



Summary of the Project Titled “Assurance of Synergic Links between Operational Programmes in the Programme Period 2007-2013”

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Between December 2008 and April 2009, The National Co-ordination Authority (NCA) realized a project titled “Assurance of Synergic Links between Operational Programmes in the Programme Period 2007-2013”, funded from the Operational Programme (OP) Technical Assistance.

The project was aimed at the classification of individual links and identification of key links, based on a comprehensive analysis of relations between the operational programmes in the programme period 2007–2013, with respect to the fulfilment of the objectives of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). For the key links the project subsequently aimed to analyse the co-ordination mechanisms and where suitable, prepare recommendations to assure these links with corresponding co-ordination mechanisms, including a proposal of monitoring them during the NSRF implementation in the period 2007-2013.

In accordance with the assignment, the project analysed the following operational programmes:

- a) **thematic operational programmes** (OP Enterprise and Innovation, OP Research and Development for Innovation, OP Environment, OP Transport, OP Education for Competitiveness, OP Human Resources and Employment, Integrated Operational Programme);
- b) **regional operational programmes** (ROP Central Bohemia, ROP Southwest, ROP Southeast, ROP Northwest, ROP Northeast, ROP Moravia Silesia, ROP Central Moravia);
- c) Rural Development Programme, OP Prague Competitiveness, OP Prague Adaptability.

The project concerned a follow-up to the “Analyses of Links between Operational Programmes in the Period 2007–2013” that was prepared by the NCA during 2008 and became one of the starting points. During the project these analyses were completed for the OP Research and Development for Innovations and for the Rural Development Programme.

1. Project procedure

The first activity of the entire project concerned the determination of the term “synergy”. In the course of the project the author was faced with the problem of a clear understanding of the terms “synergy” and “synergic link” by the individuals involved in the policy of economic and social cohesion, which may result in an incorrect interpretation of the issues of synergic action (synergic effects) of operational programmes in fulfilling the strategic objectives of the NSRF.

The author defined “**synergy**” as the “joint action of two or more components, the result of which is greater than the sum of the co-operating components (in our case of the support areas of the individual OP, or specific projects)”. “**Synergic effect**” is then the added effect of the simultaneous action of two or more aspects compared to the sum of the effects of each of them separately.

Based on the above understanding of the key terms, a “Methodology of Link Classification” was prepared in order to identify the key links showing a synergic effect, their analysis, description and assessment.

The identification of the key links was based on a multi-criteria assessment that analysed the links between the support areas of the individual operational programmes, applying two aspects:

- a) contribution of the link to the fulfilment of the NSRF objectives (material, territorial and time-related criteria);
- b) complexity of the co-ordination of the binary link (the characteristics of links affecting the complexity of co-ordination of the link – funding by ESF x ERDF, time-related condition, existing synergies, differences between the beneficiaries within the link, implementation, etc.).

Under the multi-criteria assessment the greatest weight was assigned to the material criterion, i.e. the degree of the respective link’s contribution to the fulfilment of the NSRF strategic objective was analysed. The highest rating was given to those links, the realization of which brought demonstrable and quantifiable added value resulting from the link (reflected by the indicators of the respective NSRF strategic objective).

The entire project was formally divided into three stages that, in fact intermingled.

During the project’s **1st stage**, analyses of the links between the OP Research and Development for Innovation and the Rural Development Programme were carried out. The analyses of the links between these operational programmes, together with **analyses of the links between the operational programmes for the period 2007–2013**, which were prepared by NCA in 2008, became the basic documents for the first stage, i.e. for the classification of the links.

All the links identified in the above analyses were classified according to the methodology prepared in order to identify the key links. As the key links, i.e. links that need to be further elaborated, the evaluator chose links of which the contribution value to the fulfilment of the NSRF strategic objectives were above average. However, not all such links show synergy. Nevertheless, some links also need to be monitored for different reasons than

for synergic effects (e.g. in order to prevent overlapping, a larger number of entities in relation to the link that need to be co-ordinated, issues of public aid).

The author decided to use the standardized processing of knowledge about the respective link and its co-ordination mechanisms, or a group of links in the form of a structured spreadsheet (form), in particular in order to ensure clarity, clear informative value and mutual comparability.

