



Romania

ESF project "State of the Nation: building an innovative tool for the development of evidence-based policy making"

Key facts

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

'The development and use of common systems and standards in public administration which optimise decision making processes oriented towards citizens and the business sector, according with the Public Administration Development Strategy 2014-2020.'

TARGET GROUPS



Central and local public administrations across Romania

BENEFICIARY ORGANISATION

General Secretariat of Government (GSG), Government of Romania

PROJECT DURATION

07/04/2016 – 07/04/2019

COORDINATOR

Lelia Oanță, Director, GSG



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PARTNERS

National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA)

BUDGET

EUR 2,930,039.00

ESF contribution

EUR 556,774.46

National budget



PROJECT/ORGANISATION WEBSITE



<http://starea-natiunii.ro/index.php/en/>

<https://sgg.gov.ro/new/>



<https://www.facebook.com/stareanatiuniiro/>

Activities implemented

PROJECT IN NUMBERS



Sustainable development areas



Number of indicators developed



Number of surveys carried out



Number of conferences held

MAIN PROJECT TASKS



To develop a system of socio-economic indicators and methodology that are relevant to Romania's sustainable development in order to improve decision making within central and local governments.



To create a statistical data aggregator, called the 'State of the Nation', that synthetically captures trends within the country – a multidisciplinary database that contains existing, aggregated socio-economic and synthetic data.



To collect data concerning public perceptions of relevant topics relating to the country's sustainable development.



To develop future public policy initiatives that make use of the aggregator.

Project journey: from conception to delivery

INITIAL STAGE

CONTEXT OF THE PROJECT

Lelia Oanță, Director of the Governmental Strategies Department at the General Secretariat of the Romanian Government (GSG) was aware of the need to develop policies and strategies based on evidence within central and local governments in Romania. In line with the **Public Administration Development Strategy 2014-2020**, she was committed to seeking to change the status quo, and to creating both evidence and a mechanism to use that evidence in policy and strategic work. GSG partnered with the National University of Political Studies and Public Administration (SNSPA) in Bucharest and developed the project with support from the ESF.

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

The project aimed to develop a **statistical aggregator for Romania, called the 'State of the Nation'**, and to integrate into a coherent framework existing data on 12 key sustainable development areas. Using 100 main indicators and perception-based primary data collected via barometer surveys, the project sought to provide policy makers with a dashboard indicating the 'health of the nation', signalling the current and future challenges and opportunities facing Romania. The project also identified ways in which the tool could be employed in policy initiatives and strategic documents to 'put it to good use' and demonstrate its usefulness.

PROJECT PHASE

MAIN CHALLENGES FACED, AND DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

The project leaders managed the project effectively. A number of difficulties were encountered, which the project team were able to overcome in order to complete the project as foreseen. One difficulty was related to the reticence of the Romanian National Statistical Institute to cooperate in providing the requested data. While the team succeeded in building broad approval for the project and using it to develop specific policy initiatives, greater and broader commitment at a high level could increase its impact still further.

KEY DEVELOPMENTS AND EVENTS DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

After building the team, the project leaders worked on designing the methodology and the system of indicators to be used in the project. They then moved on to create a web-based application to host the data. At the same time, they developed and implemented 30 surveys nationwide to gather public perceptions of Romania's development. In addition, the team organised four conferences, together with multiple workshops and capacity building sessions, to gather ideas, consult stakeholders, build capacity and promote the project's results.

KEY RESULTS AND SUCCESS FACTORS

The key results of the project are the creation of the 'State of the Nation' aggregator and the development of a methodology to coherently integrate data. Extensive contacts, committed leadership and a strong belief in the need for the project are the main factors explaining the success of the project.

RESULTS, IMPACTS

(EXPECTED) IMPACT ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The project team's ambition was to achieve an impact beyond the creation of the actual outputs themselves. The basis for this ambition was the team's awareness that specific initiatives 'come and go', and are likely to have only a limited impact unless they are anchored into future projects and accepted and endorsed at a high level. Thus, to avoid this situation, the project team used data from the State of Nation aggregator to support the development of **Romania's National Sustainable Development Strategy 2030**, as well as **two other projects** relating to the implementation of this strategy and to the assessment of the quality of public services across Romania.

LESSONS LEARNT: THE ROLE OF ESF FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The team learned that institutional collaboration is key to implementing a large-scale project. Similarly, it was essential to develop relationships based on trust with like-minded partners. They also recognised the importance of high-level endorsement, which can go a long way to creating impact. The project's leaders had considered a similar project previously, but a lack of financial resources prevented them from implementing it. With ESF support, they were able to pursue the idea and turn it into a coherent, three-year project that set the stage for the better use of evidence in policy making at national and local levels in Romania.



The ESF-funded project was founded on the concept of sustainable development. Source: General Secretariat of Government.

REFLECTIONS

Personal experiences



'After working intensely on the project for three years, now that it has finished, I feel like a mother whose son is leaving home to go to university. I trust that the project will continue to make an impact far beyond its official end date.'

Loredana Radu, Project Coordinator, Associate Professor, SNSPA, Romania

'The "State of the Nation" project should not remain simply a national project. I think it is highly important for national and EU leaders to consider supporting similar initiatives at a regional and European level. It's an invitation for others to join in.'

Lelia Oanță, Project Manager, Director, Governmental Strategies Department, GSG, Romania

The study "Progress Assessment of the ESF Support to Public Administration" (PAPA) aims to present specific cases of ESF-funded public administration reform and capacity building initiatives. The contractor prepared 30 case studies and factsheets on ESF supported projects funded in 17 beneficiary countries of Thematic Objective 11 during the programming period 2014-2020.

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PPMI

Find out more about the project by following the link <http://bit.ly/PAPA-PPMI> or scan the QR code using your smartphone camera.

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