proficiency levels are visible in the "Summary" sheet and should be reviewed and discussed between employee and supervisor/manager.

- ***8. Desired proficiency levels***. In situations when the required proficiency levels that are set do not meet the needs (i.e. are higher or lower than needed), they can be replaced with the desired proficiency levels by filling the column "Desired proficiency level". The final assessment results (overall final proficiency level) should be agreed between employee and supervisor during a discussion about the initial self-assessment and assessment results. The overall final proficiency levels are then compared to the required or desired proficiency levels and proficiency levels that exceed requirements or need improvement are pointed out automatically: marked green or red.
- ***9. Development plan template***. A development plan is one of the key outputs of the self-assessment process and is critical for authorities and employees in order to improve effectiveness in managing the ERDF and CF. The development plan template is prepared based on the summarised self-assessment results and a list of competencies which are lacking or need upgrading is provided in the summary.
- ***10. Identification of trainings and other development activities***. Training and other development activities that are the most suitable to fill the identified competency gaps should be indicated in the individual development plans based on the mutual agreement of the employee, his/her supervisor and other relevant stakeholders.

Figure 10 presents an overview of the self-assessment process and tool usage.

Figure 10: Overview of the Self-Assessment Tool operation



Source: EY

3.4.2 Aggregation of assessment results

The ERDF/CF Self-Assessment Tool allows for the aggregation of the results of the individual self-assessments to authority level. These aggregated assessment results can be used for the strategic decisions and actions aimed at development of competencies required for efficient management and implementation of ERDF and/or CF, such as setting priorities for development of employees or recruitment of new employees with specific competencies.

The results aggregated by the tool provide information about the competencies of the employees in a particular authority and compare the average assessed overall proficiency level for each competency at authority level to the average required proficiency levels for a specific Group of Job Role. Information about the number of employees who have a specific proficiency level is also provided. In this way, the tool helps to identify the main competency gaps. Additionally, statistical information about the number of employees participating in the assessment as well as the number and percentage of employees who have the particular competence is provided in the aggregated results generated by the Self-Assessment Tool.

3.4.3 Analysis of the self-assessment results

After the self-assessment of individual competencies is completed for all employees in a particular authority, results can be aggregated and an authority-wide analysis can be carried out. The analysis of aggregated assessment results allows identification of competencies that are lacking or need upgrading. Additionally it enables evidence based planning of capacity building activities and preparation of appropriate plans to improve the current situation. The implementation of improvement plans is directly linked to a reassessment of competencies and monitoring of progress. Regular structured reassessments of competencies and analyses of assessment results helps to understand if the implemented capacity building activities have positive impact and if any additional actions are needed, e.g. organising alternative training, temporary outsourcing part of tasks, etc.

A parallel implementation of the Competency Framework and the Self-Assessment Tool allows introducing (or strengthening) the competency based management in a systematic way and ensures better results of managing and implementing ERDF and CF.

3.5 *Job Profiles development*

The Competency Framework and the Self-Assessment Tool are developed in such a way that they can be used by Authorities responsible for managing ERDF and CF to prepare job profiles for the different functions and tasks of employees.

The flexibility of the tool enables easier preparation of job profiles and satisfies specific needs that authorities may have. The structure of a generic job profile is presented in the table below.

Table 3: Structure of a Generic job profile

Key elements	Explanations
Title	Full title of the job role.
Group of job roles	Applicable group of job roles: Decision making level, Supervisory level or Operational level.
Authority	Authority where the employee works, e.g. Managing Authority, Intermediate Body, Audit Authority, etc.
Role tasks and sub-tasks	List of tasks and sub-tasks directly related to each area of responsibility assigned to the particular job role.
Competencies and required proficiency levels	List of competencies (Management, Professional and Operational) and required proficiency levels for a particular job role to ensure efficient and effective management of ERDF and CF.

The Generic job profile is composed of 5 different elements. Each of these elements is important to ensure a common approach and understanding of a certain job role. The job title, together with Group of job roles, and authority provide the basic information about the job role. Role tasks and sub-tasks define the main responsibilities of the employee and required competencies and must be selected accurately. Finally, the profile includes competencies and proficiency levels that are required for performing the assigned tasks and sub-tasks in a proper way.

If job profiles are applied systematically along with the Competency Framework, they will serve as efficient tools for strategic management and planning of human resources.

4 Competency development through training

Starting from the structure of the Competency Framework, this chapter defines a Blueprint for the development of competencies for coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020 in Member States. The chapter also describes the existing offer of vocational training, master level education programmes, knowledge exchange networks and platforms based on the analysis of their curricula and contents included in Annex 9. Conclusions are drawn on the relevance of the Blueprint as well as practical recommendations for its implementation.

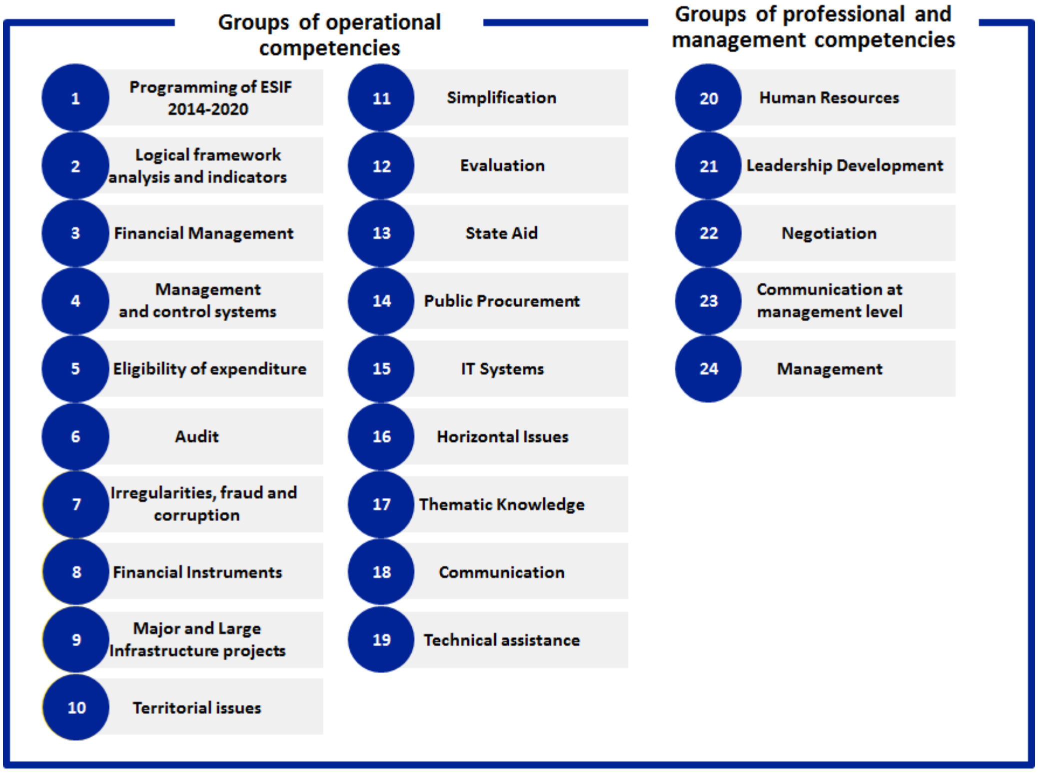
4.1 *Blueprint for "Training programmes on coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020"*

The purpose of the Blueprint for ERDF and CF management training is to provide guidance on the structure of a learning and development offer that is functional to strengthening the competencies defined in the Competency Framework.

This requires the definition of training modules that address the elements of the Competency Framework, the identification of learning methods adequate to the different levels of proficiency and the correlation with job roles and target institutions involved in the coordination, management and implementation of the ERDF and CF.

In order to make the Blueprint a practical and usable instrument based on a manageable number of training modules, the competencies as identified in the Competency Framework have been aggregated into broader groups, each representing a training module. The grouping has been made on the basis of competencies that are related to each other within the different tasks. Due to the general nature, professional and management competencies have been grouped together in order to create coherent modules. The total number of proposed modules is 24, out of which 19 related to operational competencies and 5 to management and professional competencies.

Figure 11: Groups of competencies representing the Blueprint training modules



Source: EY

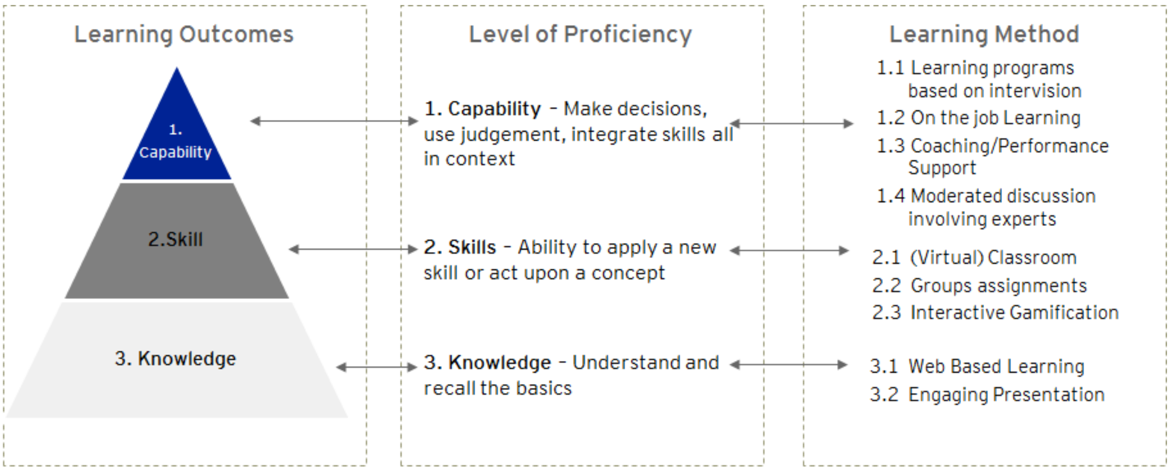
The 19 modules on operational competencies cover all the operational competencies identified in the Competency Framework. Operational competencies have been aggregated into modules which are defined taking into account either the task where they are most relevant (e.g. programming, monitoring, evaluation, audit) or key challenges of ERDF and CF implementation that were identified during the fieldwork in Member States (e.g. Financial Instruments, Major/Large infrastructure projects, Territorial Issues).

The 5 professional and management modules cover all the professional and management competencies, which have been clustered taking into account the correlation between different abilities captured in the competencies.

Addressing all the proficiency levels included in the Competency Framework requires the identification of different learning methods for each module. For this purpose, the proficiency levels included in the Competency Framework correlated to Bloom's taxonomy of learning outcomes[4]. This taxonomy distinguishes learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and capability and associates each outcome to different learning methods as explained below:

- **Learning outcome "Knowledge"**: this is associated to proficiency level 1 of the Competency Framework for operational, professional and management competencies. Web Based Learning modules with knowledge checks are the appropriate learning methods to deliver this outcome.
- **Learning outcome "Skills":** this is associated to proficiency level 2 of the Competency Framework for operational competencies and proficiency levels 2-3 of professional and management competencies. The more advanced level of proficiency to be achieved requires interactive learning methods based on virtual and classroom methods combined with knowledge checks.
- **Learning outcome "Capability":** this is associated to proficiency level 3 of the Competency Framework for operational competencies and proficiency level 4 for professional and management competencies. Achieving decision making and judgment skills requires more interactive learning methods. On the job learning and coaching options should also be considered but due to their onsite character, they cannot be provided within this training curriculum.

Figure 12: Correlation between Bloom's taxonomy and the Competency Framework



Source: EY

[4] Bloom, B. S. (1994). Rehage, Kenneth J.; Anderson, Lorin W.; Sosniak, Lauren A., eds. "Bloom's taxonomy: A forty-year retrospective". Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago: National Society for the Study of Education) 93 (2).