The **2nd stage** focused on the assessment of the existing co-ordination mechanisms for the key links (identified in the 1st stage) and recommendations for the co-ordination mechanisms. A field survey or discussions with representatives of all the managing authorities regarding the issues of monitoring synergies and setting co-ordination mechanisms formed a part of the 2nd and 3rd stages. The results of the field survey have been reflected both in the analyses and assessment of the co-ordination mechanisms and the proposal of specific recommendations regarding the individual co-ordination mechanisms.

Detailed descriptions of the individual links, including the analysis of their co-ordination mechanisms, are a key component of the entire project. The summary may not present the conclusions for the individual groups of links in a summarized form as each of them was approached individually, taking its specifics into account. Conclusions and recommendations regarding the individual groups of links (i.e. co-ordination clusters) form a substantial and integral part of the project’s final report.

The **3rd stage** concerned the synthesis of all received knowledge, and recommendations towards the individual managing authorities as well as towards the National Co-ordination Authority (NCA) were specified.

2. Main conclusions of a general nature

- In the course of the project the author was faced with the problem of a clear understanding of the terms “synergy” and “synergic link” by the individuals involved in the policy of economic and social cohesion. The understanding of the term “synergy” is also different among applicants and potential beneficiaries, which may be deduced from the data provided in the application forms for support in the section on synergic projects. It is possible to see an approach of describing the compliance with strategic documents at the national and regional levels, through territorial complementarity to a description of the history of any project with no link to public funds. Therefore, we do not consider it appropriate to have applicants or beneficiaries describe the synergy.

- Both the NCA as well as the managing authority (MA) are willing to clarify the issues of synergy and to set meaningful and functioning mechanisms not burdening the MA inappropriately.

Main findings in terms of key link identification

- The author believes that the most significant synergic effects may be found in relation to support where “hard” and “soft” projects are combined, i.e. where investments in the physical infrastructure are complemented with investments in human potential (in particular, in the form of education).
- The synergic links may also be seen in the support areas where “hard” projects are combined but it may be noted that the degree of synergy is lower (the investments in transport infrastructure under the OP Transport and the ROP are a typical example).
- The logic of the matter allows us to find significant synergic links between the OP Research and Development for Innovations (OP RDI) and the OP Enterprise and Innovations (OP EI) (despite it being a combination of hard projects) as well as the OP Education for Competitiveness (OP EC). Under the programming processes the authors of these OP intended to set the individual supported areas in a manner to achieve these synergies. However, due to an important delay in the implementation of support received through the OP RDI the achievement of synergies resulting from the mutual action of support areas 1.1 and 2.1 of the OP RDI in this programme period is rather improbable. In this respect the author recommends modifying the OP programme documents to ensure their compliance with the actual situation.
- Under the OP system as well as under the individual support areas there are many other links not demonstrating any synergic effects. Nevertheless, the nature of these links deserves attention from the MA or NCA respectively. The reason for assuring appropriate co-ordination lies in the prevention of potential overlapping that could arise during the implementation, or other problems that may be prevented through efficient co-ordination. This concerns the following links:
 - Ø Links related to support areas intervening under a different objective of the SF (Convergence x Regional competitiveness and employment), but supporting the same themes. These links may not be identified as synergic as the individual support areas are only territorially complementary (the support is always directed towards a different territory).

- Ø “Mirror projects” – they concern links between the OP Prague Adaptability (OP PA) and the OP Human Resources and Employment (OP HRE) under those priorities not having a multi-objective nature. (Mirror projects – projects carried out in the city of Prague, carefully monitored by the European Commission emphasizing the implementation of systematic steps based on consistent methodology in the territory of both objectives [Convergence and Regional Competitiveness and Employment]. The co-ordination is satisfactorily set between the MA of the OP HRE and the MA OP PA. The NCA should supervise the transfer of information regarding the number of mirror projects to MSC 2007).
- Ø Links affected by the support areas determining theme complementarity (a typical example concerns brownfields – the applicant may use the funds either from the OP Environment or the OP EI or the ROP, based on material specification). Therefore, these links do not show any synergy.
- OP Transport, ROP in the area of purchasing track vehicles. This co-ordination cluster shows rather weak synergy but there are many operational issues that should be addressed by a joint procedure of the ROP (notification, organization of tenders, selection criteria, etc.). Unless these problems are clarified and addressed in a short term, there is a risk that this support area will not be implemented by the end of the period.
- Particular co-ordination clusters seen by the author as having a high importance of co-ordination due to potential strong synergy:
 - OP EC x ROP (problems of development of the educational infrastructure);
 - OP EC x OP Environment (problems of environmental education);
 - OP EC x OP RDI (problems of knowledge development in Research and Development areas and co-operation with universities, research and development and the private sector);
 - OP HRE x ROP (problems related to support of the establishment of a social infrastructure);
 - OP HRE 4.1 a,b x IOP (problems of Smart Administration);
 - OP RDI x OP EI (problems of co-operation between businesses with research and development facilities, transfer of knowledge and technologies, support of the establishment of new innovative companies);
 - IOP x ROP (area of cultural heritage and tourism).

