

Summary

The programming period 2014 – 2020 commenced on January 1st, 2014, in spite of that, however, the real-life implementation of OPTA started only as late as on February 23rd, 2016, upon the announcement of the first call. Based on the facts assessed, we, however, must state that there were objective reasons for the belated start. The main reason was the effort of the OPTA Managing Authority and of the eligible beneficiaries to achieve the lowest possible decommitment of OPTA 2007 – 2013 as to December 31st, 2015. The administrative capacities of the OPTA Managing Authority were thus fully used towards the finishing programming period 2007 – 2013 and considering the lack thereof, there was no sufficient room to programme the new period. However, it is a fact that as all eligible beneficiaries had been financing their expenditures within the framework of OPTA 2007 – 2013 until December 31st, 2015, it was not even necessary to speedily launch the implementation of OPTA 2014 – 2020. On the other hand, the evaluation was, in some areas, influenced by the lack of data or minimal implementation progress. This mainly concerns areas such as measurable indicators and the achievement of results.

In the field of programme management, indeed, significant progress was achieved in comparison with the previous programming period, especially as far as the quality of the OPTA document is concerned, which is well arranged, logically divided, and defines all essentials in a clear and comprehensive manner. The organization and staffing of the OPTA Managing Authority has also been improved; however, the status of administrative capacities has not yet reached the required level.

What we consider a significant risk in the case of OPTA, is the status of contracting of financial resources, which is inappropriately high considering the stage of the programming period and the fact that the eligible deadline to carry out activities within the approved projects is December 31st, 2018. If such development continued, OPTA could face a risk of lacking financial resources. The OPTA Managing Authority ought to carry out an analysis of expenditures incurred within the previous period or also in the current period, as well as an analysis of the absorption capacity of single eligible beneficiaries in order to determine indicative allocations.

The OPTA Managing Authority introduced an efficient element into the process of monitoring and evaluation of OPTA in form of a set of measurable indicators, which are unambiguously and clearly defined. The indicators are mostly being fulfilled adequately and according to expectations, indeed, some result indicators have already exceeded the target value planned for 2023. This status should be maintained and progress should be achieved with the remaining indicators. Output indicators are being fulfilled directly proportional to the status of implementation of single projects. Despite significant progress, there still is room for improvement in the system of measurable indicators, for example as far as the setting out of the way of calculating the target value to be achieved in 2023 in the case of some measurable output indicators is concerned.

Specific objectives and their expected results are being achieved continuously based on the implementation of single projects. Through wage reimbursement and systematic education it was possible to stabilise the employees working for the subjects engaged in the system of management, control and audit of ESIF and to reduce employee turnover, whereby creating a stabile system to carry out the programmes of the ESIF. The implementation of OPTA projects safeguards a high level of awareness

raised among the general public, making sure that the messages of the EC are properly communicated. Some of the OPTA resources that were projected to be incurred on external services are used to promote higher quality and effectiveness of ESIF management, whereby also a higher quality and efficiency of financial management, control and audit of ESIF shall be safeguarded in the forthcoming period. By financing the integrated network of information and consultancy centres, OPTA fosters a more efficient and effective implementation of ESIF directly in the regions. By carrying out projects aimed at ITMS2014+ a stabile system was established, which is one of the basic elements of implementation of ESIF. What is considered a potential risk in the course of fulfilling the expected results are the results relating to the better implementation of ESIF in general, as they may be affected by external influences, especially the activities of other subjects which are not financed from the resources of OPTA.

The means of OPTA have until now been incurred effectively in relation to the achieved results; however, an evaluation of the real implementation of OPTA projects for such a short period of time can only provide an estimate of how efficiently the financial resources of OPTA have been incurred so far.

The global objective of OPTA, which is the establishment of a highly professional and efficient system to support the management and implementation of ESIF by finalising the structure of an efficient system of ESIF regulation, and by improving the quality of administrative capacities that play a role in the management, control and audit of ESIF and in the protection of financial interests of the EU, is being gradually and continuously fulfilled.