The characteristics of each Learning Method proposed are summarized in the table below:

Table 4: Characteristics of learning methods

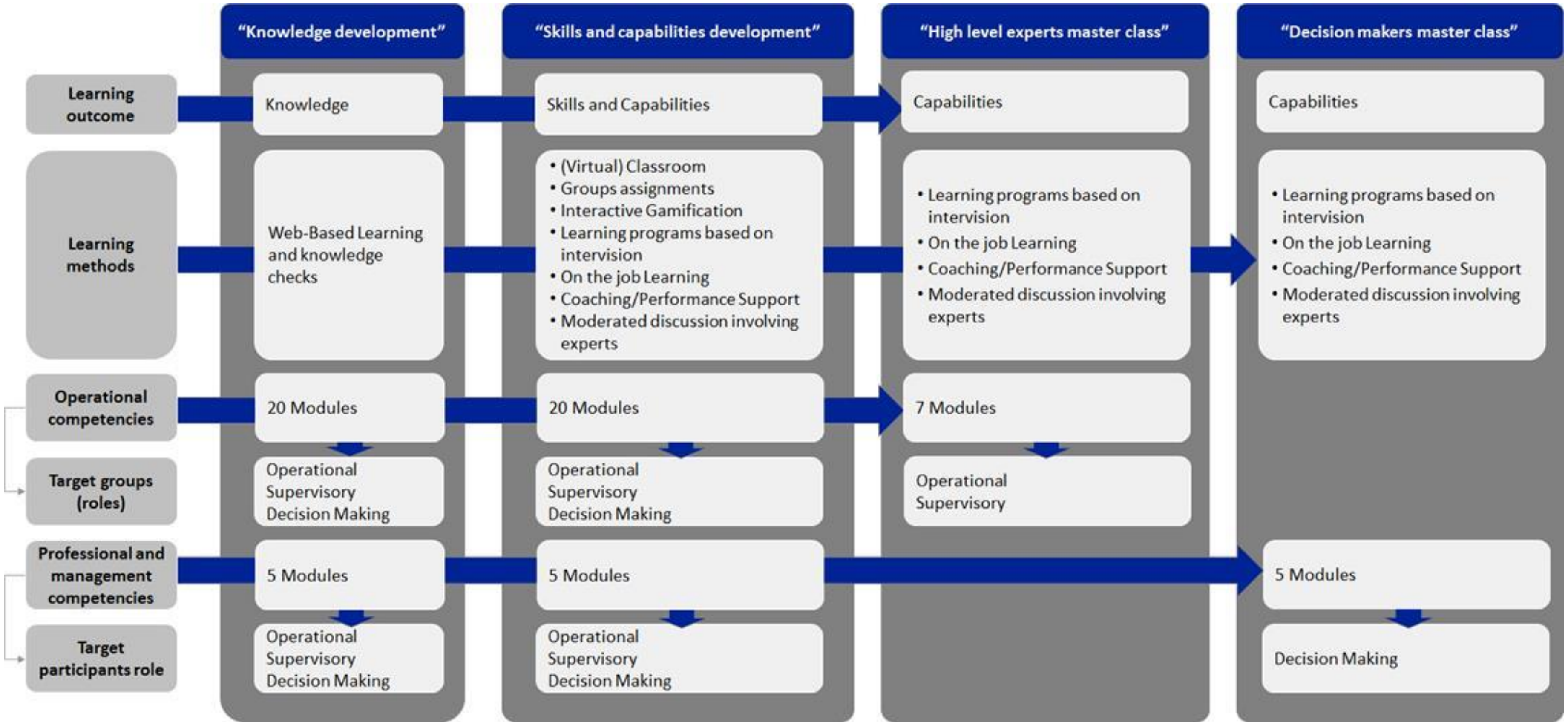
	Learning method	Definition
1.1	Intervision based learning programmes	Intervision is a self-help method that is used among peers or colleagues to help each other deal with challenges a person encounters during their job. Sometimes there is a moderator available.
1.2	On the job learning	An individual "learning by doing" approach where the employee learns new competencies in the regular work situation. The employee receives direct feedback while executing tasks. The person who coaches the employee observes, instructs and provides feedback.
1.3	Coaching and Performance support	Individual support at the workplace regarding technical and or personal functioning issues. This support is available internally (by a manager, or someone else within the organization) or externally (external coach).
1.4	Moderated discussion involving experts	An event where employees have the opportunity to address technical challenges at their job, and receive guidance, tips & tricks and solutions for these challenges.
2.1	(Virtual) Classroom assignments	A group of employees who want to learn more about certain competencies. They can come together physically in one space or meet virtually.
2.2	Groups assignments	A group of employees receives an assignment in which they collectively have to complete.
2.3	Interactive Gamification	Interactive Gamification is the process of applying gaming designs and concepts to trainings in order to make them more engaging for the learner. Learners compete directly against one or more individuals or participate individually in an interactive experience that rewards learning performance in some way.
3.1	Web based learning	An executable course file than can be emailed and run standalone on a PC or uploaded to a suitably configured Learning Management System. It allows for self-paced learning featuring textual contents, static graphics, animations and periodic interactions for motivation and recall.
3.2	Engaging presentation	An interactive method to engage a group of people in a discussion around a topic. This can be a form of discussion, debate, storytelling, Questions & Answers (Q&A) session etc.

Based on this framework four different training programmes have been defined according to the learning outcome, the "Knowledge development", "Skills and capabilities development", "High level experts master class" and "Decision makers master class":

- The "**Knowledge development**" training programme aims at providing a basic understanding of all competencies to all employees of ERDF and CF authorities in any role. The learning method for achieving this outcome is Web-Based Learning with knowledge checks.
- The "**Skills and capabilities development**" training programme aims at equipping participants with the ability to apply relevant skills and the capability of making decisions in relation to all competencies and targets employees of ERDF and CF authorities in any role. This learning outcome requires more interactive teaching methods such as (virtual) classrooms and moderated discussions.

- The "**High level experts master class**" aims at equipping participants with an advanced learning outcome in relation to a limited set of complex operational competencies and creating informal transnational competency networks. It targets experts that are required to possess vertical knowledge on a subject matter that are in an operational or supervisory role.
- The "**Decision makers master class**" aims at equipping decision makers with an advanced learning outcome in relation to professional and management competencies required in the context of ERDF and CF systems and creating informal transnational competency networks.

Figure 13: Blueprint overview



Source: EY

The training programmes are described in detail in Annex 8: Blueprint for "Training programmes on Coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020" in terms of:

- **Contents overview**: general description of the contents covered by the module.
- **Competencies covered:** list of competencies covered by the training module.
- **Target audience:** identification of the types of ERDF and CF authorities for which the module is relevant among Coordinating Bodies, Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, Certifying Authorities, Audit Authorities and Joint Secretariats.
- **Job roles, Learning outcome and Method:** learning outcome and methods proposed for the different job roles (operational, supervisory, decision making).
- **Complementary modules suggested**: modules that participants should consider in order to obtain a broader understanding of the modules in the broader context of ERDF and CF implementation.

4.2 *Overview of existing training courses, education and learning options*

The overview of existing training courses and learning programmes is based on an inventory of 80 vocational training programmes directly related to ESIF, 30 academic master programmes broadly related to EU matters and 12 knowledge exchange networks and platforms for ESIF Institutions.

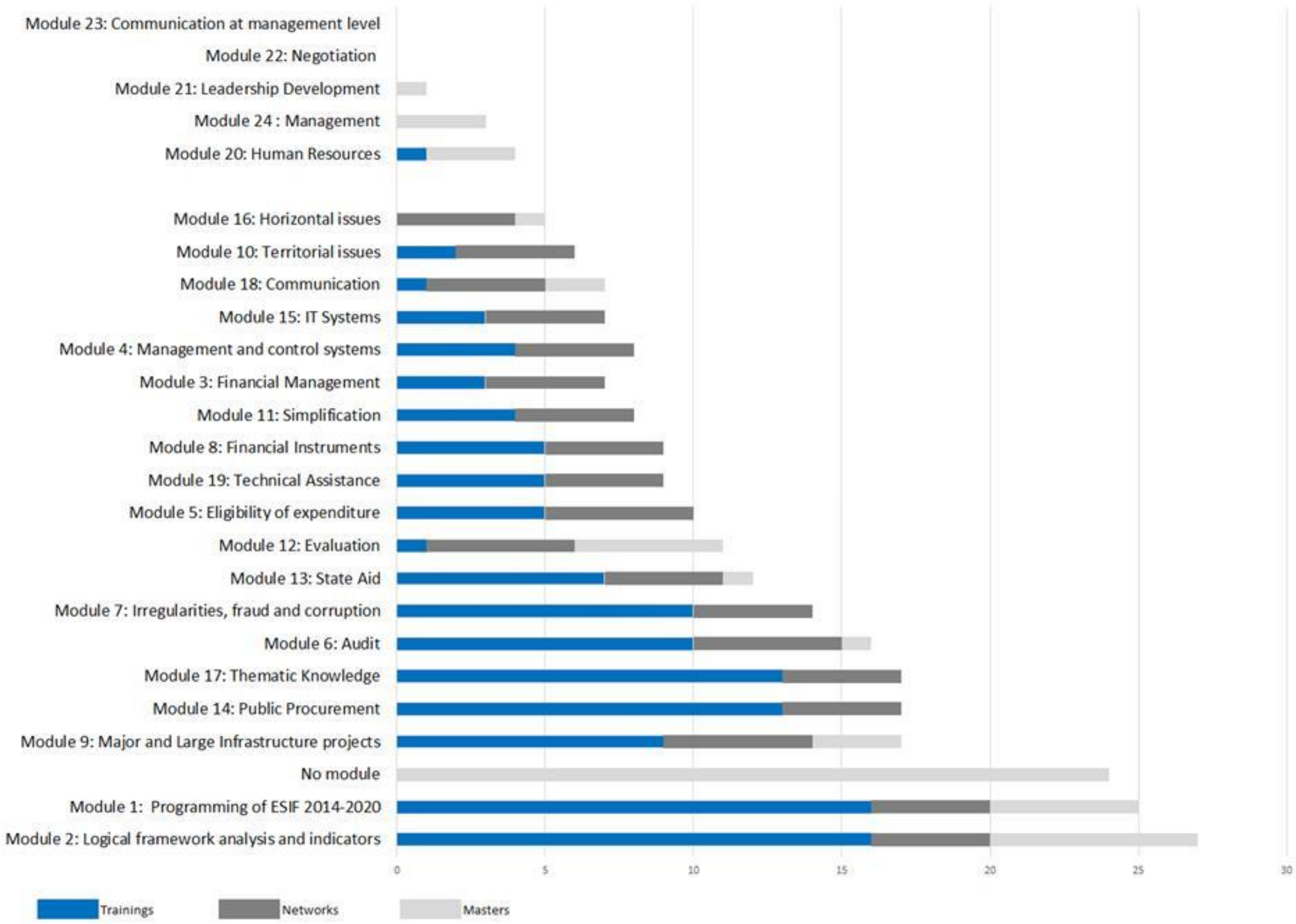
The curricula included in the inventory have been mapped against the contents of the training modules of the Blueprint[5] (Annex 9), in order to assess the extent to which the existing offer addresses the development of the competencies identified in the Competency Framework.

Overall the existing offer covers all the operational competencies modules and most of the professional and management ones, yet a number of limitations exist in respect of their relevance for developing or strengthening the competencies included in the Competency Framework and are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

The figure below presents the number of vocational trainings, master programmes and knowledge exchange networks that address the same learning needs as the Blueprint modules.

5 Each training curriculum is associated to one or more modules based on the contents covered.

Figure 14: Number of existing training and learning programmes addressing the same learning needs as the Blueprint modules



Source: EY

4.2.1 Vocational training programmes

The inventory of vocational training programmes related to the management of ERDF and CF organised at European level covers over 80 curricula delivered by 8 training institutions.

These training programmes cover all the modules of the Blueprint with the exception of Horizontal Issues. While the list does not aim at being exhaustive, it provides a relevant overview of the existing offer.

The most recurrent topics are the Programming of ESIF 2014-2020 (Module 1), The Logical framework analysis and indicators including Project Cycle Management (Module 2), Public Procurement (Module 14), different aspects of Thematic Knowledge (Module 17), Audit (Module 6), Fraud and Irregularities (Module 7) which are covered through 10-15 training curricula each.

Major and Large Infrastructure projects (Module 9), State Aid (Module 13) and Eligibility of expenditure (Module 5) are covered by 5-10 training curricula.

All other modules are covered by 1-5 training curricula; in particular Financial Instruments (Module 8) and Simplification (Module 11) are covered by 4 training curricula and Territorial Issues (Module 10) by 3 training curricula. In addition there are also two training curricula addressing specifically European Territorial Cooperation.

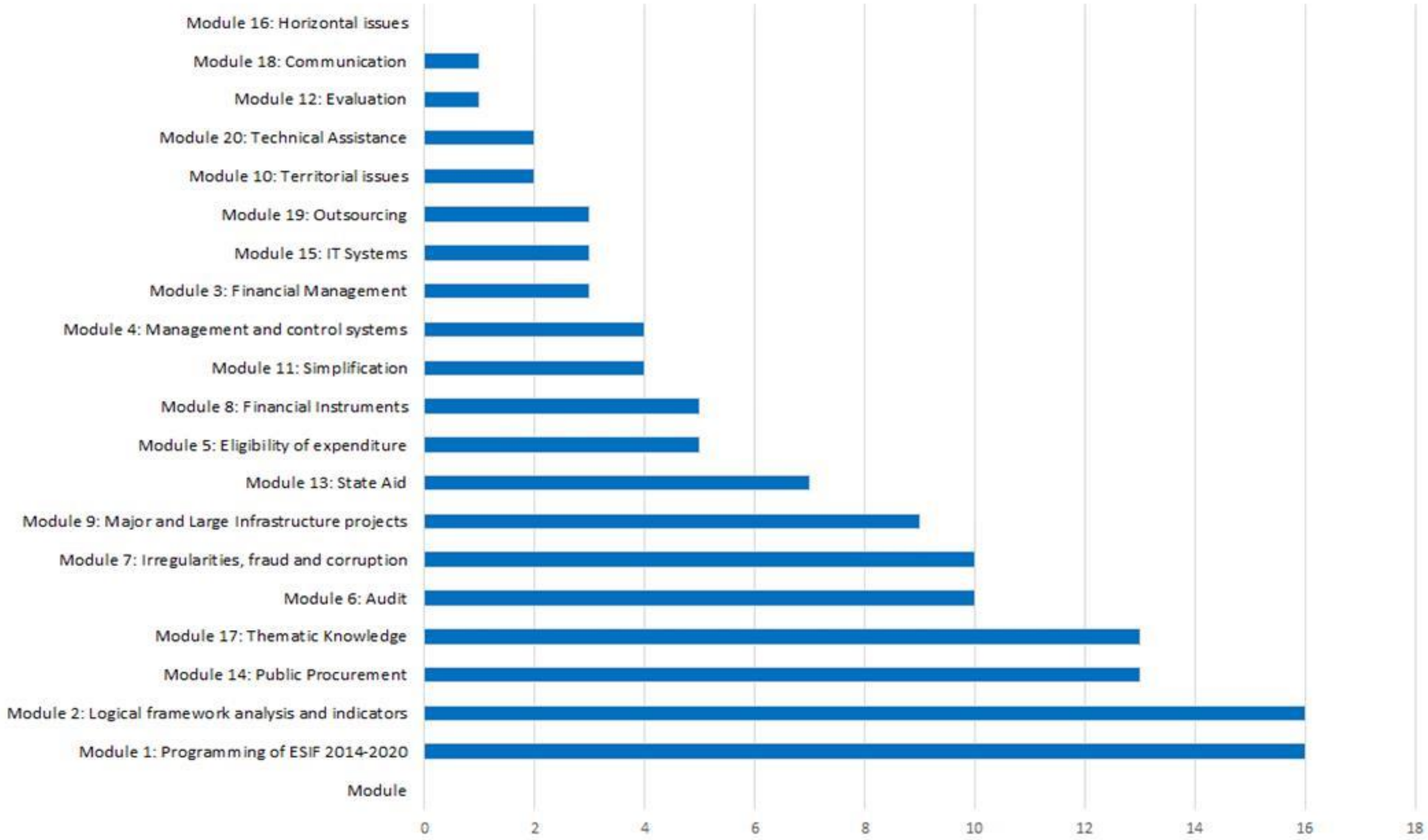
In terms of learning methods, the majority of the training curricula are delivered through classroom trainings, seminars and conferences of the average duration of 2 days (min. 1 day – max. 2 weeks). Practical aspects are addressed through group exercises, learning by doing and interactive learning, while e-learning and webinars are used more rarely.