For the co-ordination clusters above, the author suggests considering the introduction of a synergy premium.

- Particular co-ordination clusters seen by the author as having a high importance of co-ordination due to reasons different from the existence of strong synergy:
 - OP Transport x ROP (area of railway infrastructure) – intervention in the area of modernising track vehicles is very complicated;
 - OP HRE x OP PA – “Mirror projects”, the EC closely monitors the realization of the mirror projects;
 - Area of brownfields and environmental burden – necessary to monitor to avoid the risk of overlapping.
- Upon analysing the links of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) to other OP it was discovered that, regarding the logical relationship between the Rural Development Programme to the National Strategic Rural Development Plan, or to another type of support, it is impossible to identify direct links to fulfil the NSRF. These links may be found implicitly via the co-operation of the Rural Development Programme and another OP. Nevertheless, the Rural Development Programme is, with only minor exceptions, focused, in terms of territory, on supporting activities in municipalities up to 500 inhabitants, which already predetermines a very low probability of discovering any potential synergic links. Regarding the different nature of the RDP support and the related different manner of implementation, no significant co-ordination mechanisms have been set. Considering that the RDP implementation functions differently the author does not regard it necessary to set the co-ordination mechanisms. The author recommends ensuring the transfer of information through the participation of the MA RDP representative in the Co-ordinating Committee of the Managing and Co-ordinating Authority.

Main findings regarding the set-up of co-ordination mechanisms

- The MA does not feel any need to be concerned with the co-ordination mechanisms in relation to the individual binary links (the link of one OP support area to another support area of a different OP), the co-ordination mechanisms are relevant to them only in relation to another OP as a whole.
- Setting up a system of premiums assigned to projects for synergy represents an efficient tool but the actual set-up is not easy. It is necessary to consider carefully whether the effort by the MA is in line with the synergy’s significance. Therefore, it is inefficient to introduce a system of premiums for synergies for all co-ordination clusters. For each specific cluster the author specifies whether it is recommendable to introduce the system of premiums or not.

- It is necessary to approach the individual co-ordination clusters individually as the problems are very diverse and complex.
- The current structure of the Co-ordinating Committee (CC) of the MCC is not, with respect to the assurance of synergies between operational programmes, functional. The CC meetings are too formal and the structure of the CC is not optimal. The determination of a meaningful agenda for the meeting of four CCs is difficult to achieve as the individual OP and their activities contribute to more than one NSRF strategic objective. To ensure the functioning of this co-ordination mechanism it is necessary to transform the functioning of the CC MCC.

3. Proposal of the concept for the co-ordination of synergies and links between OP

In terms of the overall concept for co-ordination several hierarchic co-ordination levels may be identified with respect to the synergies. These co-ordination levels differ by their degree of formality and decision powers of set mechanisms, standing in relation to the overall management and co-ordination of SF-related issues in the Czech Republic, the structure of entities entering into the respective mechanism, etc.

a) Managing and Co-ordinating Committee (MCC)

The MCC may be seen as the highest level of the co-ordination of structural funds and cohesion funds in the Czech Republic. The committee co-ordinates the preparation and realization of EU programmes in the areas of economic and social cohesion, ensures cohesion between the co-ordination structures in order to use the resources dedicated to the policy of economic and social cohesion and their conformity with the Community policies, approves measures aimed at improving implementation efficiency, etc. Moreover, it also acts as the Monitoring Committee for the National Strategic Reference Framework.

In terms of synergy assurance this level may be seen as the highest and the formal level used, in particular, to communicate information between the members of the MCC, or the individual entities participating in the realization of economic and social cohesion policy in the Czech Republic. This formal decision-making mechanism plays a unique role and it is unnecessary to modify it. However, it has to be complemented by a lower functional working level of co-ordination. To ensure synergic effects we see the lower working level as the most important, in particular the Co-ordinating Committees of the MCC.

b) Co-ordinating committees of the MCC

The co-ordinating committees form a part of the MCC. The chairman of the MCC appoints the co-ordinating committees focused on the individual strategic objectives (SO) of the NSRF.

Pursuant to the wording of the NSRF and the MCC statute, four Co-ordinating Committees have been appointed:

- a) Co-ordinating Committee for SO I (Competitive Czech economy);
- b) Co-ordinating Committee for SO II (Open, flexible and cohesive society);
- c) Co-ordinating Committee for SO III (Attractive environment);
- d) Co-ordinating Committee for SO IV (Balanced regional development).

Pursuant to the statute the Committee should act as a working and advisory body for the MCC in addressing specific issues, co-ordinate the implementation of operational programmes of the given strategic objective of the NSRF, discuss and present to the MCC recommendations, assessments, reports and suggested measures.

As shown by the analysis of co-ordination mechanisms for the individual links, the Co-ordinating Committees of the MCC have fulfilled their function in only a limited scope so far. As of the date of processing the final report, the constitutive meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee for SO II and SO IV were held. The remaining two CCs have not yet met. The analysis also revealed that the agenda of the CC did not correspond to the original purpose specified in the statute.

The author sees potential problems also in the structure of the respective CC. The analysis of the CC MCC statute shows that the structure of the individual CC for the specific SO considerably overlaps mutually (e.g. the representative of the OP EI should be a member of the CC for the SO I, II and III). We believe that the realization of the majority of the operational programmes always helps to fulfil several NSRF strategic objectives (or even all of them in terms of synergic links) as the objectives of the economic and social cohesion policy are interconnected and should be seen in a comprehensive and mutually linked light. Therefore, we consider the establishment of four CCs for the individual strategic objectives as unfortunate and, with respect to the agenda of these committees, as difficult to grasp.

As a possible solution we suggest transforming the CC to a co-ordination platform engaged in the issues related to the action of the individual operational programmes in terms of the fulfilment of the NSRF objectives and synergic links between OP that may significantly contribute to the fulfilment of the NSRF objectives. The Co-ordinating Committee would thus become a working level body for addressing principal and methodological issues related to

synergies. In other words, solutions to common problems related to synergies would be sought.

The Co-ordinating Committee should embrace all the managing authorities of the OP, including the RDP. The representation of every managing authority should be at a level ensuring corresponding decision-making powers (e.g. regarding the approval of a procedure, acceptance of a task, etc.) and an overall knowledge and awareness of issues related to synergies under the represented OP. The members of such a platform should be appointed individuals responsible for the synergy and co-ordination between OP for each programme..

In terms of the co-ordination of synergic links we believe that the mechanism of the Co-ordinating Committee should embody the characteristics of a working and flexible platform enabling response to current requirements and needs. Therefore, we think it would be optimal to define an internal structure of the CC. The internal structure should not be “fixed” but should enable an operative response based on the currently discussed issue. In principle, the internal structure should comply with the proposed “co-ordination clusters”, i.e. if it is necessary to discuss synergies in the development of social infrastructure, the NCA will call a meeting of the respective co-ordination cluster of the CC (or several co-ordination clusters if related to several groups of links).

The meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee would then be carried out at two levels:

- a) a meeting of the Co-ordinating Committee in its entirety;
- b) an ad-hoc meeting of selected co-ordination cluster(s) based on the current need in synergy assurance.

The activities of the Co-ordinating Committee should be initiated on the basis of specific problems and needs.

c) Co-ordination at the level of the individual MA

The third co-ordination level concerns the co-operation of the individual MA without the direct involvement of the NCA. The MA will further specify and implement co-ordination mechanisms agreed at a higher operating level (for instance, reciprocal participation in evaluation commissions, systems of premiums to projects, preparation of specific joint appeal, processing data on synergies for the OP annual report [section on synergies], preparation of documents on synergies for the meeting of the MC of the respective OP, for meetings of the CC, incorporation of co-ordination mechanisms in implementation documents of the OP, operational manuals of the OP, etc.).