In terms of participants, the curricula generally provide an indication of the target institutions, which are referred broadly as all stakeholders of the management and control systems and the target participants indicated are managers and staff. The curricula, however, do not identify more precisely the job role of participants, or the proficiency level that is the desired outcome of the training, thus not allowing for a judgement on the relevance of the proposed learning methods.

DG REGIO is also providing training courses and seminars for ESIF Institutions of Member States that cover topics such as result orientation, project pipeline development, financial instruments, management and control, verifications. Training courses are organised through framework contracts and delivered by external contractors that are consulting firms and training institutions.

The figure below presents the number of vocational training programmes addressing the same learning needs as the Blueprint modules.

Figure 15: Number of existing training programmes addressing the same learning needs as the Blueprint modules



Source: EY

4.2.2 *Master level education programmes*

In order to assess the offer of Master level programmes related to the management of ERDF and CF, we have analysed the curricula of 40 education programmes correlated to European Union and public policies organised by higher education institutions in the Member States where fieldwork was performed and by some long standing European academic institutions.

While the list does not aim to be exhaustive of the entire offer available at the European level, its mapping against the contents of the Blueprint[6,] reveals a low degree of coverage of the modules. The majority of the courses analysed are not addressing directly the operational competencies modules, as they cover more broadly the topics of European studies, public administration, public sector management, governance, policy making.

A limited number of the topics included in the modules is covered by these Master courses, however in a context that lacks of specificity to ESIF. This is for instance the case of Project Cycle Management (Module 2) and Evaluation (Module 12). The analysis provided also evidence of the organisation of Master courses on Structural Funds in Italy in the past, yet this offer which referred to the period 2007-2013 does not appear to be confirmed for the period 2014-2020.

On the other hand, the Master programmes cover the subject of public administration management, which is relevant to develop professional, and management competencies such as management, leadership, and human resources.

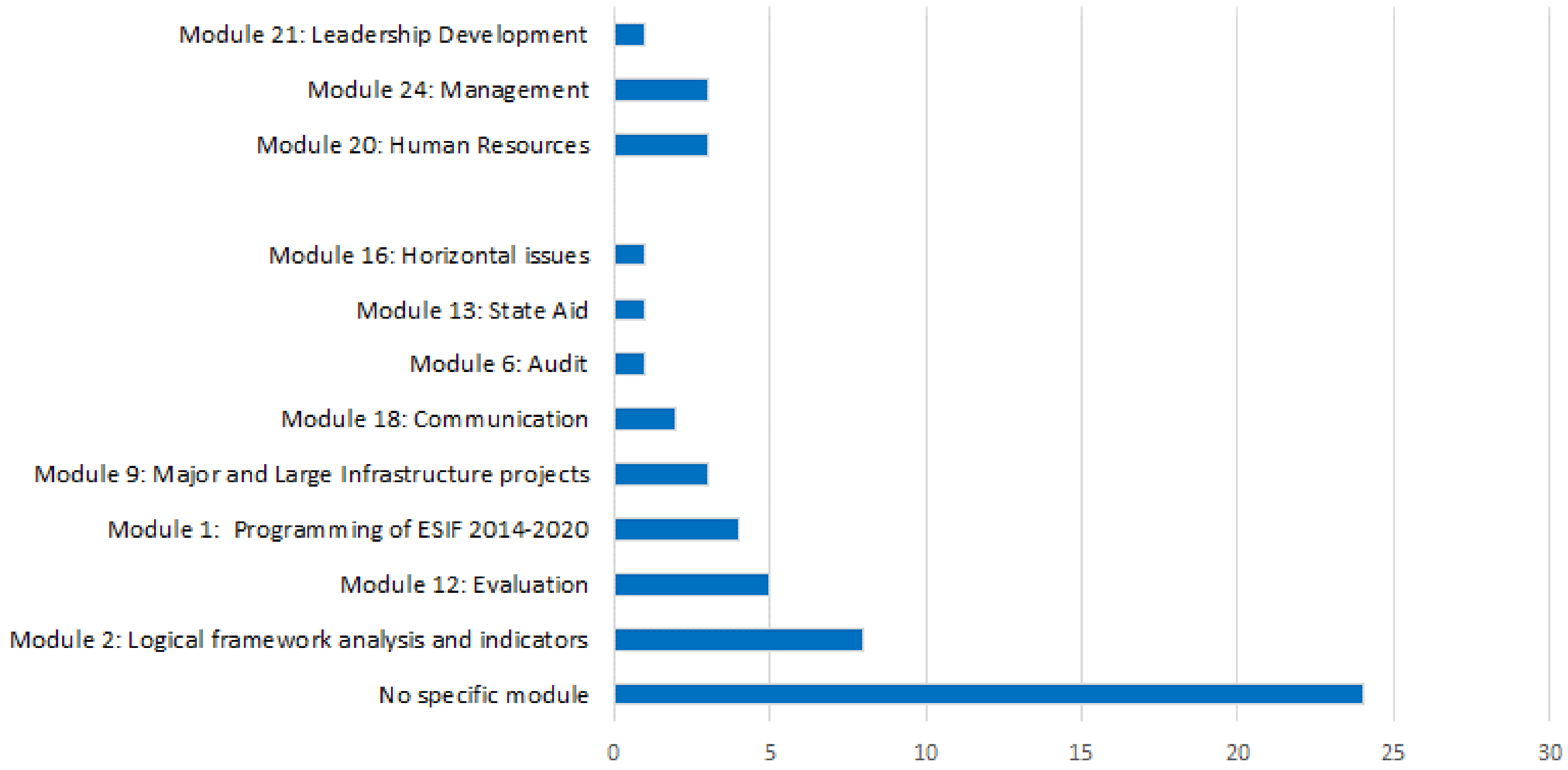
The duration of these courses varies between 1 year (full-time courses) and 2 years (part time courses), and the target groups are broad, addressing university graduates, civil servants, employees of NGOs, international organisations and those interested in pursuing such careers.

The curricula are delivered through core and elective modules; classroom lectures are the most common learning method, coupled with ICT tools such as web-based learning, audio-video tutorials, web-conference lectures, assignments and online tests. Most of the courses award master degrees with learning credits assigned according to the European Credit Transfer System.

The figure below presents the number of Master education programmes addressing the same learning needs as the Blueprint modules.

6 Each training curriculum is associated to one or more modules based on the contents covered.

Figure 16: Number of master education programmes addressing learning needs of Blueprint modules



Source: EY

4.2.3 Other learning options

There are a number of European networks and platforms that have the purpose of exchanging knowledge on ERDF and CF management, addressing practical skills and dissemination of best practices. They have been initiated and are managed either at the initiative of the European Commission, Member States or public and private institutions.

The twelve platforms identified have been mapped against the contents of the Blueprint; four are horizontal to all ESIF Institutions and tasks and broadly cover all Blueprint modules, while the other 8 have a narrower scope and focus respectively on Audit (Module 6), Financial Instruments (Module 8), Evaluation (Module 12), Thematic Knowledge (Module 17), Communication (Module 18) and European Territorial Cooperation.

The figure in the next page presents the number of networks addressing the same learning needs of the Blueprint modules while the following paragraphs describe each identified network.

TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER[7]. In March 2015 DG REGIO launched a new tool for peer-to-peer exchanges among Member States, called TAIEX-REGIO PEER 2 PEER, financing capacity building initiatives aimed at better management and implementation of ERDF and CF and better implementation of the regulatory requirements. The tool is based on the existing TAIEX instrument and provides financial support to short-term exchanges among public sector experts and institutions, i.e. expert missions, study visits and workshops.

Applications for assistance are open to Managing Authorities, Intermediate bodies, Coordinating Bodies, Audit authorities, Certifying authorities and Joint Secretariats are submitted to the EC using an online application tool.

DG REGIO Open days. The European Week of Regions and Cities is an annual four-day event, during which cities and regions showcase their capacity to create growth and jobs, implement Cohesion Policy, and prove the importance of local and regional level interventions for good European governance. It is organised in the form of a wide networking forum providing the opportunity to meet a wide range of ESIF stakeholders from across the EU.

Over the years, the Open Days have grown into the key event on EU Regional Policy, welcoming some 6000 participants in October each year (local, regional, national and European decision-makers and experts) for more than 100 workshops and debates, exhibitions and networking opportunities. In addition to the Brussels-based workshops, some 250 local events are run from September to November all over Europe.[8]

Visegrad Group[9]. The Visegrad Group reflects the efforts of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia to work together in a number of fields of common interest. In light of the importance of the Cohesion Policy, Visegrad countries actively participate to the European debate on the future of ESIF, promote the simplification of the administration of Cohesion Policy's implementation and contribute to the sharing of its

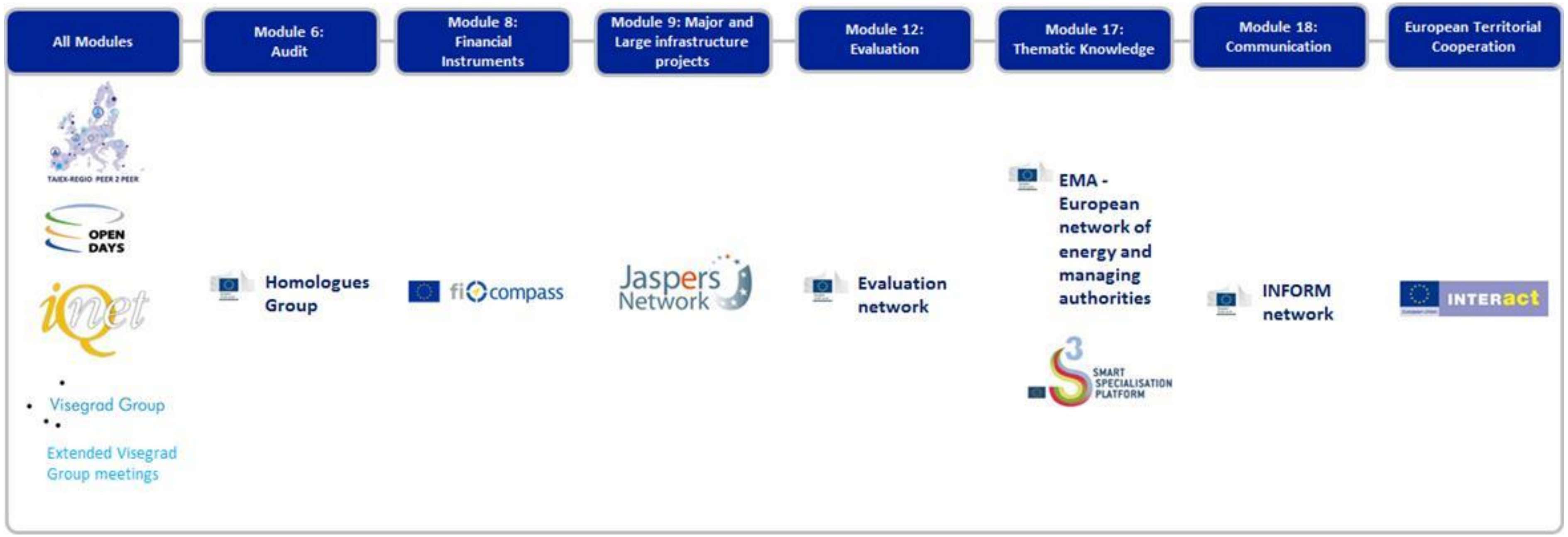
7 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index.cfm/en/policy/how/improving-investment/taiex-regio-peer-2-peer/

8 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/opendays/od2015/index.cfm

9 http://www.visegradgroup.eu

sustainable and measurable results. Visegrad Group extended meetings are organised involving Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia.