The second aspect of this level concerns the approval of agreed co-ordination mechanisms of the MC of the individual OP – only those co-ordination mechanisms or their modifications that are subject to approval by the MC of the respective OP (e.g. the introduction of systems of premiums in evaluation criteria, time schedule of calls, etc.).

d) Monitoring Committees (MC)

The Monitoring Committees of the individual OP represent the highest co-ordination level of the respective operational programme. This is the co-ordination mechanism imbedded in the programme documents. The meetings of the Monitoring Committees are too formal, with no possibilities to address current problems at a working level.

In terms of synergy assurance the role of the Monitoring Committees is predominantly informative, i.e. by the participation of representatives of other managing bodies the topical information about the implementation status of the respective OP is communicated, and approving (i.e. the approval of changes or introduction of new co-ordination mechanisms).

The author did not identify any serious issues related to the functioning of these mechanisms (if ignoring the human factor when the nominated representative does not participate in the MC meeting for whatever reason). The reciprocal representation of managing bodies entering into the binary link is, with minor exceptions, assured.

e) Co-ordination mechanisms of ESF programmes

For the programme period 2007-2013 the financial support from the ESF is realized by means of three operational programmes (OP HRE, OP EC and OP PA). This means that the implementation is organized by three managing authorities – the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport and the City of Prague.

Mutual cohesion and synergies of the operational programmes co-funded by the ESF, both with respect to their content as well as the timeline, are assured in the course of their realization, based on the co-operation and mutual co-ordination of activities.

The principal co-ordination mechanisms include the following:

- The monitoring committees of the individual ESF programme will, where suitable, be mutually interconnected through the representatives of similar membership organizations;
- Moreover, the MA of the other two ESF programmes will also be represented in the individual MC;

- In order to assist with identification and addressing common problems a co-ordination group of the MA of the ESF programmes has been established;
- The central section of the MSC2007 monitoring system of all three OP will allow access to managing authorities to enable them to be mutually informed about ongoing projects;
- The joint themes, such as uniform elements of visual identity (ESF logo), continued maintenance of the joint ESF website in the Czech Republic (www.esfcr.cz), etc., will be included under the communication strategies of the individual OP;
- The already established joint working groups set up in the previous programme period will continue in their activities, e.g. the Working Group for the Issues of Romany Communities and the Working Group for Evaluation.

Pursuant to Government Decision No. 159/1998, the co-ordination role for the ESF has been assigned to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MLSA). The member of the Council for the ESF on behalf of the Czech Republic is the representative of the managing authority of the OP HRE (MLSA). It is expected that in the next term this function will be taken over by the representative of the Managing Committee of the OP EC. The co-ordination mechanisms for the ESF will be fulfilled through joint preparation for meetings of the Council for the ESF, co-ordination in preparing documents, subsequent communication of results, including the realization of tasks arising from the respective meetings.

In order to ensure co-ordination of the activities above a Co-ordinating Group of ESF Programmes Managing Authorities for the period 2007–2013 has been established. The Co-ordinating Group consists of representatives of ESF programmes managing authorities and is chaired by the representative for the managing authority of OP HRE. The meetings of the Co-ordinating Group are usually held once in three months or when needed. The scope of the Group covers, in particular, the following activities:

- assurance of mutual links and synergies between OP co-funded by the ESF in terms of content and timeline throughout their realization;
- preparation of a common standpoint of the Czech Republic for meetings of the Council for the European Social Fund and its technical working group and the assurance of the mutual communication of information between the individual MA ESF about the outcomes of these meetings;
- co-ordination of a communication strategy of the individual ESF programmes and the application of common elements;

- preparation of a common standpoint of the MA ESF regarding specific ESF issues requiring joint or co-ordinated solutions across all ESF programmes (e.g. eligible expenses, indirect costs, monitoring indicators, sustainability of operations, etc.).

The analysis of this co-ordination mechanism shows that the co-ordination of issues related to ESF programmes is, with minor exceptions, at a good level. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention that the co-ordination of the ESF programmes forms a relatively enclosed system without the regular participation of the NCA or other managing authorities entering into binary links with ESF programmes.

With respect to a broader concept of issues related to the co-ordination and control we recommend the regular participation of the NCA in meetings of the Co-ordinating Group of ESF Programme Managing Authorities. The Co-ordinating Group addresses a number of methodological issues in relation to the ESF so the regular participation of the NCA as a body for co-ordination and control is seen as necessary not only for the communication of information but also in order to ensure methodological assistance.

The problems of synergies that also logically fall under the activities of the Co-ordinating Group are then recommended to be taken to the meetings of the CC MCC as other OP enter into synergic links with ESF programmes as well.

f) Working Group of the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic for European funds

The WG ARCR for European funds may be considered to be one of the most significant co-ordination mechanisms at the regional level despite not being a formal component of the NCA co-ordination.

The WG ARCR was established in order to prepare a uniform implementation structure for the ROP and to carry out related tasks. The actual agenda of the expert working group of the ARCR for European funds concerns primarily:

- issues of the implementation of regional operational programmes (ROP) in the Czech Republic;
- preparation of ARCR positions, underlying documents or assignments for the execution of strategic documents of the regions and the Czech Republic related to such issues;
- preparation of common standpoints regarding national rules and procedures of European fund implementation;

- monitoring of drawing the resources from European funds under regional and thematic operational programmes and proposing measures to improve drawing resources and achieve more efficient focus of the support;
- issues of administration of regional operational programmes, co-ordination of the approach of individual managing authorities of the regional operational programmes in matters related to all aspects of implementation of regional operational programmes and proposing measures to make the system of their administration more efficient;
- co-operation with other bodies of the ARCR, in particular with the Commission of the Council of the ARCR and expert groups of the Community Support Framework of the Ministry for Regional Development, and the Advisory Committee of the Minister for Regional Development, the National Fund of the Ministry of Finance and the managing authorities of sectional operational programmes.

The WG ARCR for European funds meets on a regular basis once every two months. The permanent members include representatives of the individual MA ROP (at the level of the directors and their deputies), the representative of the MA OP Prague Competitiveness (OP PC) and the representative of the ARCR. The representatives of thematic operational programmes and the Ministry for Regional Development are also invited to the meetings, based on the current needs of the discussed issues.

Within this working group, at the level of directors, expert working groups of the ROP are established, aimed at a specific thematic area – these represent joint platforms for the open discussion of common problems and the search for joint solutions and procedures. The working groups have their own guarantor who co-ordinates the activities of the working group. The WG meeting is held when needed. The WG presents the minutes of their meetings to the Expert Working Group of the ARCR for European funds. Nine thematic working groups have been established for the individual themes. The working group usually meets once a month.

The WG ARCR is involved in issues of a general (methodological) nature as well as issues related to synergies – for example, actions together with the OP EC that bring specific results for setting the monitoring of synergic projects, or actions with the OP Transport or the IOP in the area of cultural heritage, etc.

Being aware of a “historical” need to substitute for certain insufficiency from the previous period at the national level and of the functioning of this mechanism, we think that in terms of overall co-ordination and management of synergies it may be considered as unsystematic.

Therefore, we consider it appropriate to transfer the issues related to synergies to the level of the transformed CC MCC. Regarding the fact that all TOP enter into the synergic links with the ROP it is necessary to approach this topic in a co-ordinated and uniform manner. The WG ARCR should act, in relation to the issues related to synergies, as an “initiation body” and the actual discussion and adoption of an actual conclusion should be carried out at the level of the co-ordinating committees of the MCC.

Considering the intensity of the relationships between the WG ARCR and certain TOP it may be assumed that this will be a gradual process with the active role assigned to the NCA.

It is necessary to keep in mind that the issues related to synergies may not be strictly taken out of the overall concept of co-ordination and management, therefore many activities are interconnected. For that reason we believe that the NCA as the managing and co-ordinating authority should also participate in the discussion of other issues (of a methodological nature) that are discussed intensively and addressed by the WG ARCR (not only between the ROP themselves but also ROP vs. TOP) without creating a duplicate system (level of the CC MCC – addressing issues related to the fulfilment of the NSRF objectives and principal and methodological issues related to synergies, actions by the WG ARCR – other issues of implementation, including addressing regular issues related to synergies).

g) Concept of a system of premiums for projects

Setting up the system of premiums for synergies to projects represents an efficient incentive tool. It is necessary to consider whether the effort made by the MA related to the introduction and implementation of this tool corresponds to the strength of the synergy. It is inefficient to introduce premiums for synergies for all co-ordination clusters. For each specific cluster it is described whether the author proposes to introduce premiums or not.