Figure 17: ESIF networks addressing learning needs of Blueprint modules



Source: EY

IQ-Net[10] ***.*** The European Policies Research Centre of the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow (EPRC) has established a network for the exchange of experience on Cohesion Policy management and implementation issues called IQ-Net. IQ-Net enables programme managers to exchange experience and share good practices on specific themes relating to the design, delivery, management and evaluation of ESIF. Partner organisations that pay a fee for network membership are mainly regional or national MAs or programme secretariats. Currently the network is composed of authorities from Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

fi-compass[11] ***.*** fi-compass is a platform for advisory services on financial instruments under ESIF managed by the European Commission in partnership with the European Investment Bank. It is designed to support ESIF managing authorities by providing practical know-how and learning tools on financial instruments. These include "how-to" manuals, factsheets for quick reference, e-learning modules, face-to-face training seminars and networking events.

Jaspers Networking Platform[12]. The JASPERS Networking Platform was created to complement JASPERS' project advisory operations by implementing knowledge-sharing and capacity-building activities. It addresses issues specific to the preparation of infrastructure projects, fostering the dissemination of good practices and exchange of experiences among all EU Member States, pre-accession countries and other JASPERS stakeholders.

It organises multi-country workshops and seminars on topics of project preparation and implementation, targeted training and capacity building actions, including on-demand and country specific activities, development of guidelines, case studies, model projects and standard toolkits, interactive forums for exchange of experiences, dissemination of best practices, lessons learned.

DG REGIO Evaluation Network[13]. DG REGIO's Evaluation Network has the mission to facilitate exchange of experience and of good practices among Member States in order to strengthen evaluation capacity throughout the EU. Discussions cover evaluation of Cohesion Policy, including methodological guidance, indicators, evaluation plans, progress in relation to evaluations being undertaken and the sharing of evaluation evidence and its use.

The network comprises representatives of Member States who are responsible for the evaluation of Cohesion Policy. These representatives have meetings two to three times per year that are chaired by the Evaluation Unit of DG REGIO. An online network has also been established ("Evaluation Network with Member States") social networking platform[14].

INFORM network[15]***.*** The main objective of this EU-wide network of communication officers of Managing Authorities and Joint Secretariats is to improve the visibility of ERDF and CF projects by sharing experiences and good practices. It seeks to improve the

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10 http://www.eprc.strath.ac.uk/iqnet/default.php.

11 https://www.fi-compass.eu/home

12 http://www.jaspersnetwork.org

13 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/tech_en.htm

14 https://www.yammer.com/regionetwork/groups/evaluationnetworkwithmemberstates

15 http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/communication/inform-network/

quality of communication activities, in order to increase awareness among the wider public about the benefits of Regional Policy projects. It is coordinated by DG REGIO that participates and contributes to meetings organised on a national level, and helps the INFORM network members interpret the information and communication legislation.

Homologues Group. The Homologues Group is an expert group at the European Commission, participated by representatives of national Audit Authorities of EU Member States. It is concerned with coordination of proposals for legislation and technical issues in the field of control and auditing) of the implementation and expenditure of ESIF. Each year, one of the Member States organises an annual conference, which is attended by delegates from Audit Authorities, representatives of the European Commission and invited guests (the European Court of Auditors, national Courts of Auditors, etc.).

INTERACT Programme[16]. INTERACT is an operational programme designed to foster exchange of knowledge and best practices on ETC programmes management. The main INTERACT target groups are Managing Authorities, Joint Secretariats, Monitoring Committees, National Contact Points, First Level Controllers, Certifying Authorities and Audit Authorities. The programme provides free of charge advisory services, methodological expertise and tools to streamline the work of different cooperation programmes, through seminars, methodological guidelines and handbooks. A special aspect of INTERACT is the peer-to-peer learning approach, meaning that training and contents are largely provided by practitioners from Member States, enhancing open dialogue and stimulating uptake of knowledge.

Network of Energy and Managing Authorities (EMA)[17]. The EMA aims to help Member States make the best possible use of Cohesion Policy funding to promote energy efficiency, renewable energy and smart energy infrastructure, as well as energy-related research and innovation. It has been set up by the Commission in 2015 and brings together representatives of national energy authorities with representatives of Cohesion Policy Managing Authorities dealing with energy. Meeting twice a year, the network acts as an informal platform for the exchange of information, sharing of good practices, experiences and latest developments. Working groups are also convened to work on specific issues, where needed and relevant.

S3 Platform. The S3 Platform assists EU countries and regions to develop, implement and review their Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3). Established in 2011, the S3 Platform provides information, methodologies, expertise and advice to national and regional policy makers, promotes mutual learning, trans-national co-operation and contributes to academic debates around the concept of smart specialisation. It produces methodological guidance for the use of ESIF Implementing bodies such as the "Guide on Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3 Guide)" and "Enabling synergies between ESIF, Horizon 2020 and other research, innovation and competitiveness-related Union Programmes".

4.3 *Proposal for training programmes*

The analyses performed have shown the availability on the market of an offer composed of vocational training, master course and knowledge sharing networks and platforms that are relevant to the contents of the proposed Blueprint for "Training programmes on Coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020"

16 http://www.interact-eu.net/

17 https://ec.europa.eu/energy/en/events/meeting-european-network-energy-and-managing-authorities-cohesion-policy-2014-2020

As highlighted in Chapter 2 and in the perspective of implementation of the Competency Framework, access to training courses and knowledge is to be considered as an integral process of the competencies development process of both individuals and organisations, leading to progressively higher levels of administrative capacity in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF.
In this perspective, the existing market is characterized by the following aspects:

- Partial overlap of contents of training modules organised by different market providers. This implies that in order to develop the set of competencies included in a Blueprint training modules participants may have to attend more than one vocational training course, incurring consequently higher costs in terms of time spent and money.
- Learning outcomes are not standardized or not specified. The risk is that participants may not achieve the expected learning outcome or that the curriculum of the training programme is too complex for their current level of proficiency.
- Learning methods that may not be the most appropriate to the expected learning outcome as the latter is not specified.
- Timing of organisation is not coordinated, thus not allowing for an effective planning of training attendance.
- Limited networking opportunities. Since courses are open to practitioners from different economic sectors or even perspective practitioners, there are limited opportunities for these courses to lead to the development of informal cross-institutional and cross-country networks of ERDF and CF practitioners. Courses in which participants meet their peers from different authorities implementing ERDF and CF would be very beneficial for the exchange of experience on the specifics of the funds.
- Master programmes are not the most relevant option for the development of operational competencies.

All these elements limit the possibility for ERDF and CF authorities to plan a competency development path of employees and organisations, adequate to address the competency gaps in an efficient and effective manner.

Taking into account the above elements it is recommended that DG REGIO and Member States take action for the development and organisation of the four training programmes identified in the Blueprint:

- The "***Knowledge development***" training programme should be organised by DG REGIO, as a single European programme aimed at providing a basic understanding of all competencies to all employees of ERDF and CF authorities in any job role. This programme should be delivered through Web-Based Learning, translated in the official Languages of the EU, ensuring harmonization of contents and standards across Member States and the achievement of economies of scale.
- The "***Skills and capabilities development***" training programme should be organised centrally in each Member State by ESIF authorities. It will aim at equipping participants of ERDF and CF authorities in any job role, with the ability to apply relevant skills and the capability of making decisions in relation to all competencies, through interactive learning methods.
- The "***High level experts master class***" should be organised either by DG REGIO as a single European programme or by Member States authorities, with the purpose of equipping subject matter experts with an advanced learning outcome in relation to a limited set complex operational competencies and creating informal competency networks either at national or transnational level.
- The "***Decision makers master class***" should be organised by either by DG REGIO as a single European programme or by Member States authorities, with the purpose of equipping decision makers with an advanced learning outcome in relation to professional and management competencies required in the context of complex ESIF

systems and creating informal competency networks either at national or transnational level.

4.4 *Delivery of the Blue print training modules*

The learning needs are in most cases on practical issues directly related to the specifics of ERDF and CF. Ideally training courses would be delivered by experts with practical experience in the field, and for the higher proficiency levels, exchange of experience among peers.

As a result, full academic programmes are considered to be less relevant to increase the knowledge and capabilities of the staff involved in ERDF and CF as academic curricula have generally a theoretical and less practical scope.

Furthermore the development of the academic curricula normally takes quite some time, while the ESIF management and implementation mechanisms might change for the next programming period. This is also confirmed by the feedback from the field.

Box 1: Feedback from fieldwork on academic offer

During the interviews in Member States most institutional stakeholders agreed that Academic Master programmes are appropriate for the provision of the general background for the functioning of the EU policies. However they are considered not to be the main tool for the development of operational competencies needed for ERDF and CF implementation and management.

Due to their academic and thus general nature the knowledge delivered is not specific enough for fulfilling ERDF and CF management functions. The institutions in Member States have recognized that regardless of the academic education background, the best way for acquiring the strong operational competencies for ERDF and CF management is on-the-job training and specific training modules.

No specific needs were identified for ERDF and CF management related academic programmes. However it was recognized that EU law, Public Administration and European Studies related programs provide a relevant background for the building up of operational competencies. The ERDF and CF institutions recognize economic and law academic backgrounds as the most universal and appropriate for the development of a professional career in ERDF and CF management. Next to this, specific thematic knowledge is needed for some specific tasks (e.g. project appraisal), which would require employees with e.g. engineering science backgrounds.

5 Cross comparison of models for managing the funds and competency based good practices

This chapter presents the results of the cross-comparison of different approaches and models for managing the funds across the eight Member States covered by this study. This cross comparison was an important base for the Competency Framework development, as it provided evidence of the differentiation in distribution of tasks of institutions.

The cross-comparison starts from the overall architecture of ERDF and CF management and implementation systems. It continues with the organisation of structures for the different authorities, i.e. Coordinating Bodies, Managing Authorities, Certifying Authorities, Audit Authorities and Intermediate Bodies. The chapter concludes with the presentation of competency based good practice approaches.

5.1 *Overall system architecture*

In the period 2014-2020 **Croatia** implements a single operational programme co-funded by the ERDF and CF and participates in ETC programmes. The system is characterized by the existence of a Coordinating Body and one Managing Authority, a single Certifying Authority and a single Audit Authority that are all located in central ministries. Next to this, there are Intermediate Bodies at central level.

In **Lithuania** there is a single multi-funded operational programme (ERDF, CF, ESF) and no Coordinating Body as there is only one programme. Lithuania has a single Managing Authority, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority and the implementation is delegated to Intermediate Bodies.

Romania implements 4 OPs funded by the ERDF and/or CF and 2 ERDF ETC programmes through a Coordinating Body, Managing Authorities which are concentrated in two Ministries, and a single Certifying Authority. There is a central Audit Authority, which has 8 regional offices. The implementation of specific priority axes is delegated to Intermediate Bodies, of which 6 are on national level and 2 on regional level.

The situation is quite different in **Italy**, where Cohesion policy is delivered by a combination of national and regional mono-fund and multi-fund operational programmes, i.e. 11 national programmes co-financed by ERDF and/or ESF and regional programmes for the 21 regions and autonomous provinces, separate for the two funds ERDF and ESF, with the exception of 3 regions which have a single multi-fund Programme.

The implementation structures consist of a Coordinating Body set up at central level and ESIF Authorities and Intermediate Bodies established both at national and local level, and responsible for the implementation of specific programme priorities.

Also in **Poland** operational programmes are implemented both at national and regional level, more specifically 5 national programmes co-financed by the ERDF and/or CF and 16 regional multi-fund OPs co-financed by ERDF and ESF. A Coordinating Body is established at national level, Managing Authorities and Certifying Authorities are established at both national and regional level for each national or regional programme respectively, while there is a single Audit Authority. In implementation both Intermediate Bodies and Implementing Authorities are used.

In **Germany** ERDF implementation takes place exclusively at state level (Länder) through 15 mono-fund operational programmes and a single multi-fund OP. A Coordinating Body is established at central level and Managing Authorities, supported by Intermediate Bodies, Certifying Authorities and Audit Authorities are established at Länder level.

In **Spain** there are 3 national OPs co-financed by the ERDF and 19 regional ERDF OPs, one for each region. Programme coordination and implementation are ensured through a Coordinating Body, a single Managing Authority at central level responsible for all programmes, Intermediate Bodies, a single Certifying Authority and Audit Authority with regional presence.

In 2014-2020 **Sweden** manages ten operational programmes involving ERDF; eight regional ERDF programmes, one national ERDF programme and one national multi-fund programme on Community Led Local Development financed by two funds (ERDF and ESF).

Coordination is established at Central Level and there are 3 Managing Authorities, one for the CLLD Programme, one for the ESF programme and one for all the national and regional ERDF OPs. The latter is also Certifying Authority for the respective programmes and has no Intermediate Bodies. Audit Authority functions are centralized at national level.

Table 5: Overview of System Architecture in Member States

	OPs	CB	MA		IB		CA		AA	
			National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional
Croatia	1 National	1 Ministry	1 Ministry	-	Ministries Agencies	-	1 Ministry – separate from MA		1 Agency	
Lithuania	1 National	-	1 Ministry	-	Ministries Agencies	-	1 Ministry – same as MA		1 National Audit Office	
Italy	11 National 21 Regional	1 Agency under Government	6 Ministries	21 Regional Governments	Ministries	Local Public Administration	1 Ministry – same as MA	21 Regional Governments – same as MA	1 Ministry	21 Regional Governments
Romania	4 National	1 Ministry	2 Ministries	-	Ministries	Regional Agencies	1 Ministry – separate from MA		1 Court of Accounts	
Poland	5 National 16 Regional	1 Ministry	1 Ministry	16 Regional Governments	Ministries Agencies	Public entities at regional level	1 Ministry – same as MA		1 General Inspector of Treasury Control	
Germany	15 Regional	1 Government	-	15 Regional Governments	-	Regional Development Banks (mainly)	1 Ministry – same as MA	15 Regional Governments – same as MA		✓
Spain	3 National 19 Regional	1 Ministry	1 Ministry	-	Ministries	Local Public Administration	1 Ministry – separate from MA		1 Government Controller's Office	
Sweden	2 National 8 Regional	-	2 Agencies under 2 Ministries	-	-	-	1 Ministry for ERDF		1 Swedish Financial Management Authority	

5.2 *Coordinating Bodies*

In **Croatia** the Coordinating Body is the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, which is also Managing Authority of the national CF/ERDF programme and Intermediate Body for different priority areas of the same programme. These functions are segregated in two different Directorates, i.e. the Directorate for strategic planning, coordination of EU funds and international programmes, responsible for coordinating the programming process, planning and monitoring, on the level of Partnership Agreement and all operational programmes, and the Directorate for implementation of operational programmes and international instruments, responsible for management and implementation of OPs and the set-up of management and control systems.

In **Lithuania** there is no Coordinating Body established, as there is only one OP.

In **Romania** the Coordinating Body (CB) is the Ministry of European Funds, a structure dedicated to the coordination of the implementation system.

This approach is expected to produce benefits in terms of increased methodological and procedural coordination, coordination of ESIF public procurement (legislative coordination, help desk for beneficiaries, standard documentation and guidelines on public procurement), proper monitoring and evaluation of programing and implementation documents and ensuring a unitary approach on cases regarding financial correction and irregularities. The Ministry is also carrying out MA functions for 3 OPs co-financed by ERDF/CF.

In **Italy,** the Agency for Territorial Cohesion has been established under the Presidency of the Council of Ministers as Coordinating Body. It ensures supervision, coordination, efficient and effective management and control of ESIF programmes at national and regional level by means of verification of the implementation of interventions; verification of situations relating to EC interruption and suspension of payments; support to the administrations of the operational programmes; standardization of the process of data collection through a national monitoring system; adequacy of information and publicity measures and evaluation.

Poland ensures a strong coordination of implementation of national and regional operational programmes through the Ministry of Economic Development acting as Coordinating Body. The Coordinating Body ensures efficient implementation of the Partnership Agreement, through a broad set of instruments that include binding guidelines and a common approach on indicators. The main entity supporting the process is the Partnership Agreement Coordination Committee, composed of representatives from national and regional governments, making key decisions related to the Partnership Agreement implementation.

In particular, the coordinated planning of ESIF resources between the national and central level is ensured trough territorial contracts, which are strategic coordination tools aimed at ensuring the effective coordination of interventions both in terms of strategic development objectives and of the financial resources including ESIF. The contracts are signed between the Council of Ministers, represented by the Ministry of Economic Development and the authorities of a given voivodeship (structures representing the national government at regional level) responsible for the implementation of a regional programme.

In **Germany**, the Coordinating Body is the German Federal Government represented by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, responsible for preparation and

amendment of the Partnership Agreement and the coordination of ESIF policy at national level. It does not have any responsibility for programme implementation at Länder level.
There is an Administrative Agreement (Verwaltungsvereinbarung) between the national coordinator and all 16 Länder on the division of the respective tasks and responsibilities. The national coordinator does not develop "imperative" instructions and methodologies. Instead, it helps to ensure a consistent approach of implementation by facilitating common interpretation of political and legal requirements and an exchange of best practices. The Coordinating Body assists the Länder in negotiating the funds among them, but each Land negotiates the programmes with the EC and manages implementation independently.

In Spain the Coordinating Body is the Directorate General of Community funds hosted by the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration. It has responsibilities for the monitoring, evaluation and coordination of the management of ESIF and especially of the ERDF, without prejudice to the powers and responsibilities assigned to other government entities.

In **Sweden** there is no Coordinating Body. The Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation has pursed the negotiations with the EU and bears an overall responsibility for the work but all implementation and follow-up is performed by the ERDF Managing Authority, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket).

5.3 *Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies*

In **Croatia** the Ministry of Regional Development (MRDEUF) is the Managing Authority for the OP Competitiveness and Cohesion financed by ERDF and CF. The main change and challenge for this institution is represented by the increased responsibility for the implementation of one operational programme that results from the concentration of 3 operational programmes implemented by different institutions in the period 2007-2013 (OP Transport, OP Environment, OP Regional Competitiveness). This requires the institution to become a focal point for an increased number of stakeholders and ensuring a clear division of responsibilities and flexibility in the delegation of functions. Stakeholders expect that the creation of one single MA compared to three in the former programming period, will contribute to stronger coordination and harmonized implementation.

Programme implementation is delegated to Intermediate Bodies, which have responsibilities at the level of Priority Axis or Investment Priority and are classified in IB1s and IB2s based on the tasks performed. Their total number has not significantly increased in comparison with 2007-2013: the Competitiveness and Cohesion OP has 9 IB1s (lines ministries) and 7 IB2 (lines ministries and Agencies).

The subdivision of tasks between IB1s and IB2 is provided in the Croatian Regulation on Management and Control Systems. IB1s are in charge mainly of monitoring implementation at programme level (e.g. develop selection criteria, manage risk at PA level) while IB2 are the main counterparts of beneficiaries (e.g. contracting, verification of reimbursement claims); both participate in the preparation of guidelines for applicants, selection process and monitor the implementation of projects, participate in Monitoring Committees and in the programming at OP and PA level.

In Lithuania the Ministry of Finance is the Managing Authority of the single operational programme 2014-2020. The functions of Managing Authority are performed by the EU structural assistance management department. Intermediate Bodies in Lithuania are structured differently, based on a hierarchy in the delegation of functions at two levels, i.e. from Managing Authority to Intermediate Bodies that are Line Ministries with responsibility for policy design, interventions planning and development of funding measures. Additionally, tasks are delegated to second level Intermediate Bodies, which are public Agencies responsible for supervision of projects implemented by final beneficiaries.

Romania has taken the strategic decision to concentrate Managing Authorities in the institutions that were better performing during the 2007-2013 period, being respectively the Ministry of European Funds (acting also as Coordinating Body) responsible for 3 ERDF/CF programmes and the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration responsible for 1 ERDF programme.

Implementation of these programmes is delegated to Intermediate Bodies that are line ministries or their subordinated structures in the case of programmes managed by the Ministry of European Funds. Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are Intermediate Bodies for the Regional Operational Programme managed by the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration.

RDAs are non-profit organisations in which local administrations participate, and which are delegated all tasks related to organisation and management of programme implementation at regional level, with the exception of payments that they cannot perform due to their legal status.

The MA of the ERDF regional operational programme considers the implementation via RDAs to be a good practice, given their knowledge of local needs and credibility among regional stakeholders. At the same time there is a need for those institutions to further strengthen their administrative culture and accountability.

In **Italy** the MAs of national programmes are located in national line ministries, while those of regional programmes are generally established within regional governments, in structures responsible for the implementation of broader regional policies (e.g. Directorates for Economic Development, Competitiveness and Innovation) but there are also cases of structures dealing exclusively with Cohesion Policy.

The level of delegation to Intermediate Bodies was not yet explicitly defined at the time of data collection for this study, as the description of management and control systems were not yet available. However, in the 2007-2013 programming period, regional Managing Authorities have used a single level of delegation to Intermediate Bodies that most frequently are Regional Agencies, NUTS3 level local authorities (Provinces), but there were also measures implemented directly by Directorates of the Regional Governments. There are also cases of line Ministries appointed as Intermediate Bodies of national operational programmes. Technical Assistance to programme implementation is widely used in Italy both in national and regional programmes.

In Poland the MAs of national programmes are located in the Ministry of Economic Development, while MAs of regional programmes are established in the Marshal Offices (representatives of the local governments).. In both cases MAs delegate functions to IBs, which vary in terms of number and type across programmes.

For national OPs the IBs are in most cases Ministries and public bodies with consolidated experience in the implementation of European projects (e.g. Polish Agency for Enterprise Development, Centre for EU transport projects, National Research and Development Centre). Under some of the national OPs (e.g. Infrastructure and Environment, Intelligent Development), implementation tasks such as project selection, project monitoring and verifications are further delegated by IBs to Implementing Authorities. Implementing Authorities include, among others, public agencies (e.g. Polish Agency for Enterprise

Development), research institutes (e.g. Oil and Gas Institute) and the National Development Bank.

In the case of Regional OPs, IBs are established at regional level, within institutions such as metropolitan or functional area associations, enterprise centres, development agencies and labour offices.

In **Germany** ERDF programmes are implemented exclusively at federal state level (Länder) and Managing Authority functions are assigned to the Länder, where management and implementation arrangements are diversified.

Programme implementation has traditionally made extensive use of delegation to Intermediate Bodies, but in the period 2014-2020 there has been a reduction in the number of Intermediate Bodies based on lessons learned from the period 2007-2013. With the reduction in the number of Intermediate Bodies, most tasks are concentrated in Regional Development Banks (see the case study below), with the list of delegated tasks differing in each Länder.

There are also Intermediate Bodies that are line ministries, that cooperate with the Managing Authority in the development of implementation arrangements like funding guidelines ("Richtlinien") and selection criteria and that carry out jointly with the Managing Authorities information and publicity tasks and communication with beneficiaries.

Case Study - ERDF management in Germany via Regional Development Banks
In Germany Regional Development Banks (Investitionsbanken, Förderbanken, Wirtschafts-und Infrastrukturbanken etc.) are institutions established under public law with legal capacity[18] (rechtsfähige Anstalten des öffentlichen Rechts).

They are generally responsible for the evaluation and selection of projects funded by the ERDF (and ESF), on-the-spot verifications of operations, administrative verifications of reimbursement requests of beneficiaries, the functioning of systems, legality, regularity of transactions and sound financial management. In most cases, they are also responsible for collecting and storing monitoring data.

This implies that they are in fact Intermediate Bodies carrying out delegated functions of the respective Managing Authority. Due to the rigidity of the German Civil Servant Laws they have greater flexibility in terms of selecting, retaining and developing employees than Management Authorities (usually located in the supreme authorities of the Land – Ministries – and thus subject to the Civil Servant Law).

They are organised as banks with a separation of front (Markt) and back office (Marktfolge) right up to executive level. This implies very high standards in risk management and anti-fraud-management. Due to their size (compared to Managing Authorities and other Intermediate Bodies) and the high number of Funding Guidelines managed, very strong processes have been implemented by using internal handbooks and guidance that help prevent mistakes and increase work effectiveness and efficiency.

Regional Development Banks have been responsible for the professionalization of ERDF

18 See http://www.ib-sh.de/ibsh/investitionsbanken/ for an overview of regional development banks in the German Länder.

(and ESF) funding in Germany in the previous Programming Periods. Within the Association of German Public Banks (VÖB)[19] there are horizontal Working Groups on ESIF-related topics such as financial instruments, simplified cost options etc.
Some Regional Development Banks have also contributed to the preparation and amendment of the operational programmes, the development and improvement of management and control systems, Funding Guidelines, procedures and methodologies for managing ERDF (and ESF) support and, appropriate selection procedures and criteria.

In Spain there is a single Managing Authority at central level, the Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, with responsibility for all national and regional operational programmes with the exception of ETC ones. The existence of an MA at national level guarantees strategic functions of monitoring and communication with the EC and provides formal coordination of OPs, while most of the implementation tasks are delegated to IBs, coherently with the decentralised administrative system of Spain.

Spain has traditionally made use of an extensive number of Intermediate Bodies, which have been substantially reduced in terms of number for the 2014-2020 period. There are IBs that are ministries and other type of public organisations as autonomous bodies that report to ministries or public companies, and regional departments or regional public organisations or autonomous bodies, as well as local entities.

In practice, there are IBs directly nominated by the Managing Authority and established at OP level, as well as a second level of collaboration bodies mainly at regional level that participate in the execution of ERDF acting as "Second level IBs" but without a formal appointment in this sense. This construction is chosen according to the administrative set, the policies and investment decisions are their sole responsibility, and as a consequence they need to be involved in investment decisions relating to their territory. The main coordination tool between MA and IBs is the Forum of Economy and Regional Politics.

Case Study - Intermediate Bodies – Spain
For the period 2014-2020, Spain has undertaken a reduction in the number of Intermediate Bodies. In the 2007-2013 programming period there were around 180 IBs in all OPs. National authorities were IBs in all regional and national OPs, and regional authorities were IBs in national OPs. The main problem in this system was that one IB stopped functioning and as a result, through its involvement in many OPs, led to the suspension of all OPs.

Efforts to simplify the process have been carried out. For the 2014-2020 programming period a new structure is being designed in which regional authorities are IBs in regional OPs only and national authorities are IBs in national OPs. The number of IBs has been reduced to 40 for all OPs. This means that most of the Regional OPs will have one or exceptionally maximum three IBs.

The challenge is to design broader IBs with the capacity to coordinate institutions that were IBs in the previous period and that need to play an official role in investment decisions, taking into account their mandate towards the geographical area they govern.

19 See http://www.voeb.de/de/verband/english for a short description of VÖB.

These organisations are called "managing bodies" as they are involved in ERDF implementation without being nominated and without formal responsibility. Those organisations have the competence of main public policies according to the administrative set up in the country. With the new system, those institutions will no longer have direct contact with the MA and will have to address communications to a new structure within the IB. organisation

In **Sweden**, the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket) established under the Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation is the MA for one national and 8 regional programmes funded by the ERDF, implemented with the support of 8 regional offices.

There are no Intermediate Bodies and the national programme is managed primarily in Stockholm, while the main tasks for the implementation of the regional programmes are performed by the staff in the regional offices that are responsible for information and publicity, lunching of the calls, selection process, and the verification of payment claims and on the spot checks. The CLLD Programme is implemented by the Swedish Board of Agriculture, the Government Agency and expert authority in matters of agri-food policy, and the national ESF programme is managed by the ESF Council.

Case study - New organisation of the ERDF Managing Authority in Sweden
In 2014 the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth established a new organisation that allows for an integrated approach to economic and regional development in Sweden, in which the MA for ERDF has been integrated.

As a result, national and European programmes are now linked more closely and relevant expertise within the Agency can be used more efficiently. This approach gives added value to regional dialogues and increases the interaction between the allocation of ERDF and other regional development support.

This system is reflected in an internal organisation where people with different roles work together on each project, which leads to knowledge sharing between people working on the different stages of the project lifecycle. This model allows individuals to see the whole process and picture of ERDF project implementation.

5.4 *Certifying Authority*

The Certifying Authorities are established in different ways in the countries where field work was performed. In some countries, there is a single Certifying Authorities at central level and established as a separate body than the MA; this is the case in:

- **Croatia:** the single Certifying Authority is established within the Ministry of Finance, Directorate for macroeconomic analysis, economy, financial system, EU and international financial relations, Sector for National Funds which has 3 services: 1) Service for Financial Management; 2) Service for Financial Control; 3) Service for Accounting and Monitoring of System of Financial Management and Control of pre-accession funds.
- **Romania:** the Certifying Authority is established within the Ministry of Finance and covers all programmes with the exception of those financed under ETC.
- **Spain:** the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration assumes functions of Certifying Authority for all national, multi-regional and regional operational programmes.

In other countries the Certifying Authority is a separate entity, but located in the same administration as the MA. This is the case in:

- **Italy,** Certifying Authorities are located in the same administrations that cover the role of Managing Authority and are functionally and hierarchically independent from Audit Authorities both for national and regional operational programmes.
- **Poland,** Managing Authorities have been also entrusted with certification of expenditure with separation of management and control from certification as a necessary condition to carry out certification tasks.
- **Germany,** Certifying Authorities are also established at regional level for each regional operational programme closely to the Managing Authority. In some Länder they cover only ERDF, in others they cover both ERDF and ESF.
- **Sweden,** there are three Certifying Authorities, organised within the same institutions having the role of Managing Authorities, respectively the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Stockholm offices), the ESF Council and the Swedish Board of Agriculture.
- **Lithuania,** the Certifying Authority is established within the same institution as the Managing Authority: the National Fund Department under the Ministry of Finance performs functions of single Certifying Authority for the 20014-2020 programme.

5.5 *Audit Authority*

In the countries studied, the Audit Authority function is organised in different ways. In most countries a single Audit Authority is established, covering all OPs. This is the case in:

- **Croatia**, the single Audit Authority is established within the Agency for the Audit of European Union Programmes Implementation System. The consolidation of Audit of all funds is considered a good practice by the Audit Authority.
- In **Poland** the role of Audit Authority for all national and regional Cohesion Policy programmes is entrusted to the General Inspector of Treasury Control that delivers its duties through one of the organisational units (departments) in the Ministry of Finance.
- In **Sweden** the National Audit Authority with responsibility for all programmes is the Swedish National Financial Management Authority.
- In **Lithuania** the role of Audit Authority for the single national Operational programme is entrusted to one of the departments of the National Audit Office of Lithuania.
- **Romania**, the single Audit Authority is an independent body established in the Romanian Court of Accounts and responsible for all ESIF, including the ETC programmes with Romanian Managing Authority; it ensures territorial presence through 8 Regional Offices.

Multiple Audit Authorities exist in Germany, Spain and Italy:

- In **Germany** Audit Authorities are established at the level of Länder and there is evidence of both delegation to independent functional units within Intermediate Bodies and outsourcing to the private sector. A Bund-Länder working group has been set-up to define a common audit strategy for all Länder.
- In **Spain** there is a the Central Audit Body organised within the Government Controller's Office (IGAE) of the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration, performing the Audit of national and regional programmes. The Audit Authority is established at central level and has branches in the 17 Autonomous Communities (regions) and two Autonomous Cities (Ceuta and Melilla) performing delegated functions.

  The Central Audit Body (IGAE) performs audits at national level and regional audit bodies at regional level. The capacity of the Central Audit Body to influence regional audits is limited, and it may lead to duplication of controls. However, a common action framework is set among all of them in order to approve common documents (procurement, guidance for system audits, etc.). Also, a Working group composed by IGAE and representatives of 5 CCAA is established at operational level.

- In **Italy,** according to the proposal of description of management and control systems annexed to the Partnership Agreement, the Audit Authorities of national operational programmes are organised within the Ministry of Economics and Finance, while in the case of regional programmes they may be established within the same regional administration, but in functionally and organisationally independent units.

The main deviations in tasks assigned to institutions, and thus in competencies needed, can be found in the division of tasks between Coordinating Bodies, Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies. Certifying Authorities may be placed in the same institutions as Managing Authorities, but as a separate unit their tasks are clearly defined. In the tasks of Audit Authorities there are no variations.

5.6 *Competency-based good practice approaches in Member States*

Next to the overview of how different Member States have organised their structures, an inventory has been made of competency-based good practices for the development of administrative capacity. The good practices, which have either been already implemented or are planned to be implemented in Member States, vary in terms of complexity and links with broader human resources strategies and scope of application within the ERDF and CF system.

Competency based approaches specific to the ERDF and CF have been developed in Lithuania by the Managing Authority for the use of all institutions involved in programme implementation and in Latvia by individual Intermediate bodies. Both approaches are correlated with the broader human resources policy and activities of staff recruitment, performance assessment, staff development and training. In Sweden, a Competency analysis has been carried out at the level of Managing Authority and used for the identification of competency gaps.

A Competency based approach has been used in Lithuania for the incorporation of new institutions in the ESIF management system, as well as in Sweden, in establishing cooperation with external ones.

In Poland, the issue of staff capacity has been treated in a structured manner since the previous programming period, and is formalized through a centralized planning process of human resource needs of all the institutions involved in implementation. In Italy, human resource capacity is addressed horizontally across programmes through the preparation of action plans that address the issue of competency development among other issues.

Knowledge sharing, both within institutions and across them, is also considered an important approach for the development of competencies. In Germany, it is addressed through the establishment of working groups and sub-working groups of Regional ESIF Institutions, in a French Region through cross-functional project based teams, in Spain through a permanent forum for the exchange of information between MAs and IBs and in Sweden through knowledge exchange meetings involving both managing institutions and beneficiaries.

Finally as a means for retaining competencies a large number of Member States have been paying salary top-ups and bonuses through the Technical Assistance budget.

The benefits from the adoption of the above approaches are the development of competencies at employee level, higher engagement and reduction of staff turnover, the learning and development process of institutions, provision of better quality services and higher levels of satisfaction of beneficiaries. The table below presents an overview of the good practices that are included in Annex 7.

Table 6: Good practices of competency based approaches in ESIF management and implementation systems

N.	Title	Country	Aspect of good practice	Benefits
1	Map of competencies and centralized trainings	Lithuania	Competency Framework for ESIF Institutions and its application in institutional learning and development	• Effective Learning and development process • Efficient centralized planning and organisation of trainings
2	Competency Framework and one-stop-shop for ERDF and CF beneficiaries	Latvia	Establishment of a one-stop shop for beneficiaries and development of the necessary capacity through a Competency Framework	• Development of human resources • Efficiency in the use of public financial resources • Increased satisfaction of beneficiaries
3	Competency analysis and development plans	Sweden	Competency analysis in order to identify gaps in competencies in the management of ERDF funds.	• Employee engagement • Strategic orientation of the institution
4	Competence centres and development of competencies of employees	Lithuania	Incorporation in the ESIF system of Competence Centres and internal development of competencies within existing institutions.	• Specialisation and building specific competencies within the system • Reduced need to engage external experts
5	Action Plan for Administrative Capacity Development	Poland	Action Plan defining the estimated demand for personnel in the institutions involved in the implementation of Cohesion Policy 2014–2020, recommended model for the employment structure	• Planning of human resource requirements • Identification of training needs of employees
6	Administrative Reinforcement Plans	Italy	Guidance documents identifying a set of actions aimed at the strengthening of administrative capacity, including specific measures on human resources and competencies development	• Consistency across Central and Regional Public Administrations in planning of Technical Assistance resources aimed at solving specific challenges faced by the Public Administration in a timely manner.
7	ESIF Sub-Working groups	Germany	Working groups and sub-working groups that help to develop several ERDF-specific competencies by	• Learning options for new employees • Networking • Consistent and coherent implementation

N.	Title	Country	Aspect of good practice	Benefits
			contributing to mutual learning of Institutions and facilitating networking	approach • Quality and efficiency of ERDF funding
8	Evidence based learning and networking meetings for regional growth	Sweden	Organisation of regular meetings between Authorities, stakeholders and potential beneficiaries of ESIF	• Increased awareness about ESIF among potential beneficiaries • Enhanced project generation skills • Increased accountability of stakeholders
9	Knowledge management, sharing and training	France	Establishment of project based collaborative teams	• Competency development at individual level • Organisational development • Increased satisfaction of employees
10	Fraud prevention activities and transparency	Sweden	Cooperation between MA and Swedish Economic Crime Authority on fraud issues	• Effective implementation through a new management and control system, which includes transparent audit trails and separation of functions • Proactive anti-corruption work covering crime, corruption and irregularities
11	Forum for MA and IB Coordination	Spain	Instrument for regular coordination and exchange of information between MA and IBs	• Increased competencies of civil servants based on exchanges with peers from different Regions • Improved system efficiency, effectiveness and quality of implementation at OP level
12	Co-financing bonuses and top-ups through TA	Some MS, e.g. Poland	Use of top-ups and bonuses financed under Technical Assistance	• Decrease of staff turnover rate • Knowledge and experience remain in the organisation and can be further deepened.

6 Recommendations

6.1 *Recommendations for the Commission*

6.1.1 Roadmap

In order to ensure the wide use of the Competency Framework and accompanying Self-Assessment Tool, there is a need for advertising and promoting the purpose, relevance and practical use of the two instruments. The tool should be promoted as an instrument that adds to the human resources instruments available within institutions and is for internal use only and not for any reporting purposes to third parties.

Closely related to the competency Self-Assessment Tool and its outcomes, is the Blueprint for Training, which needs further promotion and implementation. For this purpose, it is recommended to draft and implement a communication strategy that highlights how the deliverables of this project can be used for their benefit.

It is recommended to create materials to promote the Competency Framework, Self-Assessment Tool and training as an important human resources instrument, which can have the form of a brochure, information seminars or webcasts/instruction videos. In addition, the further potential integration with ESF (as well as with EAFRD and EMFF) could be assessed. In order to ensure that all employees can use the Self-Assessment Tool, it is recommended to translate the tool in the different EU Member State languages.

6.1.2 Consider developing a web-based tool

The Self-Assessment Tool is based on Excel with complicated macros behind it. Although the tool is assessed to be user friendly by the persons who have tested it, it is recommended to transform the tool to a web-based tool or within a tailored programme for self-assessments.

As the tool has a lot of macros, there is a chance that the macros become unstable in the long run, especially when organisations start adapting it to their own needs. Furthermore, the proper working of the tool requires specific IT system set ups, which might differ across the institutions and there might be issues of non-compliance.

6.1.3 Help desk and update

Experience with tools shows that users will have questions or issues with the use of the tool. Especially in case of the need for adding competencies or other modifications that can be made within the Self-Assessment Tool by the authorities, there might be a need for assistance.

Hence, it is recommended to establish a helpdesk function for users. This helpdesk will also allow for registering feedback on the use of the tool and suggestions for possible changes to be made. Hence, it is recommended to review the Self-Assessment Tool after a year in order to upgrade it to the needs that appear when the tool is used by a wider group of organisations and people.

6.1.4 Blueprint for Training Programmes

It is recommended to use the Blueprint for "Training programmes on coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020" for organizing a Web-Based Learning Programme for "Knowledge development" aimed at providing a basic understanding of all competencies required for ERDF and CF management to employees of all authorities and in any job role. The Commission may also consider the organization of a "High level experts master class" and "Decision makers master class" aimed at developing advanced learning outcomes and informal competency networks at transnational level.

6.2 *Recommendations for Member States*

6.2.1 Competency based approaches in ESIF management and implementation systems

There are a number of competency based approaches to the strengthening of administrative capacity that may be considered by Member States authorities along with the implementation of the Competency Framework:

- **Integration of structures**: formally incorporating in the ESIF implementation system national institutions with competencies on specific topics (e.g. investment planning in sectors relevant to the Thematic Objectives, State Aid) that may provide methodological assistance and advice to ESIF authorities, beneficiaries and applicants. This allows for the rapid uptake of specific competencies in the system, which may be gradually transferred to existing institutions via knowledge sharing.
- **Creation of specialized structures**: creation of structures focused on specific phases of the programme lifecycle (e.g. one stop-shop for beneficiaries) where staff develop specialized competencies. By means of specialization higher level of effectiveness, efficiency and quality in service delivery can be ensured.
- **Inter-institutional cooperation agreements**: formal agreements with national institutions with competencies on specific topics (e.g. horizontal issues, fight against fraud and corruption) to ensure consistency in strategic direction and sound methodology.
- **Human resource planning**: in the preparation phase of a new programming period or when performing substantial financial reallocations, authorities should analyse the impact of reallocations on human resources requirements in terms of number, competencies and training needs. This can be done by analysing quantitative historic data and relying on the expert opinion of system stakeholders.

  Planning of TA: a detailed planning of the use of TA for the purpose of strengthening human resources capacity should be made in an early stage of programming. It should be based on an assessment of the existing situation, and identification of a set of actions (including competency development), responsibilities and deadlines for their implementation. Authorities should also continue using TA resources to finance staff costs as well as bonuses and top-ups when allowed by national legislation. This will ensure that sufficient resources are available for human resources development activities and that they are used in a strategic and coordinated manner.
- **Working groups:** creation of formal and informal working groups aimed at the development and transfer of competencies between authorities at different levels (e.g. Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies), similar authorities (e.g. Managing Authorities), similar functions (e.g. financial controllers) or involving beneficiaries. This allows for the development of harmonized approaches across Programmes or similar institutions and the transfer of knowledge among individuals.
- **Project teams**: promote the establishment of project teams of civil servants combining different competencies for the delivery of specific tasks. This favours the uptake of new competencies and the engagement of work force.

6.2.2 Implementation of the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool within the authorities

It is recommended to the relevant institutions to use the Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool as an instrument that feeds into the human resources strategies, relating to recruitment and training plans. The Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool provide for an extensive coverage of competencies needed, which can be tailored to the needs of the organisation. By using the Self-Assessment Tool on a yearly basis, it is possible to assess the competency developments of individual employees and of entire organisations, which will feed into yearly personal development plans, as well as the updates of the human resources training and recruitment plans. This will lead to enhanced capacity to implement the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund in an effective and efficient way. Preferably, the timing of the self-assessment will be disconnected from the periodical appraisal, to ensure that the self-assessment is not be influenced by strategic behaviour towards the appraisal discussion.

6.2.3 Blueprint for Training Programmes

Member States are recommended to use the Blueprint for “Training programmes on coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020” for organizing a “Skills and capabilities development” programme based on interactive learning methods aimed at equipping participants of ERDF and CF authorities in any job role, with the ability to apply relevant skills and enhanced decision making skills. Member States may also consider the organization of a “High level experts master class” and “Decision makers master class” aimed at developing advanced learning outcomes and informal competency networks at national level.

6.2.4 Knowledge sharing at Institution level

The implementation of a web-based Competency Framework could be considered as one of the components of a structured approach to Knowledge Management at institutional level.

In the context of ESIF 2014-2020, this is aimed at the better and full exploitation of the vast knowledge of ESIF Authorities in the field of Regional Policy leading to higher levels of administrative capacity, by leveraging on both the explicit and implicit existing knowledge.

The Competency Framework Self-Assessment Tool and learning options could be complemented with a map of staff's competencies that allows the user to identify the required knowledge, skills and capabilities within institutions, social media and wikis to stimulate networking and communication among staff.

This is expected to improve human resources capacity in terms of increased motivation; competence development; employee involvement, improved teamwork, shorter boarding time and increased speed of organisational learning.

Additionally, the reorganisation of all explicit knowledge into a central platform, supported by e.g. SharePoint or a wiki, and state of the art search engine technologies will increase efficiency in delivery by reducing the time spent in searching for information, collection of fragmented and incomplete knowledge needed for the completion of work, reduction of time spent on meetings, dealing with e-mails and avoiding situations where information (e.g. reports) needs to be constantly re-built from scratch and re-inventing the wheel.

Annex 1: Literature consulted

Legislative framework for ERDF and CF:

- Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006.
- Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal.
- Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006.
- Regulation (EU) No 1302/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 amending Regulation (EC) No 1082/2006 on European grouping of territorial cooperation (EGTC) as regards the clarification, simplification and improvement of the establishment and functioning of such groupings.
- Commission Staff Working document (2014): Best practices as regards implementation of the partnership principle in the European Structural and Investment Funds' programmes Accompanying the document Commission Delegated Regulation on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment funds {C(2013) 9651 final}.
- Commission delegated Regulation (EU) No 480/2014 of 3 March 2014 supplementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 288/2014 of 25 February 2014 laying down rules pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund with regard to the model for operational programmes under the Investment for growth and jobs goal and pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal with regard to the model for cooperation programmes under the European territorial cooperation goal.
- Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) No 184/2014 of 25 February 2014 laying down pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, the terms and conditions applicable to the electronic data exchange system between

Member States and the Commission and adopting pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on specific provisions for the support from the European Regional Development Fund to the European territorial cooperation goal, the nomenclature of the categories of intervention for support from the European Regional Development Fund under the European territorial cooperation goal.

- REGULATION (EU) No 1011/2014 of 22 September 2014 laying down detailed rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards the models for submission of certain information to the Commission and the detailed rules concerning the exchanges of information between beneficiaries and managing authorities, certifying authorities, audit authorities and intermediate bodies.
- REGULATION (EU) No 964/2014 of 11 September 2014 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards standard terms and conditions for financial instruments.
- REGULATION (EU) No 821/2014 of 28 July 2014 laying down rules for the application of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards detailed arrangements for the transfer and management of programme contributions, the reporting on financial instruments, technical characteristics of information and communication measures for operations and the system to record and store data.
- REGULATION (EU) No 215/2014 of 7 March 2014 laying down rules for implementing Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund with regard to methodologies for climate change support, the determination of milestones and targets in the performance framework and the nomenclature of categories of intervention for the European Structural and Investment Funds.
- Implementing acts 2014-2020: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/implementing/index_en.cfm
- Delegated acts 2014-2020: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/delegated/index_en.cfm
- The Programming Period 2014-2020: Guidance document on Monitoring and Evaluation – European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund – Concepts and Recommendations: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/2014/working/wd_2014_en.pdf
- Guidance Fiche on Performance Framework and reserve in 2014-2020. Final Version: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/pdf/guidance_performance_framework.pdf
- Implementation Guidance 2014-2020: e-Cohesion: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/implementation_ecohesion.pdf
- Guidance on common methodology for the assessment of management and control systems in the Member States (2007-2013 programming period): http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/archive/conferences/manauth/doc/guidancenote_en.pdf
- Guidance issued by DG REGIO: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/guidelines/index_en.cfm
- Guidance for Member States on designation procedure: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_ms_designation_en.pdf

- Guidance for the Commission and Member States on a common methodology for the assessment of management and control systems in the Member States: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_mcs_assessment_en.pdf

National strategic documents:

- Partnership agreements (http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/agreements/index_en.htm)
- National and Regional Operational programmes for 2014-2020 (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/country/prordn/index_en.cfm).
- EU Regional Policy's Cohesion Policy factsheets: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/brochures/index_en.cfm#2
- Measuring performance: country factsheets: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/information/brochures/pages/country2012/index_en.cfm

National legal acts:

- Distribution of roles and responsibilities among institutions responsible for managing ERDF and CF.
- Rules and procedures for funding, management and implementation of projects and programmes from ERDF and CF.
- Competency Frameworks that are applicable for institutions managing ERDF and CF.
- The Republic of Lithuania Government resolution of 4th of June 2014 Nr. 528

Reports and studies related to the management of ERDF and CF:

- Measuring the impact of changing regulatory requirements to administrative cost and administrative burden of managing EU Structural Funds (ERDF and Cohesion Funds): http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/measuring/measuring_impact_report.pdf
- Administrative of demand and supply in administrative capacity to manage European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds and explore interest in a new staff exchange instrument called "common expert exchange system" (cees). FWC 20-CE0467851/0065 – Final Report (2014)
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- The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (example from Ireland): http://www.nqai.ie/interdev_eqf.html
- Mapping Digital Competence: Towards a Conceptual Understanding: http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC67075_TN.pdf

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- InWEnt Capacity Building – Municipal and Regional Economic Promotion and Regional Management in South-Eastern Europe (page 183 of the attached document) (http://www.value-chains.org/dyn/bds/docs/607/gtz%20lred%20southeasteurope%2006.pdf)
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- EU Customs Competency Framework (including all files available for download)
- http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/eu_training/competency/index_en.htm

Annex 2: List of Interviewees and participants of focus groups

Type of Authority	Interviewee
EC	
DG REGIO	• Pawel Olechnowicz, DG Regio (Poland) • Arturo Polese, DG Regio (Romania) • Claude Tournier, DG Regio (Germany) • Nathalie Verschelde, DG Regio (ETC)
EU level	
	• Philipp Schwartz, INTERACT • Baiba Liepa, INTERACT
Spain	
Intermediate body, School for Industrial Organisation EOI	• Miguel Sánchez Galindo - Director of Innovation, Entrepreneurs and SMEs • Carmen Ruiz Perez - ESF and ERDF specialist
Intermediate body, City of Madrid	• Javier Martin Nieto - General Deputy Director of European Funds • Staff - General Coordination Services and European Funds
Part of an Intermediate Body 2014-2020, General Secretariat for Planning of Scientific and Technologic Infrastructure	• Manuel Varela Conde - Deputy Director of Planning of Scientific and Technologic Infrastructure • Ana María Aricha Yanguas - Section Manager
Managing Authority Ministry of Finance and Public Administrations, Sub-Directorate General of Programming and Evaluation	• María Muñoz Martinez – Advis • Eduardo Pallaró – Evaluator
Croatia	
Ministry of Regional Development and Coordination of EU Funds	• Helga Bubanović Devčić, Assistant Minister (Head of Directorate for management of OPs); • Tatjana Borovina, Head of Service for Set-up and Improvement of the System; • Tatjana Perković, Head of Service for Horizontal Issues
Ministry of Finance, Certifying Authority (National Fund)	• Nada Zrinušić, Head of Service for Accounting and Monitoring of Financial Management and Control System of pre-accession funds • Ivana Varga, Head of Service for Finance Control
Agency for the Audit of European Union Programmes	• Neven Šprlje, Director • Marin Stegić, Deputy Director • Biserka Šerbinek Milinković, Head of Department for the Audit of IPA programme • Marina Mandac, Senior Auditor

Type of Authority	Interviewee
Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts (MEC), Intermediate Body level 1 for the OP Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014-2020	• Suzana Vračević, Head of Service for Contracting and Financing of EU Projects. • Neven Kos, Head of Sector for EU Programmes and Projects • Mira Medić, Head of Independent Sector for EU • Theodor Klobučar, Head of Service for Coordination of Ops • Vedrana Aužina, Head of Service for EU projects • Karla Međurečan, Senior Adviser in the Service for Coordination of OPs
Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Intermediate Body	• Iva Medvešek, coordinator of national contact points for Horizon 2020 • Gabrijela Herceg Sarajlić, Head of Sector for international cooperation, programmes and projects of the EU • Darija Skoko, Head of Service for EU programmes and projects • Ana Varjačić, Head of Department for preparation and implementation of EU projects; • Ana Bošković, Head of Department for contracting.
Agency for Croatian Waters, Intermediate Body level 2 for the OP Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014-2020	• Berislav Marojević, Sector for projects co-financed with the EU funds
Central Financing and Contracting Agency (CFCA)	• Tifani Šimunović Boban, Assistant Director • Saša Barić, Assistant Director • Tihana Stipica, Head of Service for Human Resources Management
HAMAG-BICRO, Intermediate Body level 2 for the OP Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014-2020	• Monika Šućur, Advisor to the Management Board • Hrvoje Meštrić, Director of Sector for support in innovation, research and development • Irma Mogić, Division for Financial Support by Grants • Katarina Mihaljević, Division for Financial Support by Grants
Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure, Managing Authority for OP Transport 2007-2013	• Vanja Pilaš Roca, Head of Service • Kristijan Ležaić, Head of Service for project evaluation and support • Jadranka Pavić Vidović, Head of Programming Department • Martina Škvorc, Head of Section
City of Zagreb, beneficiary	• Jelena Marković, Assistant to Head of Office for EU programmes and projects • Miljenko Sedlar, Deputy Head of City Office • Ines Franov Beoković, Head of Department for implementation of projects • Jelena Marković • Zrinko Rebrina, Senior Expert Advisor
Sisačko-moslavačka County, beneficiary	• Tatjana Puškarić, Head of County Directorate for management of accession funds and incentives
Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts	• Neven Kos, Head of Sector • Suzana Vračević, Head of Service

Type of Authority	Interviewee
Ministry of Economy	• Željka Rivić, Head of Department
Ministry of Environmental Protection	• Karla Međurečan, Head of Service • Anamarija Šopron, Head of Department
Croatian Chamber of Commerce	• Igor Bobek, Senior Associate
Poland	
Ministry of Infrastructure and Development, Department of Assistance Programs,	• Maciej Aulak, Head of Division
Managing Authority of OP Smart Growth	• Agnieszka Palenik, Head of Division
Managing Authority of Regional OP Slaskie Region, 2014-2020	• Tomasz Kolton
Managing Authority of Regional OP Pomorskie Region, 2014-2020	• Radomir Matczak, Head of Department
Sweden	
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)	• Lars Wikström • Patrik Sällström • Eva Lindahl-Toftegaards • Susanna Rockström • Göran Lättman • Robert Clevestam • Per Cederblad • Anna Bäckman • Henrik Blomberg • Per Johansson • Göran Brulin • Kajsa Mattsson • Frida Andersson • Håkan Karlsson
County Administrative Board of Stockholm	• Elsmarie Fjällström
Country Administrative Board of Stockholm	• Maria Lindqvist
The Swedish National Financial Management Authority	• Barbro Nordgren

Type of Authority	Interviewee
Germany	
Regierung der Oberpfalz, Intermediate Body in the State of Bavaria	• Christiane Zürn
EU-Prüfbehörde im StMWi Bayern, Audit Authority in the State of Bavaria	• Alexander Matiasko
Bescheinigungsbehörde im SMWA, Freistaat Sachsen, Certifying Authority in the State of Saxony	• Betty Zschoche
MA/JS and Certifying Authority Baltic Sea Region Programme	• Susanne Scherrer
EFRE Verwaltungsbehörde des Landes Baden-Württemberg (MA)	• Dr. Georg Ris • Barbara Eusterschulte
Investitionsbank Sachsen-Anhalt (IB)	• Carsten Buhmann • Doris Gruß
EU-Verwaltungsbehörde Sachsen-Anhalt (MA)	• Stefanie Möllhof
EU-Prüfbehörde Sachsen-Anhalt (Audit Authority)	• Mechthild von Maydell
EU-Bescheinigungsbehörde Sachsen-Anhalt (certifying Authority)	• Frau Rothe
EFRE-Verwaltungsbehörde Schleswig-Holstein (Managing Authority)	• Rüdiger Balduhn
Prüfbehörde EFRE Thüringen (Audit Authority)	• Dr. Zöphel
Nationale Koordinierungsstelle im BMWi (National Coordinating Authority)	• Scheffel, Unger, Meyer und Kern
Romania	
Ministry of European Funds (MEF) - General Direction System Coordination and Technical Assistance	• Mihai Ioan, Counsellor
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Managing Authority ETC programmes 2014-2020	• Iulia Hertzog, Head of the Managing Authority of ETC Programmes • Ioana Glavan, Head of Unit INTERREG Romania - Bulgaria • Simona Vasile, Expert on horizontal aspects • Victoria Rosia, INTERREG Romania - Hungary
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Managing Authority for the Regional Operational Programme 2014-2020	• Gabriel Friptu, General Director of Directorate General for European Programmes • Sorin Solomon, Director of Directorate for Public Administration Reform
Ministry of European Funds (MEF), Managing Authority for Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020	• Gabriela Teletin, General Director • Daniela Balan, Head of Unit • Cristina Patrascoiu, Counsellor
Ministry of Public Finance, Certifying and Paying Authority	• Lucia Tarara, General Director • Ioana Predulea, Deput General Director • Monica Iosif, Head of Unit

Type of Authority	Interviewee
Audit Authority	• Aron Ioan Popa – President
Regional Development Agency for South-East Region, Intermediate Body	• Luminita Mihailov, General Director
General Secretariat of the Government	• Ionut Pavel, Prime Minister's Cabinet • Luminiţa Mihailov, General Director
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Directorate for Public Administration	• Sorin Solomon, Director
Ministry of European Funds (MEF), Managing Authority for the Competitiveness Operational Programme 2014-2020 – *Focus Group*	• Marinescu Maleta, Head of Service for Operational Programme Aid to the Most Deprived
Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, Managing Authority ETC programmes 2014-2020 – *Focus Group*	• Simona Vasile, Counselor Evaluation-Examination within the Evaluation Unit
Ministry of Public Finance, Certifying and Paying Authority – *Focus Group*	• Ioana Cazacu, Principal Expert • Gabriel Varnaiote, Senior Counselor
Ministry of European Funds (MEF), Managing Authority for Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014-2020 – *Focus Group*	• Cristina Pătrăşcoiu, Head of Service
Italy	
Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Department for Public Function, Intermediate Body - *Interview and Focus Group*	• Carlo Notarmuzi, Director
Lombardy Region, General Directorate Legal, Controls, Institutional, Prevention of Corruption, Audit Authority	• Gabriella Volpi, Manager of the Lombardy Region
Umbria Region, Managing Authority of the ROP 2014-2020 - *Interview and Focus Group*	• Claudio Tiriduzzi, Managing Authority
Regione Emilia Romagna, Managing Authority of the ROP 2014-2020 - *Interview and Focus Group*	• Morena Diazzi, Managing Authority • Daniela Ferrara, Coordination Structure of the Managing Authority
Ministero delle Infrastrutture e dei Trasporti, PON Reti e Mobilita' - *Focus Group*	• Nicola CARRANO, Responsible for first level controls
Agenzia per la Coesione Territoriale - *Focus Group*	• Bungaro Rosa
Autorità di Gestione, Ministero dell'Interno - Dipartimento della Pubblica Sicurezza - PON Sicurezza per lo Sviluppo - Obiettivo Convergenza 2007/2013 - *Interview and Focus Group*	• Dario Caputo - Direttore della Segreteria Tecnica Amministrativa per la gestione dei fondi europei e dei programmi operativi nazionali (Uff. di staff dell'AdG)

Type of Authority	Interviewee
Lithuania	
Managing Authority, Ministry of Finance	• Ramūnas Dilba - Deputy Director of EU Structural Assistance Management Department • Agnė Vitkauskienė - Head of Technical Assistance Administration Division
Intermediate Body, Public Institution Central Project Management Agency (CPMA)	• Lina Čepokienė - Deputy Director • Jurgita-Bogdan - Head of HR departament • Lina Mockutė - Expert in HR departament
Intermediate body, Lithuanian Business Support Agency (LBSA)	• Ignas Paukšytys - Deputy Director of Project • Management Department • Milda Gutauskienė - Head of HR departament
Intermediate Body, European Union Support Division at Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania	• Daiva Nazarovienė - Head of Department Andrius Jautakis - Chief Specialist of European Union Support Division
Intermediate Body, Ministry of Education and Science	• Rasa Dokuzlar - Head of European Union Assistance Programme Implementation Division
Intermediate Body, Transport investment directorate	• Inga Stasiūnaitė - Adviser of Head of Law and human resources division
Intermediate Body, Environmental Projects Management Agency under the Ministry of Environment	• Izolda Simanavičiūtė - Personnel and Document Management Specialist
Certifying authority, National Fund Department in the Ministry of Finance of Republic of Lithuania	• Aušra Baliukonienė – Director • Laimutė Žukauskienė - Deputy Director
Joint Technical Secretariat	• Auksė Bernadišienė - Director
Audit Authority	• Arūnas Siniauskas - Acting Director of Audit Department • Emilija Jasaitienė - Auditors Deputy Director of Audit Department 8 • Živilė Simonaitytė - Acting Deputy Director of Audit Department 8 • Raminta Malinauskaitė - Acting Deputy Director of Audit Department 8 • Dovilė Mekionytė - Advisor in Audit Department 8 • Sigita Rojutė - Acting Director of Audit Department 6

Annex 3: List of participants to Self-Assessment Tool testing

No.	Interviewee	Role	Type of Authority	Title of Authority	Country
1.	Vasilka Kostadinova	Head of department	Certifying Authority	National fund Directorate, MF	Bulgaria
2.	Neven Kos	Head of sector, IB1	Intermediate body	Ministry of entrepreneurship and crafts	Croatia
3.	Elka Bergirova	Senior expert	Certifying Authority	National fund Directorate	Bulgaria
4.	Gergana Mitreva	Operational level (state expert)	Coordinating Body	Programming of EU Funds Directorate	Bulgaria
5.	Ivan Ivanov	Head of unit	Coordinating Body	Programming of EU Funds Directorate	Bulgaria
6.	Lyubomir Stoyanov	Chief expert in ESIF structural measures dep. In programming of EU Funds Directorate	Coordinating Body	Central coordination unit	Bulgaria
7.	Uglea Simona	Develop procedures and tools	Coordinating Body	Ministry of European Funds	Romania
8.	Mihai Ioan	Counsellor	Coordinating Body	Coordination and Monitoring	Romania
9.	Paola Ferrluo	Most tasks are related to the job, small JS, staff involved in everything	Joint Secretariat	Italy - Swiss programme	Italy
10.	Dadina Dilova	Certification and financial management expert	Certifying Authority	National Fund Directorate	Bulgaria
11.	Kiril Genov	Control & Certification Expert	Certifying Authority	National Fund Directorate	Bulgaria
12.	Balan Daniela	Head of unit	Managing Authority	Ministry of European Funds - MA OPTA	Romania
13.	Debora Dazzi	Operational	Managing Authority	-	Italy
14.	Paola Ravelli	JTS	Managing Authority	-	Italy
15.	Ignas Paukštys	Deputy head of department	Intermediate Body	Lithuanian Business Support Agency	Lithuania
16.	Ludmila Rangelova	Decision making level	Audit Authority	Audit of EU Funds Agency	Bulgaria
17.	Doroteya Manolova	Operational role	Audit Authority	Audit of EU funds Executive Agency	Bulgaria
18.	Tolya Kirilova	Operational role	Audit Authority	Audit of European Union Funds Executive Agency	Bulgaria
19.	Galina Kiritcheva	Chief auditor	Audit Authority	AE UFEA	Bulgaria

No.	Interviewee	Role	Type of Authority	Title of Authority	Country
20.	Proletka Radonova	Chief Auditor	Audit Authority	Audit of EU Funds Agency	Bulgaria
21.	Iskra Hristova	Decision making level	Audit Authority	Audit of EU Funds Executive Agency	Bulgaria
22.	Tamara Sarvaš	Head of Sector	MA/Intermediate body	HAMAG-BICRO	Croatia
23.	Irma Mogič	Operational level - analyst	Intermediate body	HAMAG-BICRO	Croatia
24.	Marina Hodak	Project manager - Implementation department	Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Crafts	IB1	Croatia
25.	Dubravka Flinta	Head of Sector	Certifying Authority	Sector for National Fund Affairs, Ministry of Finance	Croatia
26.	Juraj Ivankovič	Head of Sector	Managing Authority	Ministry of regional development	Croatia
27.	Marina Buza-Vidas	-	-	-	Croatia
28.	Marko Žabojec	Head of sector	Coordinating Body	Ministry of regional development and EU funds	Croatia
29.	Petal Peroš	Implementation Specialist	Intermediate body	Hrvatske vode	Croatia
30.	Jelena Ambrenac	Head of project selection section	Intermediate body	Hrvatske vode	Croatia
31.	Berislav Marojevic	Cont. Specialist	Intermediate body	Hrvatske vode	Croatia
32.	Robert Kortelo	Head of sector	Intermediate body	IB Water	Croatia
33.	Marina Mandac	Senior Auditor	Audit Authority	Agency for audit of EU programmes implementation system	Croatia
34.	Marin Stegič	Head of AA	Audit Authority	Agency for audit of EU programmes implementation system	Croatia
35.	Maria Zafirova	National communication office/acting head of unit	Coordinating Body	Central coordination unit	Bulgaria
36.	Balan Claudia	-	-	-	Romania
37.	Burcea Codrut	Public UNLD GFR	Public administration	Regional agency of public civil servants	Romania
38.	Elena Nitu	-	Intermediate body	Central	Romania

No.	Interviewee	Role	Type of Authority	Title of Authority	Country
39.	Florea Dorina	-	Managing Authority	MSI-OIPSI	Romania
40.	Iacob Petronela	Public manager		National agency of the civil servants	Romania
41.	Luminita Tomescu	-	Managing Authority	-	Romania
42.	Marin Noemi	Public manager	Central public administration	National agency of the civil servants	Romania
43.	Raul Moraru	-	Managing Authority	OIPSI-MSI	Romania
44.	Silvestru Ramona	Civil servant	Public administration	National - NACS	Romania
45.	Ivana Varga	Head of financial control service	Certifying Authority	Ministry of Finance, National Fund	Croatia
46.	Marie-Pierre Tighe	Programme manager	Joint Secretariat	France (Channel) England Programme	France
47.	Dendev Marianne	Audit and control officer	Joint Secretariat	Interreg IVA 2 Seas	France
48.	Vivien Bodereau	Finance & appraisal officer	Joint Secretariat	Joint Secretariat	UK
49.	Davide Bengarhi	Finance unit coordinator	Joint Secretariat	Interreg 2 Seas	France
50.	Frances Jenkins	-	Certifying Authority	-	UK
51.	V. Muspratt	Head of MA	Managing Authority	Managing Authority	UK
52.	Harry Mach	Finance & appraisal officer	Joint Secretariat	Joint Secretariat	UK
53.	Adrian Horfsani	Audit Authority	Audit Authority	FZE Audit Authority	UK
54.	Graham Jermy	Head of CA	Certifying Authority	-	UK
55.	Karine Last	AA manager	Audit Authority	Audit Authority	UK
56.	Anca Lazar	-	M.O.P.F	-	Romania
57.	Birloiu Florentina	Auditor	Audit Authority	Audit Authority	Romania
58.	Ciobanu Antonio-Mihai	Supervisory role	Audit Authority	Audit Authority	Romania
59.	Ciocoiu Cristina	Auditor	Audit Authority	Audit Authority	Romania
60.	Ioana Predulea	Deputy General Director	Certifying Authority	Certifying and Paying Agency	Romania
61.	Robert Kartelo	Head of sector	Intermediate body	IB Water	Croatia

No.	Interviewee	Role	Type of Authority	Title of Authority	Country
62.	Maria Magdalena Burciu	Auditor	Audit Authority	Audit Authority	Romania
63.	Stegaru Nicoleta	External public auditor	Audit Authority	Audit Authority	Romania
64.	Toader Florentina	-	Certifying Authority	Certifying and Paying Agency	Romania
65.	Petar Peroš		Managing Authority	-	Croatia
66.	Simona Uglea		Coordinating Body	-	Romania

Annex 4: Competency Framework

Annex 5: Self-Assessment Tool

Annex 6: Instructions for the use of the Self-Assessment Tool

Annex 7: Good practices of competency based approaches in ESIF management and implementation systems

Annex 8: Blueprint of Curriculum for ESIF training

Annex 9: Inventory of education and learning programmes

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