Setting up the system of premiums for synergies is efficient when carried out in a co-ordinated way under the CC MCC as these issues are common for several OP. Without the co-ordination of this system of premiums there is a risk of not being able to compare the outcomes of the system.

We suggest approaching this problem in the form of, for instance, two ad hoc meetings of the CC MCC entailing co-ordination clusters for which we propose the premiums to be introduced. The representatives of the co-ordination clusters would participate in one of the meetings and they would discuss the system of premiums to soft projects related to an investment project, and the second meeting would discuss the system of premiums for hard projects.

In terms of the actual fashion of the system of premiums it is possible to follow up on the system already in the process for OP RDI x OP EI, OP EC x ROP.

Projects under the Integrated Urban Development Plan (IUDP) do not fall under this system of premiums as the IUDP enjoys 10% premiums pursuant to Government Decision 883 dated 13 August 2007.

h) MSC2007

At present, the central monitoring system enables aggregating and recording the synergy indicator, i.e. the number of synergic projects. Currently, the summary reports for the NCA in IS MSC2007 include the MSC214 report (Detail of Synergic Projects) and MSC215 report (Overview of Synergic Projects According to the Synergy Codes) and these reports are able to aggregate the numbers of synergic projects for all OP or, on the contrary, identify synergic projects for the respective OP. At the moment, the negotiations regarding the nature of data transfer from MONIT (ISOP) to MS Central for OP RDI x OP EI are in the final stage. When setting up other programmes it will be beneficial to use the ideas of this “pilot system”. It would be recommendable to consider and possibly execute a solution for entering into MSC2007 those synergic projects which, for whatever reason (small allocation, few synergic projects, limited competition between the beneficiaries – regions, ministries), are not proposed to be assigned with premiums.

i) Working Group for the Co-ordination of ROP, IOP and EAFRD

This working group is a co-ordination mechanism embodied in the programme documents, in particular in the Regional Operational Programmes (it was expected to set up such a working group under each NUTS II).

The structure of this group was to be the following:

- The MA of the respective ROP;
- The Ministry of Agriculture;
- The Ministry for Regional Development;
- The regional branches of State Agricultural Intervention Fund.

The working groups have not yet been installed in the individual regions and they have not started to carry out their activities. Regarding the clear territorial and material specification of interventions in relation to the RDP, or the existence of minimum synergic links respectively, the agenda of this working group is, to a significant extent, questionable. As the ROP managing authorities and the MA RDP (Ministry of Agriculture) have not

expressed a need for co-ordination, we do not consider the establishment of this working group, with respect to the assurance of synergies, as meaningful and efficient.

j) IUDP

Regarding its principle, the IUDP mechanism as a tool intensifying synergies and premiums for projects under the IUDP are addressed specifically pursuant to a government decision. Therefore, the IUDP concerns a specific group of synergic projects, certain co-ordination mechanisms of which have already been incorporated into the IUDP institute. The annual reports of the individual OP should include information about the IUDP in the section on synergy.

The risk of this mechanism lies in the delay arising from the approval of the IUDP itself. According to information provided by some MA the implementation of the IUDP brings questions and issues requiring co-ordination and stronger methodological support. Therefore, it would be recommendable to initiate a discussion at the CC MCC meeting about this topic and to verify the urgency of joint action.

A specific issue to be addressed is the system of premiums for projects following up the projects approved under the IUDP. The likely problems will be the time discrepancy and delay in the IUDP. If the follow-up project falls under the IUDP, it is not offered any premiums as it was awarded premiums under the IUDP.

4. Main recommendations

One of the key recommendations given by the author concerns the necessity to clarify the basic terminology related to the issues discussed, or harmonization of the equivalent understanding of issues related to synergies. We recommend issuing a “methodological sheet” (methodological instruction) specifying **basic terms** such as “synergy”, “synergic effect”, “synergic link”, etc. This methodological instruction should **clearly specify the concept** of synergies and provide straightforward guidance to the individual managing authorities when searching for, monitoring and reporting synergic projects. The definitions stipulated in this project may be used for these purposes.

Based on the conclusions of this project it is necessary to consider the modification of chapters dedicated to synergies in the programme documents. In 2008 the NCA, based on the information provided by the EC, issued the *Guidance for OP 2007-2013 Revision*, stipulating the principal parameters of OP changes. Specifically, this recommendation is focused in

particular on the Agreement on Co-operation between the OP EI and the OP RDI as it embodies many points that are not and, logically, may not actually be fulfilled.

Another substantial recommendation concerns the appointment of a person responsible for synergies (synergic links) both in the NCA and in every managing authority. We recommend always appointing **one person** who possesses **general knowledge across the operational programmes**. This is closely related to the corresponding managerial position of this person. We consider it important to ensure that such an appointed individual represents the respective managing authority at all meetings on synergies, either at the level of the Co-ordinating Committee of the MCC or other “lower” hierarchic levels of synergy co-ordination.

In terms of the top management and co-ordination of synergies the key recommendation is to **transform** the current concept of the **Co-ordinating Committees of the MCC**. We recommend transforming the Co-ordinating Committee of the MCC to a co-ordination platform engaged in the co-ordination of operational programmes emphasizing specific sectors (NSRF, Chapter 11.2) and **assurance of their synergies** with respect to the fulfilment of the NSRF objectives. In terms of synergy co-ordination we recommend changing the **internal structure** of the Co-ordinating Committee of the MCC to ensure that the internal structure corresponds to the proposed “co-ordination clusters” or larger groups of co-ordination clusters. We recommend not defining it as a fixed structure but maintaining the possibility of ad-hoc adjustment based on the issues discussed. In relation to such a structure of organizing meetings of the Co-ordinating Committee of the MCC at **two** levels:

- a) the CC meeting in its entirety;
- b) ad-hoc meetings of a selected co-ordination cluster(s) based on the current need in the area of synergy assurance always initiated upon specific questions and issues to be addressed.

In terms of the co-ordination mechanisms of ESF programmes we recommend **transferring the issues related to synergies** that are also the subject of the activities of the Co-ordinating Group of ESF Programme Managing Authorities, with respect to fundamental and methodological issues, to the **level of the Co-ordinating Committee** of the MCC as the synergic links with ESF programmes also involve other OP, which requires a uniform and systematic approach.

In relation to the assurance of synergies in terms of the ROP we also recommend **transferring the issues related to synergies** to the level of the transformed Co-ordinating Committee of the MCC as a co-ordinated and uniform approach is needed. The WG ARCR should act as the “initiation body” in terms of synergies; the discussion and adoption of

specific conclusions should be carried out at the level of the Co-ordinating Committee of the MCC.

Furthermore, the author recommends considering setting up a **point system of premiums** assigned to synergic projects. The MA, upon agreement with the NCA, should select the co-ordination clusters eligible for premiums. The nature of each co-ordination cluster and strength of the synergy within the respective links differ and thus it is necessary to select clusters eligible for premiums. The application of premiums for all links would be, in terms of programme management, inefficient as in certain cases it would bring an excessive burden for the MA without the effect justifying the incurred cost. This is related to the need to establish a standardized approach to the transfer of information about synergic projects in MSC2007 or projects with identified synergic links, with access enabled to all MA (in accordance with the pilot testing for OP EI and OP RDI), and to utilize the existing experience.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, it may be noted that the assessment of co-ordination mechanisms has provided a great number of ideas for further modification or completion. The presented report will become a good basis for subsequent discussion between the NCA and the respective MA about the real possibilities of co-ordination of the links between the operational programmes and projects and their monitoring.

Abbreviations

ARCR	Association of Regions of the Czech Republic
CC	Co-ordinating Committee
EAFRD	European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
ERDF	European Regional and Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
EU	European Union
IOP	Integrated Operational Programme
IUDP	Integrated Urban Development Plan
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MCC	Managing and Co-ordinating Committee
MLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MSC	Central Monitoring System
NCA	National Co-ordination Authority
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme
OP EC	OP Education for Competitiveness
OP EI	OP Enterprise and Innovations
OP HRE	OP Human Resources and Employment
OP PA	OP Prague Adaptability
OP PC	OP Prague Competitiveness
OP RDI	OP Research and Development for Innovations
RDP	Rural Development Programme
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
SF	Structural Funds
SO	Strategic objective
TOP	Thematic Operational Programme
WG ARCR	Working Group of the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic