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Technical Assistance
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CONTENTS:

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS 6

SECTION 1 STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION (ARTICLE 27 (1), POINT (A) OF THE FIRST SUBPARAGRAPH OF ARTICLE 96 (2) OF REGULATION (EU) 1303/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL) 8

1.1. STRATEGY FOR THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNION STRATEGY FOR SMART, SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH AND TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION 8

1. 1. 1. Description of the operational programme's strategy to contribute to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion 8

Strategy of OPTA MA 2014–2020 26

1. 1. 2. Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities based on the identification of regional or national needs including those identified by the relevant country-specific recommendations, taking into account ex-ante evaluation and with reference to the Partnership Agreement, adopted in accordance with Article 121 (2) TFEU and relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148 (4) TFEU. 30

1.2. JUSTIFICATION OF THE FINANCIAL ALLOCATION 30

SECTION 2 PRIORITY AXES 37

2.A DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES OTHER THAN TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (POINT (B) OF THE FIRST SUBPARAGRAPH OF ARTICLE 96 (2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013) 37

2.A.1 Priority axis (for each priority axis) 37

2.A.2 Justification of the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region or more than one thematic objective or more than one Fund 37

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and basis for the calculation of Union support 37

2.A.4 Investment priority 37

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results .. 37

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority 37

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be financed an their expected contribution to the corresponding specific objectives, including, where appropriate, the identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries 37

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations 37

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments 37

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects 37

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and by category of region 38

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and the contribution to thematic objectives 1 - 7 38

2.A.8 Performance framework 38

2.A.9 Categories of intervention 38

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance, where necessary, including the actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries 38

2.B DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIORITY AXES FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (POINT (C) OF THE FIRST SUBPARAGRAPH OF ARTICLE 96 (2) OF REGULATION (EU) NO 1303/2013) 39
2.B.1 PRIORITY AXIS 1: SUPPORTING THE MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT 39
2.B.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than once category of region 39
2.B.3 Fund and categories of region 39
2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-1 39
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: CREATING CONDITIONS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND COORDINATION OF MANAGEMENT 39
2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 1-1 42
2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives .. 44
2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-1 44
2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-1 51
2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-2 52
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: ENSURING AWARENESS OF THE ESIF AMONG THE TARGET GROUPS... 52
2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 1-2 53
2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-2 54
3.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-2 54
3.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-2 58
2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-3 59
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: ENHANCING CAPACITIES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ESIF AT LOWER THAN NATIONAL LEVEL 59
2.B.2 Result indicators for SO 1-3 60
2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-3 61
2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-3 61
2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-3 62
2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-4 64
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4: CREATING CONDITIONS FOR EFFECTIVE CONTROL AND AUDIT OF THE ESIF 64
2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 1-4 65
2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives .. 66
2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-4 66
2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-4 68
2.B.7 Categories of intervention for PA 1 69
2.B.1 PRIORITY AXIS 2: SINGLE MONITORING SYSTEM 70
2.B.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region 70
2.B.3 Fund and categories of region 70
2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 2-1 70
SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: ENSURING A SINGLE MONITORING SYSTEM BASED ON HIGH DEGREE OF DATA COMPUTERIZATION 70

Odstraněno: 59
Odstraněno: *60*
Odstraněno: 60
Odstraněno: *62*
Odstraněno: *63*
Odstraněno: 63
Odstraněno: 64
Odstraněno: *66*
Odstraněno: 66
Odstraněno: *67*
Odstraněno: *68*
Odstraněno: 68
Odstraněno: 70
Odstraněno: *71*
Odstraněno: 72
Odstraněno: *72*
Odstraněno: *72*
Odstraněno: *72*
Odstraněno: 72

2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 2-1 71
2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 2-1 72
2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 2-1 72
2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 2-1 79
2.B.7 Categories of intervention for PA 2 80
SECTION 3 FINANCING PLAN 82
3.1 FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM EACH OF THE FUNDS AND AMOUNTS OF PERFORMANCE RESERVE .. 82
SECTION 4 INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT 85
SECTION 5 SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS MOST AFFECTED BY POVERTY OR TARGET GROUPS AT HIGHEST RISK OF DISCRIMINATION OR SOCIAL EXCLUSION 87
SECTION 6 SPECIFIC NEEDS OF GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS WHICH SUFFER FROM SEVERE AND PERMANENT NATURAL OR DEMOGRAPHIC HANDICAPS 88
SECTION 7 AUTHORITIES AND BODIES RESPONSIBLE FOR MANAGEMENT, CONTROL AND AUDIT AND THE ROLE OF RELEVANT PARTNERS 89
7.1 RELEVANT AUTHORITIES AND BODIES 89
7.2 INVOLVEMENT OF THE RELEVANT PARTNERS 96
7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme 96
7.2.2 Global grants (for ESF) 101
7.2.3 Earmarking for capacity building (for ESF) 101
SECTION 8 COORDINATION BETWEEN THE FUNDS, THE EAFRD, THE EMFF AND OTHER UNION AND NATIONAL FUNDING INSTRUMENTS, AND WITH THE EIB 102
SECTION 9 EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES 106
9.1 EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES 106
9.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIONS TO FULFIL THE EX-ANTE CONDITIONALITIES, THE RESPONSIBLE BODIES AND A TIMETABLE FOR SUCH ACTIONS 125
SECTION 10 REDUCTION OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN FOR BENEFICIARIES 132
SECTION 11 HORIZONTAL PRINCIPLES 134
11.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT 134
11.2 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND NON-DISCRIMINATION 134
11.3 EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN 134
SECTION 12 SEPARATE ELEMENTS 135
12.1 MAJOR PROJECTS FOR WHICH THE IMPLEMENTATION IS PLANNED DURING THE PROGRAMMING PERIOD 135
12.2 PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME (ARTICLE 22(1) OF THE CPR; PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK RULES ARE NOT APPLICABLE TO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE) 135

Odstraněno: *73*
Odstraněno: *74*
Odstraněno: 74
Odstraněno: 80
Odstraněno: *81*
Odstraněno: 83
Odstraněno: 83
Odstraněno: 86
Odstraněno: 88
Odstraněno: 89
Odstraněno: 90
Odstraněno: 90
Odstraněno: *97*
Odstraněno: *102*
Odstraněno: *102*
Odstraněno: 103
Odstraněno: 107
Odstraněno: 107
Odstraněno: 126
Odstraněno: 133
Odstraněno: 135
Odstraněno: 135
Odstraněno: 135
Odstraněno: 135
Odstraněno: 136
Odstraněno: 136
Odstraněno: 136

12.3 LIST OF RELEVANT PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATION OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME 135
ANNEXES (UPLOADED TO THE SFC AS SEPARATE FILES) 137

LIST OF TABLES 155

Odstraněno: 136

Odstraněno: 138

Odstraněno: 156

List of abbreviations

AA	Audit Authority; Department of Audit Authority (MoF)
ACP	Annual Communication Plan
CA	Certifying Authority
CCP - AFCOS	Central Contact Point of AFCOS (MoF – Department of Control)
CCS	Common Communication Strategy
CF	Cohesion Fund
CR	Czech Republic
CRD	Centre for Regional Development of the Czech Republic
CSF	Common Strategic Framework
CSR	Country-specific Recommendations
DG	Directorate General
DWH	Data Warehouse
EAC	Ex-ante conditionality
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EC	European Commission
EC	European Community
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
EP	European Parliament
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
EU NCA	Evaluation Unit of National Coordination Authority
EUR	Euro
HRE	Human Resources Development
HW	Hardware
IROP	Integrated Regional Operational Programme
IB	Intermediate Body
IS	Information System
ISAO (ISAA)	Information system of Audit Authority
IT	Information Technology
ITDP	Integrated Territorial Development Plan
ITI	Integrated territorial investments
LAG	Local Action Group
MA	Managing Authority
MEYS	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports
MG	Methodological Guideline
MG HRD	Methodological Guideline for Human Resources Development in the Programming Period 2014-2020 and in the Programming Period 2007-2013
MG UII	Methodological Guideline for the Application of Integrated Instruments in the Programming Period 2014-2020
MIS	Management Information System

MIT	Ministry of Industry and Trade
MoE	Ministry of Environment
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MoT	Ministry of Transport
MRD	Ministry for Regional Development
MRD-NCA	National Coordination Authority, Ministry for Regional Development of the CR
MS	Monitoring System
NCI	National Code-list of Indicators
NET	National Electronic Tool
NRP	National Reform Programme
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OG	Office of the Government of the Czech Republic
OP	Operational Programme
OPC	Office for the Protection of Competition
OPE	Operational Programme Employment
OPTA	Operational Programme Technical Assistance
PA	Paying Agency
PA	Partnership Agreement for the 2014–2020 Programming Period
PC	Public Contract
PCA	Paying and Certifying Authority; Department of the National Fund (MoF)
PA	Priority axis
PPA	Public Procurement Act – Act No 137/2006 Coll. on public contracts, as amended
ROP	Regional Operational Programme
SAIF	State Agriculture Intervention Fund
SC	Steering Committee
SFC	Information system of the EC for electronic transfer of information on SF programmes (Structural Fund Common Database)
SMS	Single Monitoring System
SO	Specific objective
SSW	System Software
SUMPs	Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans
SW	Software
TO	Thematic Objective
UME	Uniform Methodological Environment
VIOLA	Management and Accounting system of EU Structural Funds
2014+	Programming period 2014–2020

Section 1 Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion (Article 27 (1), point (a) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council[1])

1.1. Strategy for the operational programme's contribution to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

1. 1. 1. Description of the operational programme's strategy to contribute to the delivery of the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and to the achievement of economic, social and territorial cohesion

This document, the Operational Programme Technical Assistance (hereinafter referred to as the "OPTA") 2014–2020, lays down the basic framework of objectives and strategies for their achievement in the field of management and coordination of the European Structural and Investment Funds (hereinafter referred to as the "ESIF").

In the Chapter 1.1., the overall strategy and focus of OPTA is explained and separately presented is also the strategy of the OPTA Managing Authority (hereinafter referred to as the "OPTA MA"). First of all, presented and clarified is the overall design and objectives of OPTA 2014–2020, which are based on analysis of challenges and their causes in the field of implementation of EU Funds, on identification of external factors which are outside the scope of powers of OPTA, but have an impact on the progress of implementation of OPTA and on the achievement of objectives set out in OPTA, and on selection of causes of challenges on whose elimination the OPTA will zero in. This analysis serves as a starting point for setting the particular focus of OPTA and its structure (division into priority axes and setting out the specific objectives), which are detailed in the following sub-chapters. Separately, the OPTA MA strategy is explained, which will be applied in the management and implementation of OPTA. The management and implementation strategy of OPTA builds on the overall strategy and focus of OPTA, which is why it is presented separately at the end of Chapter 1.1.

[1] Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 o 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 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006, Official Journal L 347, 20 December 2013, p. 320.

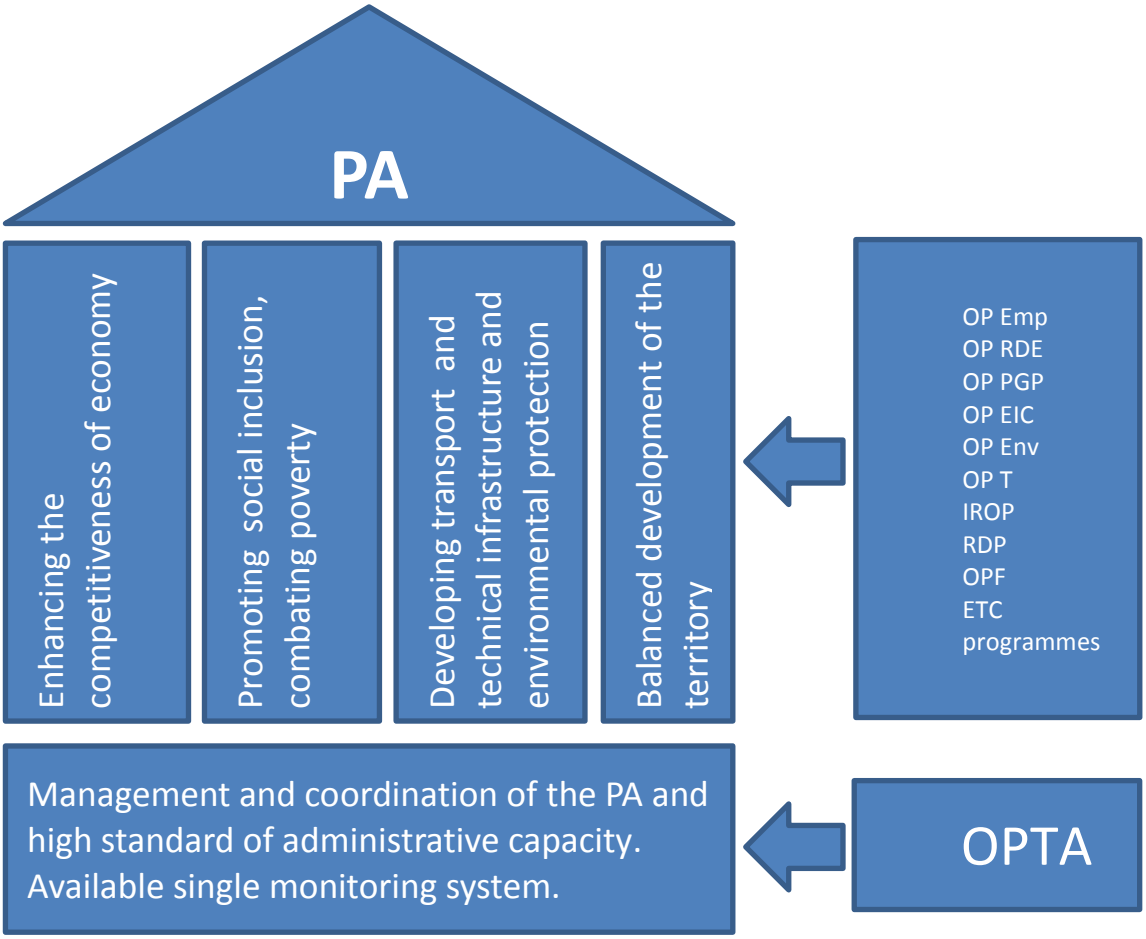
The document presents the individual priority axes, or specific objectives of the OPTA 2014–2020, their financial allocations and activities for which the support from ESIF can be obtained. It also introduces the design of the set of indicators used for physical monitoring within the operational programme (hereinafter referred to as the “OP”). Last but not least, the document presents the implementation structure of OPTA 2014–2020 and the coordination between OPTA and activities of other operational programmes in the field of technical assistance.

Strategies and objectives of OPTA 2014–2020

In order to understand the OPTA strategy and its overall design, it is essential to realise that OPTA plays an entirely different, specific role within the structure given by the Partnership Agreement (hereinafter referred to as the “PA”) than the other thematic operational programmes. Whereas the other operational programmes contribute directly to the achievement of objectives set out in the Partnership Agreement, the role of OPTA is of a supporting nature and focuses on setting out such an environment for implementation of the PA and thematic operational programmes which will facilitate and make easier the achievement of the set out objectives. Therefore, the OPTA seeks primarily to eliminate the obstacles at the level of inputs of the other operational programmes and thus has no direct effect on achieving the targets of Europe 2020 or objectives of the PA. It will, however, support the activities that will indirectly contribute to their accomplishment.

The design of OPTA builds on the underlying premise that without a central coordinator and quality, uniform management and coordination of the PA, available single monitoring system (hereinafter referred to as the “SMS”) and without ensuring a high standard of administrative capacity the results at the level of the PA would be poorer, if not unachievable. Therefore, the OPTA shall enable and facilitate the absorption of funds and first and foremost ensure the efficient use of funds that are available for the other operational programmes, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Chart of relationships between the OPTA, PA objectives and the other operational programmes



The strategic objective of OPTA is to create such setting for the ESIF implementation in which the negative factors seen in 2007–2013 period will be minimised, funds will be used more efficiently and achievement of the PA objectives will thus be made possible. OPTA will also seek to maintain high standard of management and monitoring, while respecting the principles of sound financial management, development and retention of administrative capacity, enhancing the public awareness of ESIF and improving the public opinion on ESIF.

OPTA by its nature is a support service programme providing direct support particularly to central authorities ensuring institutional coordination and management of the Partnership Agreement in the Czech Republic. On the other hand, it shall be highlighted that the main purpose of activities supported under OPTA is to ensure such activities and set up such processes that will enable to implement the ESI Funds in the Czech Republic in a more effective and efficient manner and generally in a better way than it was the case in the 2007 – 2013 programming period.

The central authorities providing for the institutional coordination and management of the Partnership Agreement in the Czech Republic are the institutions that fulfil the tasks and/or coordination function for the whole or a substantial part of one of the Investment for growth and jobs goal or the European territorial cooperation (hereinafter referred to as the "ETC"), i.e. the institutions which are involved in the implementation of ESIF directly and indirectly or in the implementation of the anti-corruption startegy within ESIF in the Czech Republic.

The support provided from OPTA 2014 – 2020, however, in line with what has been said above, does not serve only the horizontal institutions, but thanks to activities provided by horizontal institutions it also serves the other bodies and actors involved in the implementation of ESI Funds in the Czech Republic, which is reflected in the overall setup of individual priority axes and specific objectives of this programme, and thus also in the design of its set of indicators.

Ranking among the directly supported central institutions is the National Coordination Authority (hereinafter referred to as the "NCA"), the Audit Authority (hereinafter referred to as the "AA"), the Paying and Certifying Authority (hereinafter referred to as the "PCA"), and the Central Contact Point of AFCOS (hereinafter referred to as the "CCP-AFCOS"). The central institutions are the main beneficiaries and implement the individual projects under OPTA. OPTA is predominantly a spending programme since it provides financial resources to cover the salaries, operation of the information system, purchase of necessary material and equipment and outsourcing of expert services (such as evaluation, publicity) so that the Member State can fulfil some of the obligations ensuing from the Regulation.

The MRD-NCA is the authority responsible for management and coordination of the implementation of the PA, namely with respect to the achievement of its set out objectives. To this end it coordinates the implementation of programmes falling under the PA and closely cooperates with the respective bodies at the national and regional level. The MRD-NCA, as a component part of the MRD, is one of the beneficiaries as well as a target group of the OPTA 2014–2020. Hence, the key role of the MRD-NCA lies in setting out the individual minimum standards, or rules for the implementation of ESIF programmes (with account taken of the specifics of respective Funds), in monitoring the implementation of programmes and submitting proposals of measures aimed at improving the implementation of programmes and coordination of processes directed towards the attainment of the PA objectives. The MRD-NCA also plays an important role at the stage of planning, strategic management and implementation and evaluation of results of implementation of the programmes. The MRD-NCA ensures primarily the following activities:

- Management and coordination of the PA and coordination of the OP;
- Communication with the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as the EC);
- Ensuring the awareness of ESI Funds;
- Evaluation;
- Single monitoring system;
- Cooperation with partner authorities (AA, PCA and other bodies of the ESI Funds implementation structure);
- Development of human resources at the level of the PA;
- Monitoring of administrative capacity of the ESIF implementation structure (MRD 2013k).

The MRD-NCA is one of the beneficiaries of the OPTA 2014–2020 and also its main target group.

The PCA, AA and **CCP-AFCOS** are independent bodies with regard to the certification of expenditure and conduct of audits within the ESIF structure and respective programmes. They cooperate with the MRD-NCA, particularly as regards the identification of weaknesses or bottlenecks of implementation, including specific proposals for preventive measures to improve the system of absorption of support from ESIF, linked to their activities. The Ministry of Finance (hereinafter referred to as the "MoF"), comprising the AA, CCP-AFCOS, and PCA, acts as both the beneficiary and the target group of OPTA 2014–2020.

The PCA is responsible especially for drawing up and submitting payment applications to the EC, for preparing the supporting documents for verification and approval of accounts, for

certifying the completeness, accuracy and veracity as well as that the expenditure entered in the accounts complies with the applicable Union and national law. A major change in the programming period 2014–2020 consists in the obligation to draw up the accounts stipulated in Article 59 para 5 (a) of the Financial Regulation. The PCA shall for each accounting year (from 1 July of the n-1 year to 30 June of the n year) draw up the accounts which will comprise expenditure included in the applications for interim payments less the potential financial corrections. At the same time, the PCA will certify the completeness, accuracy and veracity of the accounts and that the expenditure entered in the accounts complies with the applicable law and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the operational programme and complying with applicable law. The PCA, in the framework of certification and its ongoing control activities, verifies whether the managing authorities fulfil their roles, including the observance of principles of sound financial management. Unless the CA obtains assurance that the expenditure has been duly incurred (especially that the principles of sound financial management have been observed), it can suspend, for a necessary period of time, the payment of funds and the certification in respect of the given project, priority axis (hereinafter referred to as the "PA") or the whole programme, provided it is considered necessary in order to protect the financial interests of the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the "EU").

As one the key requirements for management and control systems and classification of management and control systems concerning their efficient functioning as laid down in Article 31, **the AA** shall ensure an appropriate segregation of duties and suitable systems in order to make sure that any other body carrying out the audit in keeping with the programme audit strategy is totally independent in the performance of its duties and respects the generally accepted auditing standards. The AA will conduct audits of control systems, audits of control, audits of operations, compliance and extraordinary audits on an appropriate sample of operations, and verification of the annual accounts. Appropriate procedures shall be set out to safeguard a reliable audit opinion and to draw up the annual control reports (EC 2014c).

In the field of protection of the EU financial interests as of 1 January 2008 the MoF – Department of Control was, based on the Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as the "CR") No 1010 of 5 September 2007, authorised to act as the **Central Contact Point of AFCOS**. The MoF – Department of Control is based on the Government Resolution No 941 of 20 July 2009 also a liaison point for the Central exclusion database.

OPTA 2014–2020 is not directly linked to any thematic objective (hereinafter referred to as the "TO") or any investment priority. By its nature and focus it contributes to improving the functioning of the implementation structure that is a component of public administration, which is closely linked to TO 11 – Enhancing institutional capacity and efficient public administration.

The OPTA and the area covered by TO 11 share many common features. Public administration, just like the OPTA, is not directly linked to any quantified targets of Europe 2020 strategy, it is rather a horizontal area demanded across the flagship initiatives and Integrated Guidelines, closely linked to shortcomings identified in Country-Specific Recommendations of the Council and the Position Paper. For OPTA, it concerns particularly the deficiencies suffered in the implementation of EU funds, identified based on experience and analyses (see the next chapter). Potential shortcomings in the field of public administration and particularly in the field of implementation of interventions from the EU funds would, however, impede or thwart other public policies directed to the delivery of Europe 2020 strategy targets, or the Partnership Agreement objectives.

The OPTA focuses on challenges and reflects the needs of all ESIF, including the European Social Fund (hereinafter referred to as the "ESF"). The ESF education is also reflected primarily

in the system of education and training and in the monitoring system, where the requirements of Annex 1 to the Regulation on ESF will have to be satisfied.

Starting points for OPTA focus – identification of problems and their causes in the implementation of EU funds.

Identification of the existing problems is a necessary step for articulating any policy and its directions. As explained in the previous part, the OPTA focuses first and foremost on the overall environment and conditions for the implementation of EU funds which have an effect on the absorption and use of available resources. The cardinal issues that shall be addressed with respect to the Funds and their implementation and on which the OPTA will focus in the period 2014–2020, have been identified mainly based on experience gained in the programming period 2007–2013 and its analysis, conducted evaluations, and also based on the SWOT analysis for both the periods by intervention area (MRD 2013l). Annex 2 presents the main conclusions of the carried out analyses and evaluations with respect to the objectives of 2014–2020 period. The conclusions were projected into specific objectives (hereinafter referred to as the "SO") of individual priority axes and the recommendations for implementation and monitoring of the period 2014–2020 will be taken into account by the OPTA MA during the performance of related activities.

The implementation of ESIF in the programming period 2007–2013 showed not only multiple achievements, but also a number of deficiencies. The combinations of these deficiencies resulted in the use of ESIF which in many respects was far from being optimal. The failure to use the ESIF in an optimal manner can be demonstrated by the fact that the rule of automatic decommitment was applied at the end of 2013 and that the CR ranks among those EU-27 countries that show a lower absorption of funds with less than 42 % of payments sent to the EC for reimbursement as against the average 53 % (MRD 2013b, p. 1). The CR thus failed to use a part of the available funds in the amount of several billion Czech crowns. Where funds are not used at all, they are naturally not used in an optimal manner and the set out objectives cannot be achieved. The non-optimal use of funds can then hinder the further qualitative development of the Czech Republic. The OPTA will focus primarily on eliminating the risk that this problem persists and continues in the programming period 2014–2020.

The crucial problems related to non-optimal use of resources available from the EU Funds are caused by a number of reasons, both at the level of the Czech Republic and the EC. As illustrated below, these causes are related and reinforce each other. It is difficult to identify clear and causal relationships since some of the causes are interconnected.

The main causes are the following:

1. **Complicated design of the system of the ESIF and poor coordination of the preparation of national legislation with the implementation structure bodies of the ESI Funds**

The system of the ESIF is set out based on the combination of Union and Czech legislation and other rules established specifically in line with conditions of the respective implemented programmes. The complicated set up of the system and the introduced rules has led to high technical complexity of implementation of particular supported projects. One of the examples of the adopted complex rules impacting the effectiveness and smoothness of the absorption of allocated funds can be e.g. the public procurement rules, which we consider as an example of a complicated system for entities who implement the supported projects, playing the role of contracting entities.

The setup of the public procurement rules perceived as complicated by beneficiaries thus in the programming period 2007–2013 represented one of the obstacles to smooth drawdown of resources from the EU Funds, both with respect to the quality of award procedures and the observance of rules by beneficiaries and huge numbers of petitions filed by unsuccessful tenderers to the Office for the Protection of Competition (hereinafter referred to as the "OPC"), which were conducive to considerable delays in absorption. The enormous number of appeals was apparently also brought about by the impacts of economic crisis and cutbacks in government investments that resulted in a major reduction in the number of PC and in an increased pressure among tenderers.

The public procurement rules, which are in case of programmes financed from the EU funds based on the MA decision often times even more stringent than the Union or national legislation, frequently constitute the greatest challenge for aid beneficiaries. The beneficiaries find the rules to be complicated and due to these excessively strict rules they err more often, and frequently such errors result also in financial penalties.

Moreover, already at the national legislation level, the wording of some sections of the Act No 137/2006 Coll., the Public Procurement Act, as amended (hereinafter referred to as the "PPA") is considered by beneficiaries to be risky since in some areas the beneficiaries can rarely award the respective public contract and at the same time to satisfy all the statutory requirements of the PPA (MRD 2013b, p.11).

Another cardinal issue in the area of public procurement, that became evident in the 2007 – 2013 programming period, was the poor reflection of requirements and needs of bodies of the implementation structure of the EU funds in drafting the national legislation. In the course of this programming period the amendment to the PPA came into force which had a major effect on the whole process of the award of public contracts (the prohibition to conclude the contract for the delivery of the public contract where only one bid was submitted). Regarding the implementation structure of the EU funds, the amendment was adopted even though the relevant MA had pointed at the issues which will definitely arise as a result of applying this amendment to the field of science and research since the amendment will thwart the award of public contracts in the field of top notch science and research that requires the purchase of top-of-the-line technology for the centres of excellence and regional research centres built in the Czech Republic , where due to the specific nature of equipment to be purchased the submission of a single bid only is common and is not brought about by inappropriate or discriminatory requirements of the contracting entity.

Deficiencies have prevailed on the part of the contracting entities – the contracting entities fail to familiarize themselves with the public procurement rules in sufficient detail or do not know them at all. In some cases the public procurement rules are circumvented. Ranking among other related issues is the high turnover of employees of the contracting entities, late familiarization with the public procurement rules and inadequate number of staff designated to the award of public contracts. In some cases the contracting entities are unable to correctly define the subject of the PC.

In the period 2007–2013, the personal capacities ensuring the public procurement procedures were also inadequate and were not appropriately trained to manage the public procurement procedures at their workplaces and to perform activities related to public investments. There was also a higher turnover rate of this staff, inter alia partly also due to the non-existence of the Civil Service Act.

2. Tendency to corruption and fraud in the implementation of EU funds

In the programming period 2007–2013, also the cases of a misuse of funds granted from the EU Funds occurred. In several operational programmes major negative impacts on public budgets

were reported and in a few cases the absorption of funds was generally suspended (ERNST & YOUNG 2013, p. 2-3). The reasons behind the misuse of funds and negative impacts on the state budget were particularly the following:

- Lack of any concept in combating corruption in Funds;
- Introduction of remedial mechanisms ex-post;
- Inconsistence of rules and procedures.

3. **Lengthy and administratively intensive closure of the programming period 2004-2006 and late launch of the programming period 2007–2013, resulting frequently in prioritizing of fast absorption over the search for quality projects**

Some of the programmes of the 2004 – 2006 programming period have so far not been closed. Their protracted closure increases the administrative demandingness of the whole process.

4. **Another identified issue was the late launch of implementation of programmes in the period 2007–2013 which together with the rules and pressure to draw down and fully absorb all the available funds has in some cases resulted in giving preference to the absorption of funds at any cost instead of to searching for quality projects with demonstrable effects.**
5. **Shortcomings in the Czech institutional setting at the level of public administration, impacting also the way of implementation of the ESI Funds programmes in the Czech Republic**

In all the international comparisons the institutional setting is considered to be one of the greatest weaknesses of the Czech Republic. On account of non-existence of the Civil Service Act, the public administration is unstable, suffers from frequent changes and it takes great pains to maintain continuity. Public administration is largely politicised. The image of public administration in the eyes of society is unfavourable, the confidence in public administration institutions is low.

The need to develop and improve public administration is embedded in many national as well as European strategic documents and recommendations. The key document at the European level is the Country-specific Recommendations (CSR) of the Council on the National Reform Programme 2013 (hereinafter referred to as the “NRP”) which comprise a list of main actions that should be taken by the Member State in the given year. Public administration is covered by recommendation No 5: “Ensure implementation of the anti-corruption strategy for 2013-2014. Adopt a Civil Service Act that should ensure a stable, efficient and professional state administration service. Improve the management of EU funds in view of the 2014-2020 programming period. Strengthen the capacity for implementation of public contracts at local and regional level (EC 2013b, p. 6)“.

In the field of public administration, in response to Council recommendation No 5, the NRP lays down the following four areas and related priorities and measures:

- Quality and transparent public administration – adoption of the Civil Service Act.
- Combating corruption – drafting the amendment to Act on the conflict of interest, elaborating a draft act that will apart from bearer shares ensure the transparency of ownership also in corporations with registered shares, protection of whistlerblowers, etc.
- Management of resources from EU Funds in the programming period 2014–2020.
- Award of PC – preparation of a horizontal educational programme, higher stress on methodological activities (Resolution of the CR Government 2014, p. 16–18).

In the context of implementation of the ESI Funds, the generally lower quality of public administration in the Czech Republic is also often seen in unclear specification of roles of individual divisions and individual employees of the implementation structure of the EU funds, which in the area of management and implementation of the EU funds constitutes a much more serious problem than in other public administration agendas in the Czech Republic (due to a higher degree of possibility to regulation and control the agendas associated with the implementation of the ESI Funds). To be specific, it concerns frequent duplications of agendas of various bodies or divisions of individual bodies involved in the management, implementation or control of programmes financed from the EU Funds or on the contrary inadequate interlinkage of tasks of the MA and other public sector bodies outside the implementation structure of the ESI Funds. Thus, in practice such situations often occur, when the opinions of individual stakeholders are in contradiction, which substantially hampers the implementation of projects by beneficiaries and their ability to understand the entire system of implementation of individual programmes, or certain MA decisions take much longer time on account of long deadlines for addressing a certain requirement by another public administration body outside the implementation structure of the ESI Funds.

Another serious shortcoming of the Czech institutional setting of public administration is also poor cooperation of some sponsors of the national legislation with the MAs of the ESI Funds programmes, in consequence of which the new legal acts often do not appropriately reflect the requirements and the MA warnings against potential risks of newly drafted legislation, namely also in situations, when the newly drafted legislation can dramatically deteriorate conditions for the use of assistance from the EU Funds in the Czech Republic.

6. Inadequate exploitation of positive effects of natural turnover of employees in the implementation structure of the ESI Funds in the Czech Republic and negative impacts of political pressures on employees of the ESI implementation structure in the Czech Republic

In 2012, the total turnover of implementation structure employees reached 13 %, while in the preceding years it was even much higher (19 % in 2011, 21 % in 2010) (MRD 2013m).

According to the NCA expert estimates, the employees mostly changed positions within the implementation structure of the ESI Funds in the Czech Republic.

In the Czech Republic, however, the turnover of employees of the ESI Funds implementation structure in the Czech Republic is considered to be rather a negative phenomenon and is not perceived as an opportunity to transfer the knowledge and experience from one body of the implementation structure to another.

A clearly negative example of employee turnover in the Czech Republic is especially the turnover caused by political influences (low quality of public institutions and non-existence of the Civil Service Act allow for major political interventions) and the associated movements of experts – managers, including the members of their teams, with the implementation structure.

It was this turnover of employees which in the programming period 2007 – 2013 became one of the most frequent causes of destabilisation of administrative capacity of individual bodies.

7. Limited use of evaluations and their inconsistent quality

Without evaluations conducted in a quality manner it is more difficult to ascertain the exact contribution of ESIF and impacts of projects implemented with the support from these funds. Limited use of evaluations and misunderstanding of their benefits is brought about by short tradition of evaluations in the Czech Republic and a shortage of quality human resources in this

field both on a certain part of the demand side (public administration) and on a certain part of the supply side (evaluation companies).

The challenge, however, is not only the lack of quality human resources on the part of contracting entities and often also the evaluators themselves, but particularly the shortage of information on the benefits of evaluations among all the senior staff operating not only in the implementation structure of the ESI Funds but also outside it.

Focus of OPTA

OPTA responds mainly to the need to learn from to date experience with the implementation of ESIF and to prevent the problems described in the previous section from recurring. OPTA will therefore focus primarily on eliminating or preventing the identified causes of the to-date non-optimal use of the ESI Funds in the Czech Republic.

Not all the identified and described causes of this cardinal issue, however, directly fall under the scope of OPTA and can thus be addressed directly by OPTA interventions. Some of the described causes were therefore identified by the analysis rather as external factors. An external factor is a factor lying outside the scope of the programme concerned, i.e. the programme can have no or only a minimum effect on it, whereas the factor affects the ability of the programme to achieve the set out objectives and results. The awareness of external factors and actors who, contrary to the OPTA, have a strong influence on their development, is essential for setting out the strategy of OPTA. The development of external factors will be continuously monitored throughout the implementation of OPTA, while wherever it is possible the OPTA will also contribute to their addressing at least indirectly (e.g. through providing quality education and training in the field of combatting corruption and fraud).

For OPTA, 3 causes of the identified cardinal issues have been pinpointed as external factors: complicated set up of the Cohesion policy, tendency to corruption and fraud in the implementation of the EU Funds and shortcomings of the Czech institutional setting at the level of public administration.

The identified external factors are due to their significance to a large degree covered by ex-ante conditionalities (see also Chapter 9), and therefore appropriately addressed by the responsible authorities of the Czech Republic. Some external factors (particularly the public procurement rules and a higher tendency to corruption and fraud in the implementation of the EU funds or complicated set up of the ESIF system and poor coordination of the preparation of national legislation with the bodies of the ESIF implementation structure) will also be impacted by OPTA, especially through the design of rules and procedures within the uniform methodological environment (hereinafter referred to as the “UME“) and through horizontal level educational activities. More details on external factors are given in Table 1.

Table 1 Description of external factors of OPTA

1. Complicated setup of the Cohesion policy and poor coordination of the preparation of national legislation with bodies of the ESIF implementation structure
This area is to be improved especially through activities under PA 1 SO 1 (including e.g. the introduction of uniform methodological environment or the transfer and sharing of information with the EC and other Member States) and also by more precise definition of roles of individual bodies of the ESI Funds implementation structure in the Czech Republic, the NCA in particular. Specifically, for the programming period 2014 – 2020, the NCA role has been substantially strengthened, namely with respect to the other bodies of the ESI Funds

implementation structure in the Czech Republic. The reinforced powers of the NCA are, however, accompanied also by higher responsibility for ensuring the coordinated approach of the ESI Funds implementation structure in the Czech Republic vis-à-vis the other bodies of the public administration in the Czech Republic as well as to the EC, to be borne by the NCA in the programming period 2014 – 2020. Next to the MAs, the NCA will thus newly represent, the main partner of sponsors of the national legislation that through its focus influences also the environment in which the ESI Funds are implemented in the Czech Republic.

As far as the public procurement is concerned, it is covered by ex-ante conditionality No 4.

At the level of activities ensured by the OPTA, the public procurement related matters are addressed also within the UME, defined by the NCA, namely specifically through the Methodological Guideline for the Award of Public Contracts for the Programming Period 2014-2020 (MRD 2014g). The aim is to ensure the maximum consistency of obligations of contracting authorities across the individual OPs. These are obligations of contracting authorities laid down in the MG, which have to be incorporated by all the managing authorities in their binding documents. The MG also introduces model documents and simplified procedures e.g. for assessing and evaluating the bids.

The shortcomings on the part of the contracting entities of public contracts are reflected primarily in the educational activities of OPTA – the area of public procurement and its rules will become the focus of education for the whole ESIF implementation structure employees supported under PA 1 SO 1. The area of PC is also a component part of horizontal themes, which will be on the agenda of training courses to be provided from OPTA, while an emphasis will be laid on deepening the knowledge through the system of education and training with a view to increase the professional competence of capacities for the implementation and control of PC.

2. Tendency to corruption and fraud in the implementation of EU Funds

As stated above, the complicated set up of the Cohesion policy results primarily in a potential stronger tendency to fraud and corruption with respect to the Funds. From the OPTA MA perspective, **the combating corruption takes place along three levels – along the level of the whole CR and the CR policy, along the level of ESIF and along the level of OPTA**. The new direction of fight against corruption was approved by the Government through the Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No 418/2014 of 4 June 2014, namely based on the document called “Guidelines for Combatting Corruption at the Government Level“.

The underlying premises for combatting corruption are the following:

- Legislative activities as the crucial activity.
- The legal norms shall be drafted only after an in-depth analysis of their society-wide impacts, i.e. also the potential effects of corruption.
- Corruption risks shall be looked for in the existing legal order, namely in focus areas.
- Coordination activities shall focus also on non-legislative tasks – particularly on the implementation of internal anti-corruption programmes, education and transparency in its broadest sense.
- Instead of lengthy strategies, the “Anti-Corruption Action Plans” for individual years shall be drawn up.
- The future Anti-Corruption Action Plans shall apart from the national priorities comprise also the recommendations articulated on the grounds of the membership of the Czech Republic in international organisations, or the European Commission.
- As concerns the institutional background, at the government level the fight against

corruption shall be under the patronage of an advisory body of the Government, namely the Government Anti-Corruption Committee.

In **combating corruption at the level of the Czech Republic**, the key document is the document "From Corruption to Integrity" – the Government anti-corruption strategy for the period 2013–2014, which was approved through Resolution of the CR Government No 39 of 16 January 2013. This document has been replaced by the "Anti-Corruption Action Plan for 2015" and by the "Government Anti-Corruption Policy for the years 2015 - 2017" approved by the Government Resolution No 1057/2014 of 15 December 2014. The documents are implemented at the national level, and will also be subject to evaluations.

At the level of ESIF, it is the document called "Strategy to combat fraud and corruption in the absorption of ESIF in the period 2014–2020" (ERNST & YOUNG 2013) and the associated action plan. The Strategy to combat fraud and corruption is the document governing the fight against fraud and corruption, namely in all areas of management and implementation of ESIF. In terms of sequence of activities associated with the drawdown of ESIF, the Strategy is applicable to activities ranging from the preparation of operational programmes up to their closure. The Strategy complies with the valid national and Union legislation on combating fraud and corruption. The main aim of the Strategy is to minimise the frauds in the implementation of ESIF in the period 2014–2020. This strategy is incorporated through the UME into other methodological documents and the OPTA MA also adopts measures/design in the guidance documents of the programme. The anti-corruption strategy is complemented for example by the MG for risk management (MRD 2013) which is a part of UME. It will underpin the monitoring and evaluation of risk of corruption in the implementation of EU Funds. The tools that are to be used in combating corruption can be summed up in the key points below:

1) Transparency

- SMS - computerisation of processes (for more see PA 2 SO 1)
- Introduction of e-government
- UME – unification of rules and procedures – simplification of rules (for more see Chapter 10)
- Regular monitoring and evaluation of the significance of fraud risk under the implementation of the ESIF, and information sharing
- Making information available to the general public through www.dotaceEU.cz website (regularly updated list of all aid beneficiaries, EUROFON free-of-charge information line and on-line chat, library of all conducted evaluations, updated and detailed status of absorption, etc.), under the UME the Methodological Guideline for Publicity has been adopted that prohibits the use of pictures of politicians during election campaigns and according to which the annual communication plans are to be approved by the monitoring committees, including the budget and its potential overrun

2) Public procurement and state aid (for more see the Ex-ante conditionalities)

- More intensive computerisation of public procurement
- Monitoring the process of award of public contracts
- Prohibition of discriminatory criteria
- Update of the central register of de minimis aid – the data are in the SMS

3) Measures to prevent conflicts of interest

- Introduction of the employee Code of Conduct across the implementation structure (for more see the MG HRD)
- Enabling the use of Arachne or a similar system by the MA

Measures applied in **combating corruption at the level of OPTA** are described in more detail in Chapter 7.1. Based on lessons learned in the 2007-2013 programming period, the educational activities focused on the area of combating corruption intended for the implementation structure of ESIF will continue to be provided. The OPTA Managing Authority shall, in addressing particular and specific needs, also cooperate with non-governmental non-profit organisations. The non-governmental non-profit organisations are highly competent to provide, where a need arises, the relevant specific expertise for example in the area of transparency, fight against corruption, education, and others. These activities will be supported under PA 1 SO 1.

3. Shortcomings in the institutional setting at the level of public administration impacting also the way of implementation of the ESI Funds in the Czech Republic
The key measures that have to be taken are particularly the completion of public administration reform, including the interventions financed from ESIF under thematic objective 11 (especially the Operational Programme Employment and the Integrated Regional Operational Programme and the adoption of the Civil Service Act. This area, however, is entirely outside the direct scope of OPTA and has to be closely monitored and, where appropriate, the adoption of necessary measures has to be pressed for. Nonetheless, under OPTA an emphasis will be laid on building and developing quality administrative capacity which implements the ESIF, through setting out a uniform methodological environment, specifically by means of the Methodological guideline for human resources development in the programming period 2014–2020 and in the programming period 2007–2013 (hereinafter referred to as the "MG HRD"). Moreover, the introduction of UME helps strengthen the role of the NCA in the whole implementation structure of the ESIF in the Czech Republic, by which in the 2014 – 2020 programming period the NCA can become inter alia the main partner of sponsors of the national legislation influencing the manner of implementation of the ESIF in the Czech Republic. Public administration and enhancing its quality and efficiency is also addressed by the thematic ex-ante conditionality No 11.

OPTA will, especially through its support to activities of horizontal institutions, focus on eliminating and preventing the other causes of the cardinal issue so that in the period 2014–2020 improvements are made and problems are eliminated in absorption and fulfilment of objectives of the PA. Table 2 gives an overview of individual causes of the issue and the way it will be addressed by the OPTA and horizontal institutions supported from OPTA.

Table 2 Causes and actions supported from OPTA

1. Complicated set up of the system of the ESIF and poor coordination of the preparation of national legislation with bodies of the ESIF implementation structure
The complicated set up of the system of ESIF is to be addressed primarily by the UME. The UME can be characterised as uniform standards which, with appropriate implementation and clear definition of roles and responsibilities at all levels of management of the drawdown of ESIF, will ensure efficient, effective, transparent and enforceable system of support from the European Funds. The process of uniform standardisation encompasses a portfolio of

procedures, from unifying the used terms (terminology) via the continuity of processes and selected deadlines up to the control procedures (MRD 2013d).
UME aims to:

- Simplify the administrative procedures;
- Facilitate easier orientation of the applicant/beneficiary in the system of granting the support;
- Improve the communication between applicant/beneficiary and the grant provider;
- Establish uniform and clear rules;
- Cut short the administrative deadlines;
- Ensure efficiency and economy of spending the funds;
- Influence the legislation so that the conditions of the ESIF administration are simplified.

The UME and the SMS should be instrumental in simplifying the project implementation for aid beneficiaries and reducing the administrative burden of applicants and beneficiaries. The support from OPTA will ensure that the UME will throughout the programming period 2014 – 2020 be continuously further monitored and evaluated and based on the experience gained also modified. In addition, under PA 1 SO 1 in the framework of UME the activities of horizontal institutions will be ensured that guarantee e.g. also the provision of ongoing methodological and consultancy support to all components of the ESIF implementation structure in the Czech Republic. Under PA 2, the operation and full functionality of the UME used for the implementation of the ESIF in the Czech Republic will be safeguarded.

The supported measures are thus ensured above all through the administrative capacity which creates the UME. Important is also its high expertise and close link to the coordinated system of education and training.

2. Lengthy and administratively intensive closure of the programming period 2004-2006 and late launch of the programming period 2007–2013, resulting frequently in the prioritizing of fast absorption over the search for quality projects

Based on the experience with the closure of programmes of the programming period 2004-2006, the OPTA will through PA 1 SO 1 and PA 1 SO 3 support the consistent closure of programmes supported in the 2007 – 2013 programming period.
Moreover, in order to prevent a late launch of the period 2021+, activities focused on ensuring the preparation of 2021+ period will be supported from OPTA. All the components of the implementation structure as well as the potential applicants and beneficiaries will thus for example be provided with timely updated information on preparation of the programming period 2021+, uniform methodological guidance for the preparation of new programmes and their implementation will be elaborated, etc. This type of support is covered by PA 1 SO 1-2.

Measures to support the applicants and beneficiaries through for example information and publicity actions will be financed.

3. Inadequate exploitation of positive effects of natural turnover of employees in the implementation structure of the ESI Funds in the Czech Republic and negative impacts of political pressures on employees of the ESI implementation structure in the Czech Republic

The issue of high turnover of employees is addressed particularly by the MG HRD, which defines uniform minimum requirements for quality administrative capacity and is an integral

part of the UME. In addition, it comprises processes of the system of management and development of human resources, from human resources planning via the recruitment, selection and adaptation of employees, management and evaluation of employees, up to the system of education and dismissal of employees. It lays down also the rules for the use of outsourcing which is limited by the MG HRD to specific activities that the internal administrative capacity is incapable of or the performance of which is inefficient, such as the provision of specialised legal, economic and other experts, etc. The MG HRD is binding. It builds on the valid national and Union legislation governing human resources and staffing, and takes into account the future Civil Service Act, or its proposal known at the time of drawing up of the MG HRD. The wording of the MG will be updated in compliance with the wording of the Civil Service Act once it is adopted or takes effect.

The MG HRD was elaborated based on the analysis of experience from the programming period 2007–2013 in the area of administrative capacity and education, which revealed the following strengths of the existing system for development of human resources:

- Well-designed system of education which facilitates central training of EU Funds employees in all principal cross-cutting areas;
- Well designed and thoroughly worked-out system of selection of employees (see Government Resolution No 313/2012) which is non-existent in the remaining part of state administration and which ensures transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination;
- Financial incentives, or compensations to offset the demanding nature of activities performed with respect to the EU Funds (see the bonuses stipulated in Government Resolution No 444/2014) – introduction of a single framework for financial incentives within the implementation structure helped reduce the turnover rate of employees;
- System of type positions, including the basic description of activities carried out in the framework of implementation and requirements for knowledge/education and competences.

The following factors are considered the weaknesses of the system of development of human resources:

- Absence of a UME in the field of administrative capacity, or a consistent methodology which would provide an all-embracing approach to subsequent processes of management and development of human resources;
- In some OPs, the design of the implementation structure has proven inadequate with regard to the volume of activities in later stages, due to which outsourcing was used also in activities that were supposed to be performed by the basic type positions;
- Insufficient coverage of processes by type positions has shown also an excessive workload (together with high requirements for qualification of the person performing the activity).

Supported from OPTA will be measures leading to the retention of administrative capacity. Rules for selection of employees, their assessment and professional development will be defined and observed. The number and type of positions will be allocated based on the Report on Administrative Capacity that shall be continuously updated. Last but not least, regular monitoring and evaluation of the turnover of staff, transparency and regularity of public procurement and consistent approach of relevant actors will take place. If, in spite of that, there is a markedly higher employee turnover in the IS, the need arises to ensure that the leaving of the employee has no effect on smooth operation of the body, including continuing education of a new employee in the new agenda. The transfer of experience from employees moving within the IS bodies can also be considered positive.

In conclusion, an appropriately set system of remuneration and rewards (including financial incentives), also based on experience from the 2007–2013 period, will result in reducing the

employee turnover and in ensuring stability of the implementation structure. The rules governing the remuneration and rewards shall be transparent; compliant with the conditions and limits laid down in the Civil Service Act and in the relevant implementing legal acts, in the MG HRD, and shall be set to reflect the findings on effects of remuneration on motivation of employees (Pink 2009) .

4. Limited use of evaluations and their inconsistent quality

Owing to the underdeveloped evaluation base and its low quality, the OPTA will focus on its support. Development of evaluation environment is a new area to which more attention will be paid in the period 2014–2020. To cover this area the MRD-NCA has elaborated the so called MG for evaluations in the programming period 2014-2020 (MRD 2014 f), which sets out the basic standards for the process of evaluation with a view to align the approaches, sharing of information and knowledge under the ESIF. An evaluation unit will be established at the MRD-NCA which will play the role of the national coordinator of evaluations and ensure communication with the evaluation units at the level of EC and programmes.

The OPTA will cover the labour costs of evaluators at the MRD-NCA and OPTA MA and also the costs of specialised courses on evaluation within the system of education of the whole implementation structure of ESIF. Further, thanks to the support from OPTA, the ongoing fulfilment of the evaluation plan of the Partnership Agreement as well as of the evaluation plan of OPTA will be ensured.

As a part of the ongoing monitoring of OPTA, monitored will also be the number of duly completed and published final evaluation reports, but also the acting upon the recommendations and the number of thematic areas where changes were made based on suggestions resulting from evaluations.

Moreover, support will be channelled to measures under the OPTA, with stress on education and training and transfer of information from evaluations, and the educational events and shared information focusing on this area will be made available not only to employees of the whole ESIF implementation structure, but also to other partners, namely including the public administration employees operating outside the ESIF Implementation structure and to external evaluators. For more information see PA 1 SO 1.

5. Dubious media image of the ESIF

The media image of EU Funds at the horizontal level is at the heart of attention of communication activities that are under the umbrella of the MG for publicity of ESIF (hereinafter referred to as the “MG Publicity”), which is binding and lays down the fundamental common rules, exploiting the experience from the previous programming period. The MG Publicity sets out primarily:

- Rules for publicity in compliance with the principles of transparency, 3E and other methodological guidelines e.g. so that the communication activities covered from EU Funds do not serve to promote certain politicians, are not abused for pre-election campaigns, are objective, impartial, use the language comprehensible for the target group instead of the Eurojargon, etc.
- Single interpretation of the Union regulations and other documents related to the publicity of EU Funds in the programming period 2014–2020.
- Uniform rules for the imposition of penalties for not keeping up to the mandatory publicity rules. In this field, inconsistent interpretation prevailed in the programming period 2007–2013, and thus also inconsistent penalties were imposed for the same errors. Hence, the rules have been unified in order to put in place a clear and single mechanism of penalties.

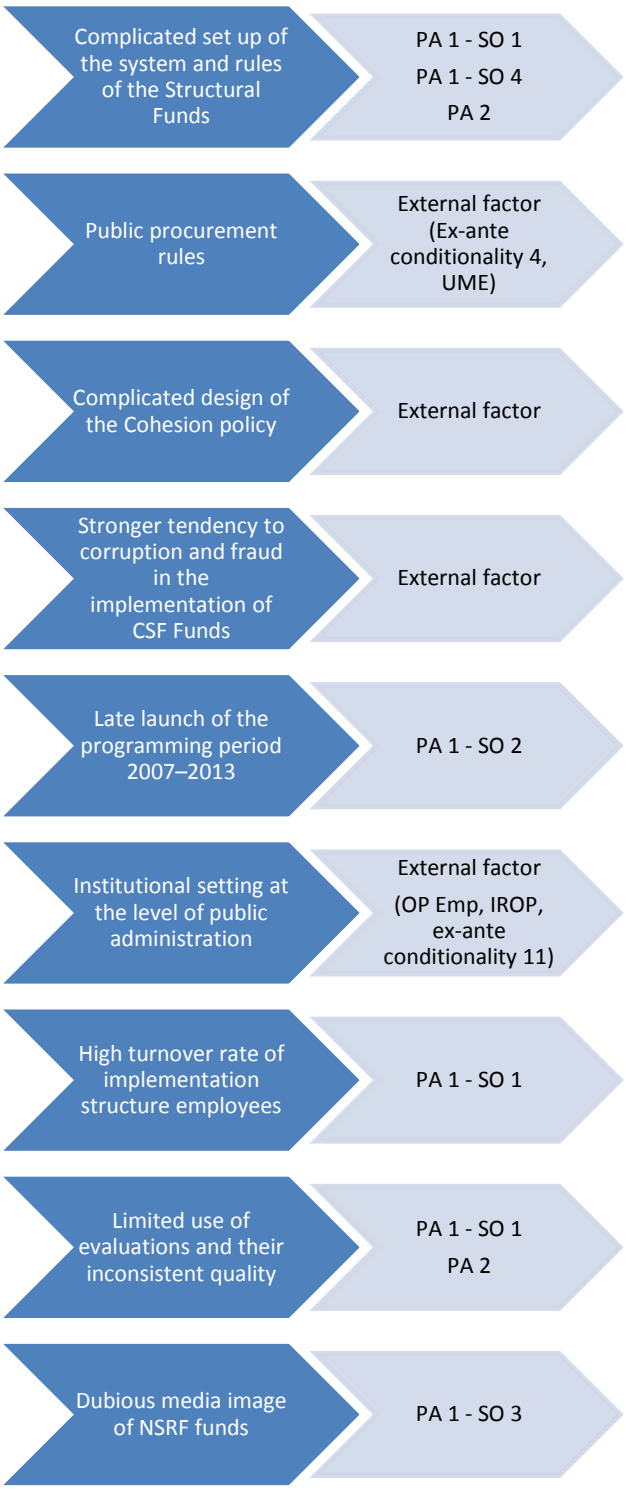
- Maximum use of the potential of synergies between the communication activities of individual managing authorities.
- Reinforcing the role of the MRD-NCA.
- Decreasing the number of logos to minimum. The number of logos in the programming period 2007–2013 was not good. The surveys repeatedly indicated that people get lost in the high number of logos.
- Common measurable indicators in the form of result indicators.
- Drawing up the Common communication strategy which will replace the multi-annual communication plans of individual (operational) programmes.
- Single procedure followed in the evaluation of communication activities.

Under the OPTA, measures will be covered that support publicity activities, which will contribute to positive image of the ESI Funds and create comprehensive and transparent media coverage of the ESI Funds.

Structure of OPTA

OPTA is divided into two priority axes. In PA 1, the OPTA will focus on ensuring conditions for coordination and management of the Partnership Agreement through covering the labour costs and expenditure of horizontal institutions, development of human resources, fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (SO 1), publicity and communication at the level of the PA and EU Funds (SO 2), on support of capacities for the implementation of ESIF at lower than national level (SO 3), and on ensuring the conduct of an independent audit (SO 4). PA 2 will concentrate predominantly on the single monitoring system. Owing to the necessity to maintain the audit trail, it is also necessary to keep and maintain the functioning of the current monitoring system 2007-2013.
Under individual SOs, support is also channelled to activities on preparation of the programming period 2021+.
Areas which did not come out from the conducted analyses and evaluations (it concerns particularly the activities such as fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities and preparation of the period 2021+), are included in PAs and SOs due to the newly specified obligations ensuing especially from the Partnership Agreement and related documents, since the MRD-NCA and OPTA MA shall safeguard the fulfilment of this Agreement and coordinate the management of ESIF. The overview of causes of the cardinal issue, on the elimination of which the OPTA shall concentrate, and external factors with effect on achieving the objectives of OPTA are depicted in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Overview of causes of the cardinal issue and their links to PAs and SOs of OPTA



PAs of OPTA complement the PAs of technical assistance of the other operational programmes. The demarcation line between the OPTA and PAs of the other OPs is set in a simple manner – OPTA focuses exclusively on all horizontal activities and activities at the level of the PA. The PAs of Technical assistance then finance activities associated with the specific OP (e.g. specific education, provision of information on a specific operational programme, etc.). More details on

borderlines between the OPTA and TA of individual OPs are described and explained in Chapter 8.

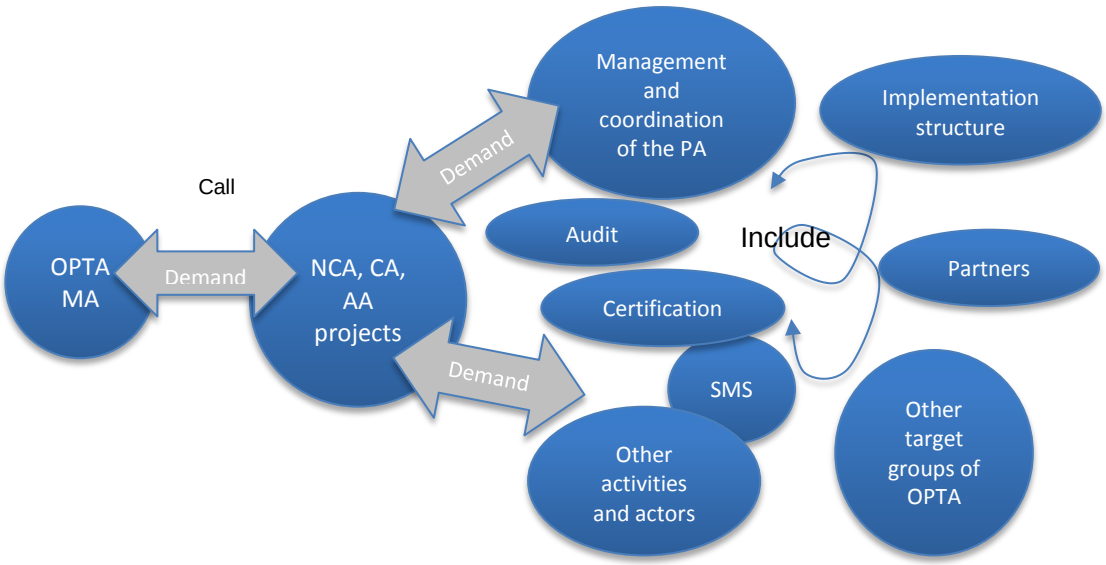
Strategy of OPTA MA 2014–2020

Each OP, provided the set out results are to be achieved through the supported projects, shall understand that it is necessary to influence and support primarily the project holders. The MA then has to choose the way of work with these project holders. There are three basic strategies and ways of work with project holders: innovator, enhancer and solution manager. Whereas the innovator concentrates primarily on supporting the projects holders and other partners to continuously (re) develop new products and services to satisfy the new needs of target groups and deploy them until they become stable and mainstream, the enhancer supports the project holders in a highly efficient way to produce (a higher volume) of already existing products and services to satisfy the existing needs of the target groups. The solution manager then does not focus on specific products or services, but on developing detailed knowledge concerning specific challenges the project holders are facing regarding their target groups and working closely with them to solve these challenges (for more details see Wauters 2013, p. 90-105).

The primary strategy of OPTA will be that of the solution manager. OPTA is a support programme for horizontal institutions at the level of the PA and will focus on their support in solving their challenges emerging in the course of the programming period 2014–2020. The OPTA in line with the solution manager strategy will not directly develop or introduce the necessary solutions, but will support the individual actors in their continuous joint discovering and seeking the ways how to overcome the challenges, including the developing of detailed knowledge and skills regarding the solutions for selected challenges.

The main content of OPTA work will therefore be primarily the support of horizontal institutions through a portfolio of made to measure activities and discussions with various actors who cooperate with each other and with their target groups. The strategy and way of work of OPTA MA is illustrated in Figure 3. The OPTA MA publishes calls based on the demand of horizontal institutions and within these supports such projects that safeguard the operation of horizontal institutions – thanks to them the horizontal institutions can carry out their activities and tasks (e.g. in case of MRD-NCA activities concerning the management and coordination of the PA, ensuring the awareness of ESIF or management of human resources at the level of the PA). Only in the framework of these particular activities the OPTA target groups– implementation structure partners and other relevant target groups are engaged.

Figure 3 Diagram of the OPTA MA strategy



The choice of strategic focus depends on the requirements for the way of work of the MA. The mission of the solution manager requests the following at the level of work processes:

- Flexible work processes capable of fast response to the changing requirements of project holders;
- Stress on support and coordination of partnership with other relevant actors;
- Data and information sharing;
- Openness to criticism and reflecting the performance.

In order to ensure sustainable progress and development of the programme applying the solution manager strategy is necessary to set out self-sustainable dynamics of mutual adaptation. Under the OPTA, room shall be provided for continuous adaptation to the emerging challenges both on the part of the MA and main beneficiaries and target groups of OPTA.

The choice of the solution manager strategy matches the nature of the PA as a comprehensive social system (For definition of the term and practical implications see KURTZ & SNOWDEN 2003).

Comparison between OPTA 2007–2013 and OPTA 2014–2020

The content of OPTA for the programming period 2014–2020 is very similar to the design of OPTA for the period 2007–2013, changes have been made primarily in the design or scope of individual supported activities and are also described in more detail in the description of PAs. The benefit of continuity of these two follow-up programmes is considered to be one of the greatest advantages, and the objectives and focus of OPTA 2014–2020 draw from the lessons learnt from the programming period 2007–2013 and experience from the implementation of the ESIF and OPTA 2007–2013.

In the 2014–2020 programming period, the activity on **financing the administrative capacity** for horizontal institutions and OPTA MA continues to be covered. Under the analysis of administrative capacity, the necessary number of employees is identified in order to achieve the highest efficiency and transparency. The crucial task of quality administrative capacity remains

to be especially the **coordination and management of** the ESIF implementation in the Czech Republic in line with the Partnership Agreement. Included in the programme again is the **support for the system of education and training** for employees of the ESIF implementation bodies, which builds on the educational needs analysis carried out by individual bodies and takes into account the objectives of individual programmes and education plans drawn up during the assessment of employees. The System of Education is implemented based on the cooperation between the MRD-NCA and the representatives (coordinators of education) of individual implementation bodies who twice a year forward their requirements for education and training events within the System of Education to the MRD-NCA The MRD-NCA also coordinates the prevention of duplications in educational activities at the level of individual MAs. The indicative allocation to educational activities is planned at the amount which is roughly by one third lower than in the programming period 2007–2013. In comparison with the 2007–2013 programming period, **evaluation activities** will continue to be performed, including analyses, methodologies, etc.. The OPTA will continue to ensure **publicity activities** and **support of absorption capacity.** The Priority axis 2 focuses on the **monitoring system and other systems of horizontal institutions**. Under the OPTA, the role or **activities of MoF-AA** continue to be ensured.

Main shifts as against the period 2007–2013 are as follows:

- Strengthening the role of the national coordinator, mainly in the field of building and setting out the uniform methodological environment and management of the PA in order to ensure and maintain the central management (for more see PA1 SO1);
- Reinforcing and developing the evaluation activities at the level of the PA based on the lessons learned in the programming period 2007-2013 (for more see PA1 SO1);
- Promoting the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities (for more see PA1 SO1);
- Focusing on communication activities at the level of the PA through enhancing the clarity, compactness and availability of information (for more see PA1 SO2);
- Increasing absorption capacity remains the task of individual OPs that are closer to applicants and target groups, OPTA will focus only on building the basic awareness of the EU Funds, i.e. on the potential applicant (for more see PA1 SO2);
- Supporting the owners of integrated instruments, mainly in the field of standard operation and evaluation of strategies (for more see PA1 SO3);
- Ensuring the operation of the National Standing Conference and Regional Standing Conferences which take part in managing the territorial dimension of ESIF interventions (for more see PA1 SO3);
- Arranging for the closure of Regional Operational Programmes 2007-2013 after 2015 based on analyses, their evaluation and efficiently set needs (for more see PA1 SO3);
- Preparing and developing a new generation of a SMS for the whole implementation structure, with no exceptions as was the case of the Operational Programmes Environment and Enterprise and Innovation in the programming period 2007-2013 (for more see PA2 SO1);
- Ensuring the concurrent operation of the monitoring systems 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 (for more see PA2 SO1);
- Opening the education activities also for partners outside the implementation structure who will be involved in the management of the Partnership Agreement (for more see PA1 SO1);

- Supporting the acting upon the Council Recommendations within the capacity and eligible activities under the OPTA

The individual differences are described in more detail in the description of PAs below.

Preparation of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance 2014–2020

The 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, 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 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (hereinafter referred to as the "CPR") indicates the system of management and coordination of the ESIF. At the national level the ESIF are under the umbrella of the **Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 Programming Period**. The PA is a document elaborated by the Member State with the involvement of partners in line with the approach based on multi-level governance, which stipulates the strategy of the Member State, priorities and measures for efficient and effective use of ESIF for the purpose of achieving the targets of Europe 2020 strategy. The PA in all its parts covers the areas and programmes of all the ESIF.

By Resolution of the Czech Government No 867 of 28 November 2012, the existence of the OPTA, managed by the MRD CR, **was approved**.

By Decision of the Minister for Regional Development No 3/2013 of 15 January 2013 performance of the function of the MA OPTA 2014–2020 was entrusted to the Department of the MA OPTA at the MRD.

The OPTA structure complies with Article 27 of the Regulation of the EP and of the Council laying down common provisions on the ESIF and builds on the MRD-NCA document entitled "Methodological guideline for the preparation of programming documents for the programming period 2014–2020".

The coordination role of the MRD and its authority to negotiate with the EC are defined in Act No 248/2000 Coll., on regional development support, as amended, Section1 para 1e). The MRD shall ensure the international cooperation in the field of regional development support and cooperation with the European Community (hereinafter referred to as the "EC") in the field of economic and social cohesion, including the coordination of physical content of instruments of assistance and elaboration of the course of their delivery. In accordance with Resolution of the CR Government No 650 of 31 August 2011, the MRD shall play the role of the chief coordinator of preparations of the programming period 2014–2020.

Involved in the implementation of OPTA will be apart from the OPTA MA especially the MRD-NCA and **MoF: PCA, AA** and **CCP-AFCOS** (for more see Chapter 7.1).

Ex-ante evaluation

Simultaneously with the preparation of OPTA 2014–2020 and the Partnership Agreement, pursuant to Article 55 of the CPR and instructions given in the MG for the preparation of programming documents for the programming period 2014–2020, the ex-ante evaluation of the programme is conducted. The conclusions of ex-ante evaluation have been used to increase the quality of the document. The final report of ex-ante evaluation of OPTA is annexed to the programming document officially submitted to the EC for negotiations.

Ex-ante evaluation of OPTA was conducted in the period from July 2013 to June 2014 in the framework of the project called Provision of management activities of the OPTA MA. The evaluator assessed the version of June 2014. Ex-ante evaluation of OPTA was carried out by HaskoningDHV Czech Republic, spol. s r. o. company selected in a tender. The independence of evaluator pursuant to Article 54(3) of the CPR was guaranteed. The evaluator was selected in accordance with Act No 137/2006 Coll. on public contracts, as amended and internal regulations of MRD. Full version of the final report of ex-ante evaluation of OPTA is published in accordance with Article 54(4) of the CPR.

The main conclusions of this stage of the conducted evaluation are summed up in Annex 1. Conclusions of the report of ex-ante evaluation of OPTA, drawn up in June 2014, are structured around individual evaluated areas, namely evaluation questions answered at this stage of contract implementation.

1. 1. 2. Justification for the selection of thematic objectives and corresponding investment priorities based on the identification of regional or national needs including those identified by the relevant country-specific recommendations, taking into account ex-ante evaluation and with reference to the Partnership Agreement, adopted in accordance with Article 121 (2) TFEU and relevant Council recommendations adopted in accordance with Article 148 (4) TFEU.

Table 3 Justification of the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities

Selected thematic objective	Selected investment priority	Justification for selection
Not applicable to technical assistance	Not applicable to technical assistance	Not applicable to technical assistance

Source: OPTA MA

1.2. Justification of the financial allocation

This chapter is based on Article 119 of the CPR, stipulating that the amount of the Funds allocated to technical assistance in the Czech Republic is limited to 4 % of the total amount of the ESIF allocation and shall not exceed 10 % of the Cohesion Fund (hereinafter referred to as

the “CF”) allocation. In accordance with the Partnership Agreement, 3.41 % of funds from the CF is allocated to OPTA, which amounts to EUR 209 704 582 in absolute terms. The shares of priority axes in the allocation for OPTA 2014–2020 have been derived primarily from the allocations for OPTA 2007–2013, with account taken of the experience with the absorption in the period 2007–2013 in individual intervention areas and analysis of absorption capacity of individual beneficiaries. The whole allocation for OPTA 2014-2020 is co-financed from the CF. The amount of allocation has been influenced especially by increased needs in certain activities and inclusion of new activities not financed in the 2007-2013 period.

Under OPTA 78.1 % of funds (EU share)**, i.e. EUR 163 704 582, will be used in PA 1 for 4 specific objectives.**

1. Creating conditions for the achievement of objectives of the Partnership Agreement
2. Ensuring awareness of the ESIF among the target groups
3. Enhancing capacities for the implementation of the ESIF at lower than national level
4. Creating conditions for effective control and audit of the ESIF

The allocation to individual activities is based on the updated forecasts of beneficiaries under the OPTA. The largest volume of funds under SO1 is dedicated to ensuring the **adequate administrative capacity** of horizontal institutions (except for the AA) and the OPTA MA. The allocation covering the salaries was quantified based on the needs analysis and experience from the programming period 2007–2013 in accordance with the applicable national and Union legislation. The MRD-NCA once a year evaluates the administrative capacity of the National Strategic Reference Framework (hereinafter referred to as the “NSRF”) implementation structure, thanks to which it avails of relevant data on the number of employees of OPTA, AA, PCA, AFCOS and MRD-NCA as well as on the planned future number of employees, but also of fairly accurate information on the average salary. The allocation for salaries includes also the index of wage growth in the CR, which according to the publicly available data from the Czech Statistical Office in the last ten years reached roughly 2.36 % on average. Included are also other benefits, defined in the MG HRD. The MG HRD aims to align the forms of remuneration of staff implementing the NSRF and ESIF in order to stabilize and motivate them in relation to programme implementation, individual professional competence and performance and also to set out a single framework for evaluation of eligibility of expenditure covered from OPTA. The MG HRD strives to prevent the high turnover of employees in individual implementation bodies. Fulfilling of this ambition by the OPTA is detailed below under activities of PA1 SO1. Compared to the 2007-2013 period, the planned wage costs under the OPTA 2014-2020 are higher which is brought about especially by the necessity to ensure concurrently the adequate capacity for rollout of implementation of the ESIF and closure of the 2007-2013 period and for the retention and development of working teams.

Other areas under SO1 are the **education and training** of employees of the ESIF implementation structure. The education will be provided by all the horizontal institutions. The allocation to this activity as against the previous period will be increased, especially due to the necessity to ensure training in the new UME and continuous enhancement of qualification of staff of the ESIF implementation structure

Activities in the field of **evaluation, methodologies and analyses**

as compared to the previous periodwill be reinforced, particularly in the area of evaluations, but also methodologies with respect to the UME. The expenditure incurred by **publicity** and absorption capacity under SO2 was strongly overrated in the 2007-2013 period and the funds were not absorbed in the end. Based on the evaluations and analyses for the 2014-2020 period,

a smaller volume of funds is planned to be channelled to publicity activities. Their use will be continuously monitored and evaluated.

The SO3 is dedicated to capacities at lower than the national level and to the associated application of integrated instruments and strategies so as to enhance the territorial competitiveness of regions, towns and villages. The activities are new as compared to the OPTA 2007-2013. They consist of ensuring the completion of implementation of the Regional Operational Programmes 2007-2013, ensuring the participation of representatives in the NSC and RSC, and supporting the ITI owners in their activities related to the ESIF implementation. The MRD, in compliance with the Resolution of the CR Government No 867 of 28 November 2012, has drawn up the MG for the application of integrated instruments in the programming period 2014–2020 (MGII), the aim of which is provide all the relevant bodies with binding procedures for the process of preparation, evaluation, approval and implementation of integrated strategies. This methodological document is crucial for defining the roles and tasks of the owners of integrated instruments. Derived from the obligations laid down in this document will be the requirements placed on the OPTA, both material and financial, by the owners of integrated instruments (ITI). Costs are anticipated in the field of preparation of strategies, building the staffing capacities at beneficiaries, vocational training (including necessary analyses and studies) and networking and establishing of partnerships for the sake of developing and implementing the integrated strategy, as well as the operation costs of the implementation of integrated strategy, costs of updating, monitoring and evaluating the integrated strategy. The allocation to these new activities matches the needs of individual stakeholders identified based on their needs analysis, and the activities are largely brand new.

SO4 focuses on **ensuring the performance of activities of the independent Audit Authority.** The OPTA will cover particularly the wage costs, the operating costs and the costs on education. As against OPTA 2007-2013, the costs will increase due to the concentration and necessary reinforcement of staff.

In PA 2, 21.9 % of the planned allocation for OPTA, i.e. EUR 46 000 000 EUR, will be earmarked for activities related to monitoring.

Quantifying the allocation for activities under PA2 SO1 is very important also due to the number of planned activities for OPTA, but with regard to the fact that a part of public contracts has already been duly implemented it can be fairly precisely determined. The OPTA MA grouped the individual activities into logically interlinked groupings, which is why the allocation for PA2 SO1 can be broken down into two basic areas, namely the sustainability of period 2007–2013 and activities of the period 2014–2020.

When costs of the MS are compared, account shall be taken of the fact that two systems have to be run in parallel throughout almost the whole programming period. As against the previous period, much more information shall be included in the system than in the system for the 2007-2013 period.

In the framework of sustainability of the monitoring system for the programming period 2007–2013 and meeting the requirement for its accessibility for control and audit bodies, it is necessary to reckon also with costs to be incurred in relation to the need to maintain the operation of the systems, to have valid licences and to upgrade the technical infrastructure for activities/elements that safeguarded the operation of the monitoring systems in the programing period 2007–2013, run at the horizontal level. It concerns e.g. the ensurance of operation of Monit7+, Benefit7 and MSC2007 applications, but also the operation of the data warehouse (hereinafter referred to as the “DWH”), links to the accounting systems of the MA, ISAA, VIOLA, systems under the responsibility of the CRD (services and operation, licences and support, and

upgrade and reinforcement of system infrastructure of the CRD) and others, in a limited scope at least until 2020. Another area of activities under PA2 SO1 consists in requirements for the central development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application, ensuing from the requirements of the Union and national legislation, including the follow-up Government documents, methodological guidelines for the implementation of ESIF at the central level and proposals for optimisation of the way of delivery of certain functionalities. The anticipated activities shall cover the horizontal needs under the responsibility of the MRD, but also activities falling within the remit of e.g. the MoF or the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (hereinafter referred to as the "MoLSA"). The list of activities can contain the following generally defined deliveries and services: Ensuring the operation and development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application, the MoF application (AA+PCA), the MoLSA application (in line with requirements of the EC and the applicable Union legislation, particularly the ESF Regulation), links to the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application and accounting systems of the MAs. The envisaged total volume of costs is an estimate made based on experience and forecasts using the expected prices that could result from the prepared/scheduled tenders. In case of information system (hereinafter referred to as the "IS") of the MoF, it concerns technical equipment, development, maintenance, operation and system support for these ISs, including the technical interfaces covering the requirements of Fiche 29. The costs of modification of the system for the period 2021+ will be quantified based on the analysis of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period system operation.

Table 4 Overview of the programme investment strategy

Priority axis	**Fund** (ERDF, Cohesion Fund, ESF or Youth Employment Initiative)	**Union support** EUR	**Share of the total Union support to the operational programme**	**Thematic objective**	**Investment priorities**	**Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priorities**	**Programme specific result indicators corresponding to the specific objective**

1	Cohesion Fund (CF)	163 704 582	78.1 %	NA	NA	NA	Satisfaction rate of the relevant actors with conditions for work in the management of the PA/OP Retention rate of employees of the implementation structure Satisfaction rate of employees of the implementation structure with human resources policy and system of education Number of permanent employees of the implementation structure Early approval of the PA/OP 2021+ or a similar document before the beginning of the period Methodological environment approved before the adoption of the first OP Level of knowledge of supported projects among the target groups Level of awareness of Funds among the target groups Level of awareness of EU Funds among the general public Success rate of project applications under integrated instruments Closed operational programme Share of the audited funds in the total allocation for the Czech Republic

2	Cohesion Fund (CF)	46 000 000	21.9 %	NA	NA	NA	Satisfaction degree of employees of the implementation structure and beneficiaries and applicants with the information system Computerization of processes Completeness and correctness of the data in the system

Source: OPTA MA

Section 2 Priority axes

2.A Description of the priority axes other than technical assistance (point (b) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.1 Priority axis (for each priority axis)

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.2 Justification of the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region or more than one thematic objective or more than one Fund

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.3 Fund, category of region and basis for the calculation of Union support

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.4 Investment priority

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.5 Specific objectives corresponding to the investment priority and expected results

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.6 Actions to be supported under the investment priority

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.6.1 Description of the type and examples of actions to be financed an their expected contribution to the corresponding specific objectives, including, where appropriate, the identification of the main target groups, specific territories targeted and types of beneficiaries

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.6.2 Guiding principles for the selection of operations

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.6.3 Planned use of financial instruments

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.6.4 Planned use of major projects

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.6.5 Output indicators by investment priority and by category of region

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.7 Social innovation, transnational cooperation and the contribution to thematic objectives 1 - 7

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.8 Performance framework

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.9 Categories of intervention

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.A.10 Summary of the planned use of technical assistance, where necessary, including the actions to reinforce the administrative capacity of authorities involved in the management and control of the programmes and beneficiaries

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.B Description of the priority axes for technical assistance (point (c) of the first subparagraph of Article 96 (2) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013)

2.B.1 PRIORITY AXIS 1: Supporting the management and coordination of the Partnership Agreement

2.B.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than once category of region

Not applicable to OPTA.

2.B.3 Fund and categories of region

Fund	**Cohesion Fund**
Category of region	**Not applicable**
Basis for the calculation (Total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)	**Public eligible expenditure**

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-1

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: Creating conditions for the achievement of objectives of the Partnership Agreement and coordination of management

Under this specific objective, a stable structure of horizontal institutions will be put in place and their coordination role will be reinforced. An emphasis will be laid above all on cooperation of these institutions in strategic management and functioning of the Uniform Methodological Environment. The key factors will be the monitoring and evaluation of the ESIF implementation which will offer suggestions for its continuous improvement.

Conditions will be created for the functioning of horizontal institutions thanks to which they will be capable of efficient coordination and management of ESIF. The employees of horizontal institutions will be satisfied with their working conditions, human resources policy and the system of education.
The partners, involved in the implementation of ESIF, will be satisfied with their working conditions, the provision of educational and training activities will result in improving the capacity of partners to efficiently cooperate in implementing the ESIF.

The horizontal institutions will experience further stabilisation of implementation structure and the reduced turnover rate will prevent discontinuity and unnecessary loss of experience. A

transparent and fair system of selection and recruitment of all the employees within the implementation structure, their remuneration inclusive, will be put in place.
Through activities supported under the SO 1 PA 1, all the employees of the ESIF implementation structure will receive consistent training in horizontal topics as opposed the technical assistance of individual OPs which will focus inter alia on specific ad hoc training courses relevant for the respective OP. This SO meets the need of employees of horizontal institutions of the implementation structure to work under the conditions which facilitate quality performance of their work and further development of their expertise through the available quality system of education, and thus contribute to higher quality of their work.

Support will be granted to activities on ensuring the principle of partnership and to activities on ensuring the evaluation activities and increasing their quality.

SO1 will also focus on support of fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities. To this end, mostly activities in the field of coordination and provision of methodology and continuous monitoring will be implemented. The horizontal institutions and the OPTA MA will also strive to contribute to the fulfilment of Council Recommendations regarding the efficient implementation of public procurement rules, state aid rules and anti-corruption actions. Support will also be channelled to coordination and monitoring of financial instruments.

Under SO 1 also the timely coordination of preparation of the new programming period 2021+ will be ensured, e.g. the preparation of the methodological environment, evaluations, organisation of conferences and other associated activities, including the application of the partnership principle. Thanks to these activities, support will be channelled to early launch of the programming period 2021+, which will enable timely and first of all effective and efficient absorption of funds from the ESIF. Concurrently, a stable knowledge and information base in the field of Cohesion policy will be created as a pre-requisite for its coordination and implementation in the Czech Republic at the national level. The evaluation of the programming period 2014–2020 will help efficiently use the allocated funds and achieve the strategic objectives.
Therefore, this SO also meets the needs of employees responsible for the preparation of the 2021+ period, consisting in having all the necessary financial, information, human and other resources in order to perform their work.

The evaluation of the 2007-2013 programming period has identified a few areas that constituted a heavy administrative burden both for the implementation bodies and beneficiaries. SO1 will focus especially on providing support for lifting legal barriers and obstacles to implementation, alignment and harmonisation of rules through creation of the uniform methodological environment and rigorous computerisation of processes. Last but not least, support will also go to adequate administrative capacity.
In accordance with Article 15 of Regulation No 1303/2013, ranking among the arrangements to ensure effective implementation of the ESI funds are also the methodology and mechanisms to ensure consistency in the functioning of the performance framework, and concurrently in accordance with Annex 1 in the area of coordination and complementarity promoted are common approaches between ESI Funds with regard to guidance for the development of operations, calls for proposals and selection processes or other mechanisms and encouraged is also the cooperation between managing authorities in the areas of monitoring, evaluation, control and audit support. This underlying requirement facilitating the access of beneficiaries to the ESI Funds based on the consistent approach and setting up of common rules for the whole system is fulfilled through the UME.

In addressing the particular and specific needs the OPTA Managing Authority will cooperate with the non-governmental non-profit organisations. These non-governmental non-profit organisations, or their umbrella organisations, according to the criteria defined by the Secretariat to the CR Government Council are highly competent to provide, where a need arises, relevant specific expertise in the area of e.g. transparency, fight against corruption, equal opportunities, environment and sustainable development, education events and others. Support will be granted only to projects focused on a specific solution of the respective problem area. Not eligible are projects on operation and staffing of NGOs.

Within the three building blocks of the quality administrative capacity (for basic definition see Chapter 4 in ECORYS 2011, compare also the development of the concept in the Governance Matters, a series of working papers of the World Bank), this SO ensures primarily the human resources and the basic structure as a key component of the policy as well as multiple methodologies and procedures in the field of tools and systems (ECORYS 2011, p. 48).

2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 1-1

Table 5 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-1

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value total	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
82410	Satisfaction rate of the relevant actors with conditions for work in the management of the PA/OP	%	63	2014	70	MA Standardised questionnaire survey	Once a year
82510	Retention rate of employees of the implementation structure	%	55	2014	75	MA	Once a year
82110	Satisfaction rate of employees of the implementation structure with human resources policy and system of education	%	65	2014	72	MA Standardised questionnaire survey	Once a year
82520	Number of permanent employees of the implementation structure	FTE	195	2014	225	MA	Once a year
81610	Early approval of the PA/OP 2021+ or of a similar document before the	Calendar months	-8	2014	Earlier than in 2014-2020	MA	Once at the end of the period (2023)

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value total	Baseline year	Target value (2023) Total	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
	beginning of the period						
81510	Methodological environment approved before the adoption of the first OP	Calendar months	Actual status 2014-2020	2014	4	MA	Once at the end of the period (2023)

Source: OPTA MA.

Note: More details on individual indicators, including their definition, are included in the NCI.

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-1

Supported activities under SO 1

Ranking among the strengths in the field of management and coordination is especially the fact that in 2007–2013 period the central role of the MRD-NCA and the MoF acting as the PCA and CCP - AFCOS was continuously reinforced. Nonetheless, the necessity to address and coordinate at the national level the implementation of measures responding to the findings of EU audits as well as to deal with deficiencies in absorption of funds across the programmes calls for further strengthening of central coordination. This is why the central role of the MRD-NCA and the MoF acting as the PCA and CCP - AFCOS will be further promoted and reinforced.
The mutual coordination of activities of the PCA and AA will further increase, while the existing structure of the PCA is maintained since it was proven useful in the programming period 2007–2013, and while the existing centralised structure of the AA is maintained which had been put in place in response to the identified deficiencies in the course of 2007–2013 period. The AA will also have to deal with the new requirements for audit activities ensuing from the stronger stress put on financial instruments and from the e-Cohesion requirements (see SO 4 PA 1).

Under SO 1 PA 1, such actions will be supported which will ensure and facilitate further functioning and development of horizontal institutions. Also these activities of horizontal institutions will lead to reducing the administrative burden of beneficiaries, for example through increasing the transparency and clarity of rules across the ESIF system (for more see Chapter 10). The reduction of administrative burden will be evaluated by the NCA, where this activity is included in the Evaluation Plan of the Partnership Agreement.

Under PA 1 SO 1 the following activities are supported:

1. **Ensuring administrative capacity for horizontal institutions (MRD and MoF-PCA in particular) and OPTA MA as concern salaries and necessary material, equipment and administrative and technical support of their activities;**

This action serves to cover the remuneration of employees implementing the EU funds, i.e. through the OPTA the wages/salaries, including related statutory deductions, and various forms of bonuses (financial incentives) at the level of MRD and MoF (CCP-AFCOS, PCA) will be covered. Supported can also be other bodies that participate in creating conditions for the implementation of the ESIF (e.g. Office of the Government of the Czech Republic, CRD).

In order to set the optimal size of administrative capacity, each implementation body conducted the Analysis of administrative capacity pursuant to Government Resolution No 444/2014 which comprises the need analysis of needs, breakdown of positions and education plans, etc.

The activity also provides support for fulfilment of **ex-ante conditionalities** that is a pre-requisite of successful absorption of funds from the ESIF. In view of the cross-cutting nature of ex-ante conditionalities among individual programmes, it is essential at the national level to make sure they are implemented in compliance with the EC requirements and to continuously monitor their fulfilment, or to propose measures leading to their fulfilment. The last activity is therefore directed towards the coordinator of ex-ante conditionalities, the MRD-NCA, and also the sponsors of general ex-ante conditionalities on the provision of staffing. Under some ex-ante conditionalities, working groups (for public procurement, state aid and non-

discrimination) have been established. In the field of Statistical systems and result indicators, it also covers the work on the National Codelist of Indicators (hereinafter referred to as the "NCI"), performed by the MRD-NCA, etc.

Under this activity also all the other relevant needs are met (for example renting of premises, provision of necessary technical equipment, material, refreshments, purchase of publications, travel expenses, translation, interpretation, telecommunication and other services).

The employees of horizontal institutions will perform the following activities:

- Ensuring the UME to achieve the PA objectives;
- Methodological management in the field of eligibility of expenditure, financial flows, addressing irregularities, 3E principles (efficiency, economy and effectiveness), drawing up annual accounts, etc.;
- Ensuring anti-corruption mechanisms;
- Control and evaluation of achievement of milestones for the evaluation of performance framework;
- Monitoring of progress made in the ESIF implementation;
- Evaluating the implementation processes and effects and impacts of interventions (coordination and conduct of summary, thematic, cross-cutting and ad-hoc evaluations);
- Developing, updating and implementing the evaluation plan of the Partnership Agreement,
- Coordinating the evaluation activities of the MAs of programmes and the Partnership Agreement;
- Coordinating the preparation of major projects and JASPERS Action Plan;
- Coordinating the planning of calls among programmes and safeguarding the creation of synergies;
- System of strategic management of cohesion policy;
- Coordination and management of activities associated with the application of integrated strategies and territorial dimension, including the ensurance of activities of the National Standing Conference;
- Evaluation of territorial dimension and integrated instruments;
- Ensuring communication with the EC;
- Ensuring appropriate conditions for control activities;
- Ensuring appropriate conditions for cooperation of experts aimed to strengthen and enhance the efficiency of control and monitoring activities in projects, including prevention of errors;
- Providing methodological support to the ESIF implementation structure bodies;
- Arranging for activities of horizontal institutions and OPTA MA (organisational and technical aspects of the working group meetings, ensuring the operation of horizontal institutions and OPTA MA, etc.)
- Ensuring smooth closure and evaluation of the programming period 2007–2013 at the MRD-NCA and OPTA MA;
- Methodological support for closure of the period 2007–2013;
- Preparing the programming period 2021+.

Based on the analyses of staffing needs, the following number of FTE is indicatively foreseen: MRD-NCA (161), OPTA MA (31), CCP-AFCOS (10) and PCA (50). In total it is approximately 252 FTE.

The Evaluation Plan of the Partnership Agreement has scheduled for an evaluation of administrative capacity in 2016. The management of the Partnership Agreement and monitoring and evaluation of the progress made in the ESIF implementation will rely on the database derived from the monitoring system that will be backed up by further collection of primary and secondary data and their assessment. It concerns also the monitoring of results at the level of OPTA. The main activities supported under PA 1 SO 1 will be monitored and evaluated through a questionnaire survey ascertaining the satisfaction rate of the

relevant actors with the working conditions for the management of the Partnership Agreement/OP and the satisfaction rate of the implementation structure employees with the HR policy and the system of education. These questionnaire surveys will ascertain the aggregate value of satisfaction rate that will be used for reporting the values of result indicators, but will also make it possible to obtain more detailed information that will be used particularly for the needs of management by the OPTA MA and MRD-NCA.

The questionnaire survey ascertains the satisfaction rate with working conditions of the employees, whose salaries are covered from OPTA, and of the partners, who are involved in the management of the Partnership Agreement, but are not paid from OPTA. To be specific, ascertained is the satisfaction rate with:

- Material conditions for work (opinion on premises, aids and resources, and IT equipment except for the monitoring system);
- Information necessary for work and its availability;
- Design of formal rules for work (understandability and usability of methodologies and rules at the level of MRD-NCA and OPTA);
- Cooperation of actors;
- System of education and training;
- System of remuneration.

Thus, the questionnaire survey enables, for example, to identify the current educational needs. The questionnaires also serve to obtain the feedback from employees and partners, they also comprise open-ended questions which provide space for specification of particular issues as perceived by the employees or partners.

2. System of education for employees involved in the ESIF implementation and for employees involved in closure of the 2007-2013 programming period, horizontal bodies and the PA Partners (members of platforms and monitoring committees);

Education of the ESIF employees embraces two levels, the horizontal education in cross-cutting areas (System of Education implemented by the MRD-NCA) and specific education (organised by individual implementation bodies and financed from the technical assistance of the respective operational programmes).

The education aims to create conditions for retention and motivation of the ESIF administrative capacities with respect to the need of their professional growth and improvement of their knowledge and skills. Education depends on the aims of individual programmes and respective education plans developed during the assessment of employees.

The educational events under the System of Education focus on cross-cutting topics, e.g. on public procurement, state aid, evaluations, controls, anti-corruption strategy, general ex-ante conditionalities, i.e. non-discrimination, equal opportunities, disability, EIA/SEA) etc. Educational events zeroing in on closure-related matters will be open to employees involved in closure of the 2007-2013 programming period.

The educational events will be evaluated on a continuous basis through feedback from participants and other bodies involved with a view to optimising the efficiency of education and, where negative feedback is received, to remedying the situation.

Under the OPTA, also the OPTA MA specific education takes place, when the OPTA MA provides continuous education to its employees reflecting the needs and specifics of the programme.

Both the types of educational events attended by employees will be recorded in the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period monitoring system.

This division proved its worth in the 2007–2013 programming period and will remain in existence also in the 2014–2020 programming period.

3. **Ensuring the partnership principle at the national and Union level and the transfer of experience and sharing of information with the EC and the other Member States;**

Under this activity the OPTA contributes to providing a professional background for the Council for the ESIF, including the operation of platforms for the programming period 2014–2020. The activities of the Council for the ESIF and other platforms for the 2014-2020 period are performed in the form of round tables, conferences, seminars, etc., with the OPTA providing the administrative and technical background or management and activities of these platforms.

The OPTA shall also support activities directed at an active transfer of information and mutual exchange of experience with the EC and the other Member States. It concerns e.g. international business trips made in order to take part in activities of networks and working groups at the EU level, or organisation of conferences and seminars in the Czech Republic for participants from abroad.

4. **Ensuring support for the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities and coordination of the implementation of financial instruments**

Activities under SO 1 are directed also at ensuring support for the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities which is a prerequisite for successful absorption of the ESIF. In view of the cross-cutting nature of ex-ante conditionalities among individual programmes, it is essential at the national level to make sure they are implemented in compliance with the EC requirements and to continuously monitor their fulfilment, or to propose measures leading to their fulfilment. The activity is therefore directed towards the coordinator of ex-ante conditionalities, the MRD-NCA, and also the sponsors of general ex-ante conditionalities on the provision of staffing and on the provision of methodological support. Under some ex-ante conditionalities, working groups (for public procurement, state aid or non-discrimination) have been established. Moreover, in the field of Statistical systems and result indicators, it also covers the work on the National Codelist of Indicators (hereinafter referred to as the “NCI”), performed by the MRD-NCA, etc.

Under this activity support will also be granted to administrative capacity of the MoF in the field of implementation of financial instruments.

5. **Support for fulfilment of Council Recommendations**

Even though the MA identifies areas for which recommendations for the Czech Republic have been made by the Council as an external factor (see the strategic part and the part covering public procurement and corruption), the OPTA through its activities encourages the improvement of situation in the following areas:

a) Public procurement (the area is addressed under the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities)

- Providing administrative capacity – MRD employees (methodological assistance for the MA/contracting entities, cooperation on methodologies and other documents),
- Educational activities (see point 2)
- Organising the working groups Public Procurement and the OPC
- Drawing up the Progress Report analysing the situation and main findings of relevant institutions, evaluation of the design of methodological environment and the necessity to update it, proposals for legislative and non-legislative actions, etc.
- Monitoring and modifying the methodological environment in order to unify the practice of its application
- Communicating with all the implementation structure bodies

b) Anti-corruption measures (see the Action Plan for implementation of anti-fraud and anti-corruption strategy under the ESIF)

Ranking among the main anti-corruption activities under SO1 will be the implementation of measures ensuing from the implementation of UME that contains anti-corruption measures in connection to implementation of the Strategy for combatting fraud and corruption within the absorption of the ESI Funds in the 2014 – 2020 period (Strategy). In addition, cross-cutting activities of a systemic nature will be supported. These activities will aim at strenghtening of prevention and detection of corruption and fraud mainly in the farea of public procurement in order to increase the transparency and efficiency o public procurement.

The core is the implementation of precautionary and control mechanisms described in the Strategy, fullfilment of measures specified in ex-ante conditionalities related to public procurement, cooperation with NGO as well as the integrated risk management system which is administered by the MRD-NCA and in which all the programmes falling under the Partnership Agreement, PCA, AA, PA and CA are involved. Based on the outputs from the integrated risk management system and based on additional information and experience for the previous programming periods, the MRD-NCA summarises and evaluates the risks. Information on critical risks, with one of the regularly monitored and evaluated risks (at least twice a year) being also the risk of fraud and corruption, will be included in the Annual Report on Achieving the Objectives of the Partnership Agreement that will be submitted to the Council for ESI Funds. The identified risks will be further discussed at the standing platforms (WG NCA), under the reinforced risk management and also at the committee for risk assessment. Thus, under the UME also the availability of data is ensured that are used in order to identify and manage the risk of fraud and corruption.

Anti-corruption activities will be an integral part of education in the field of fraud prevention, whose aim is to create a system of education of employees involved in the implementation of EU Funds, particularly in the programming period 2014-2020 so that it matches the needs arising in relation to the performance of function at positions described in the guidance documents of programmes, management and coordination of the Partnership Agreement/NSRF, and so that it creates conditions for promoting the principle of transparency and prevention of corrupt behaviour. Regular training courses are prepared with the involvement of relevant NGOs active in this area and also sharing of experience, especially through the system of education delivered by the MRD-NCA in cooperation with the AA (e.g. in the area of transparency and prevention of corrupt behaviour).

As a part of coordination of public procurement, interpretative opinions will be issued, where necessary, regarding the individual operations or the overall understanding of relevant matters as seen by the documents of methodological nature, namely in connection to the existing case law in the matters concerned.

In order to prevent the risk of a conflict of interest and undesired ties, a number of measures is incorporated in the UME, e.g. in the Codes of Conduct, declarations of honour or in employee selection process. Also stipulated are matters concerning the revealing of ownership structures, directly linked to the identification of a potential conflict of interest, the risk of a conflict of interest is also covered by the drafted control and audit checklists and their future use.

6. Activities to reduce the administrative burden

Under SO1, activities to reduce the administrative burden will be supported that have been defined especially in the mid-term evaluation of the NSRF 2007-2013, evaluations of individual OPs and in other documents.

The basic tool for reducing the administrative burden is the provision of UME and SMS (see PA2 SO1). The absence of single terminology (especially in calls for proposals, handbooks for applicants and beneficiaries), incomprehensible and unclear methodologies, frequent duplications and inconsistent

forms and statements, inconsistent interpretations, etc. were the key issues of the previous period causing the administrative burden. A large part of the UME was adopted through Government Resolution in 2013, the remaining part was completed in 2014. Support will be channelled to activities contributing to the alignment of rules of all processes of implementation (especially of the publication of calls for proposals, transparency of evaluation and selection of projects, implementation including the monitoring and reimbursement of expenditure, and project sustainability), while maintaining the specifics of individual OPs. The success rate will be assessed through evaluations carried out in keeping with the Evaluation Plan of the Partnership Agreement (Evaluation of the achievement of objectives of the UME concept, etc.) at the level of MA as well as beneficiaries.

At the level of OPTA implementation structure, the primary processes (Wauters 2013, p.78-79). will be organised in such a way that especially the selection and approval of projects and control of monitoring reports and applications for payment are performed by the fewest possible number of organisational units. These measures should accelerate these primary processes, increase the comfort of beneficiaries through retention of contact persons and reduce the error rate by means of concentrating the responsibility of individual administrators. These measures will be adopted by the end of 2015. The OPTA MA will repeatedly assess the design of processes and optimize it through the methods of Systems thinking (Seddon 2008);

7. Ensuring evaluation activities and increasing their quality

The aim of the OPTA in the field of evaluation is above all to implement the evaluation activities so that they become one of the **management tools** for the management of the Partnership Agreement and coordination of programmes. In keeping with requirements laid down in the CPR and with the *Evidence Based Cohesion Policy* principle, under the OPTA evaluation activities at the level of the Partnership Agreement will be carried out by the *Evaluation Unit of the NCA (EU NCA)*. These activities will be performed in compliance with the *Methodological Guideline for Evaluations in the Programming Period 2014-2020* and with the ***Evaluation Plan of the Partnership Agreement*** *(EP PA),* i.e. a concept paper updated each year, which inter alia stipulates an indicative list of evaluations for the whole programming period 2014-2020, with more details on evaluation activities to be conducted in the next 2-3 years. For example, the reduction of administrative burden will be assessed based on the MRD-NCA evaluations. This activity has already been included in the Evaluation Plan of the Partnership Agreement.

The EU NCA will provide especially for **horizontal evaluations** of topics that go beyond the matters covered by a single programme. In the first years of the PA implementation, the evaluation activities will focus predominantly on process evaluations supporting the implementation process, including the reduction of administrative burden, stress will be put on verification of relevance of introduced interventions and in the field of result evaluations an ex-post evaluation of the 2007-2013 period will be carried out at the national level. Subsequently, the focus of activities will shift to the evaluation of achieved results. The EU PA will also help coordinate the selected evaluation activities of the managing authorities.

Higher quality of evaluations and their use will be achieved based on the requirement to meet the evaluation standards, to conduct the assessment of quality of evaluation outputs, to carry out obligatory **assessment of fulfilment of the evaluation plan,** and **to create a summary of acting upon the recommendations from evaluations**, which will be one of the tools to be used in decision-making processes in the management of the PA and coordination of programmes.

The OPTA funds will also be used for **developing and strengthening the evaluation capacities** in the Czech Republic. To that end the EU NCA will cultivate the cooperation of established evaluation platforms (apart from the Working Group for Evaluation of the NCA, it concerns also the evaluation platforms at the level of the EC, the Czech Evaluation Society, etc.), it will hold regular annual conferences intended to

share information and news relevant for evaluations, it will collaborate with the academic sphere and initiate vocational training in the field of evaluations, etc.

8. Ensuring timely preparation of the new programming period

Experience from the late launch of implementation of the programming period 2007–2013 shows that the failure to prepare the programming period 2021+ can cause delays in the absorption of funds, or can make the absorption of EU funds in the programming period 2021+ impossible. It is therefore necessary to timely coordinate the preparation of the new programming period 2021+, e.g. the preparation of methodological environment, evaluations, organisation of conferences and other related activities so as to ensure as fast and smooth launch of the programming period 2021+ as possible. To be specific, the following activities will be supported:

- Coordination of preparation of the new programming period 2021+ in cooperation with the other relevant bodies (partners);
- Preparation of methodologies, evaluations, studies, analyses and other relevant documents, including the organisation of conferences, workshops, seminars and working meetings for the preparation of the new programming period 2021+;
- Support for the preparation of selected principal cross-cutting strategies at the national level;
- Verifying the appropriate set up of individual implementation structure bodies in compliance with valid regulations and other rules.

All the activities above are complemented by consultancy and legal services that will respond to the current needs of horizontal institutions in management and coordination of the ESIF and that will provide methodological assistance in socio-economic, environmental and legal consultancy.

Beneficiaries:

Central authorities ensuring institutional coordination and management of the Partnership Agreement and the implementation of the anti-corruption strategy within ESIF in the Czech Republic
Central governmental authorities and Organizational component of the state, which contribute to fulfilling the Partnership Agreement
Centre for Regional Development of the Czech Republic
Office of the Government of the Czech Republic
Umbrella non-governmental non-profit organisations (only under the conditions of a specific call)
Sponsors of general ex-ante conditionalities
Sponsors of coordination and monitoring of financial instruments
Managing Authorities of operational programmes in programme period 2014-2020

Target groups:

Implementation structure of the ESIF, participants of activities focused on ESIF (e.g. partners involved in working groups and platforms, public specialists); other bodies intended to manage the Partnership Agreement; partners involved in preparation of the programming period 2021+ (e.g. social partners, organisations associating the national self-governing bodies, Regional Standing Conferences, etc.)

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-1

Table 6 Output indicators for SO 1-1

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) total	Source of data
80200	Number of produced information materials	Unique materials	210	A/B
82300	Number of pieces of newly acquired equipment	Inventory numbers	130	A/B
82200	Purchase of material, goods and services necessary to ensure the implementation of the programme	CZK	80 000 000	A/B
80500	Number of drawn up and published analytical and strategic documents (including evaluation documents)	Documents	445	A/B
81101	Number of domestic and international business trips	Persons	300	A/B
82000	Number of held training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences	Activities	2 000	A/B
60000	Total number of participants	Persons	15 000	A/B
80600	Number of meetings of authorities, working or advisory groups	Meetings	400	A/B
82500	Number of jobs (FTE) financed from the programme	FTE	[2]	A/B
82100	Number of participants in education and training	Persons	12 000	A/B
80800	Number of held certifications	Certifications	200	A/B
81601	Early commencement of preparation of 2021+	Calendar months	18	A/B

Source: OPTA MA

[2] The target value of indicator 82500 is not requested

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-2

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 2: Ensuring awareness of the ESIF among the target groups

Communication activities will be specifically and efficiently targeted in line with the nature of the target group. The awareness of positive results of the ESIF and actual effects of interventions supported from ESIF will increase. A transparent and objective image of the ESIF will be created and thus the quality of public debate on the use of funds will improve. The general image of the ESIF among the broad public and other target groups will improve. Thanks to OPTA, the potential applicants will receive coherent and useful information which will navigate them to a specific programme/managing authority and provide them with basic knowledge of the ESIF workings and potential ways of absorption.

SO 2 satisfies the need of all target groups to be knowledgeable of the ESIF, and thus helps ensure the absorption capacity at the central level. Activities supported under this SO will meet the need of the general public to avail of objective information on the ESIF. They also satisfy the need of potential applicants to have a basic understanding of the structure and rules of the ESIF interventions. In order to enhance the awareness of target groups, support will also be directed to activities ensuing from the Council recommendations such as the public procurement and anti-corruption measures.

Under this SO, also ensured will be the coordination of preparation of the new programming period 2021+, e.g. ensuring the awareness of preparation of the new programming period 2021+, etc.
Within the three building blocks of quality administrative capacity, this SO shall offer the selected publicity tools.

2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 1-2

Table 7 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-2

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value Total	Baseline year	Target value (2023) total	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
80110	Level of knowledge of supported projects among the target groups	%	67	2013	70	MRD-NCA / Questionnaire survey	Once a year
80120	Level of awareness of Funds among the target groups	%	65	2013	68	MRD-NCA / Questionnaire survey	Once a year
80130	Level of awareness of EU Funds among the general public	%	83	2013	85	MRD-NCA / Questionnaire survey	Once a year

Source: OPTA MA

Note: More detailed information on individual indicators, including their definitions, is included in the NCI.

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-2

3.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-2

Supported activities under SO 2

Publicity activities under PA 1 SO 2 of OPTA are primarily focused on communicating cross-cutting/integrating topics such as the European funds in general, joint communication of all the OPs, and their target group is especially the general and professional public and national media. On the other hand, the managing authorities are tasked to communicate their own OP to their target groups, to mobilise potential applicants and to support the actual applicants and beneficiaries. This demarcation line proved its worth in the programming period 2007–2013, and thus remains unchanged. The consistency of communication activities between the MRD-NCA and individual MAs will be arranged for through the MG Publicity and through the Common Communication Strategy for ESIF 2014-2020. All the MAs will be obliged to submit their annual communication plans (hereinafter referred to as the "ACP") to the respective Monitoring Committee for approval, namely in the year before the year for which the plan is made. The ACPs will be forwarded to the MRD-NCA which will express its opinion thereto. This way the MRD-NCA will have a clear picture about the communication activities of individual OPs for the upcoming year and will be able to reflect this information in its communication plan and in its communication activities.

As concerns the public opinion on the EU Funds and publicity activities carried out in the period 2007–2013, based on the regularly conducted public opinion surveys the following achievements have been identified:

- The general public avails of high (the third highest among the EU Member States) (EC 2013a) awareness of the EU Funds, 83 % of respondents state that have already heard about the EU Funds;
- The knowledge of at least a single specific project supported from the EU Funds is also high, 67 % of respondents state that they know at least one such project (EC 2013a). In this indicator a significant improvement has been achieved from 2011 to 2013 since in 2011 the positive answer was given by only 47 % of respondents (STEM/MARK 2011);
- The general public considers the information on the EU well accessible (65 %), presented in an interesting manner (61 %) and sufficient (61 %) (IBRS 2013).

In the programming period 2014–2020, the activities will strive at maintaining and, if possible, at improving the existing achievements. Through continuing successful publicity of projects implemented in 2012–2013, use of media with national reach such as the TV, radio broadcasting, the most-widely read periodicals, etc., and especially through highlighting the positive benefits of projects supported from the EU funds and the positive impact on life of the citizens, a further increase of knowledge of supported projects among the general public will be sought.

Apart from the above referred to achievements, a few shortcomings still persist:

- 61 % of respondents consider the available information on the EU funds too complicated and unclear (IBRS 2013);
- The general public is not interested in matters related to the EU Funds and has mainly a passive approach to information - only 4 % of the general public take an active interest in the Funds, 48 % of respondents take a passive interest in the Funds, and 48 % of respondents is not interested in the Funds at all (IBRS 2013);

- Negative media coverage of the EU funds predominates and media are often not interested in communicating positive information and to publicize good results that have been achieved;
- The Czech citizens mostly believe that the absorption of resources from the EU Funds is non-transparent, only 22 % of respondents consider the use of resources from the EU Funds in the CR to be clear and transparent (IBRS 2013).

By simplifying the used terminology and better adaptation of presented information to the respective target groups, efforts will be made to improve the image of the Funds among the public as to the clarity and complexity of presented information. The other prevailing troublesome areas are not so easy to resolve and are interlinked. Due to the rate of corruption and scandals covered by media in the programming period 2007–2013, the image of the EU funds among the public is rather negative. The positive perception of ESIF by individual target groups can hardly be enforced.

The general public is easily influenced by media through which it most frequently receives the information on the Funds (69 % of respondents obtained the information from the TV, 42 % from newspapers and periodicals), while the media as such are not easy to influence. The content of media communication follows certain routines, i.e. certain deep-rooted criteria which determine the content of news coverage so that it is attractive for the target groups. The fundamental values of news reporting include apart from physical proximity (i.e. the event took place in the close vicinity), or the presence of prominent persons, also the feature of negativity. If the topic of the news is negative, it is immediately of value and interest and it is more likely that it will appear in the news (whether printed or audio-visual) (see e.g. Jirák & Köpplová 2003). This is the reason of a long-term optical illusion in the CR, namely that the number of unsuccessful projects is higher that the number of those that have been successfully implemented, although in fact it is the other way round. In general, the information on problems faced by the European Funds prevails over the information on their contributions. In the years to come the supported activities will therefore endeavour to multiply the positive information and to use as much as possible own communication channels for publicizing the successfully implemented projects and the positive results in general. It is necessary to try to offset the negative image in media by providing information on the actual reality.

The public opinion is, however, also influenced by a number of other factors, totally unrelated to the European Funds, such as the overall political situation in the country, euroscepticism and the growing lack of confidence in the EU per se, which is an all-European issue of recent years. This is reflected in the general atmosphere in the country and it has a strong effect on the ability of the general public to absorb the true, objective and positive messages. All these facts are external factors that cannot be influenced by the OPTA and that have to be taken into account during the implementation and especially during the evaluation of activities.

Therefore, in order to improve the media image of the EU Funds, apart from particular publicity and communication activities which will focus above all on better publicity of tools increasing the transparency such as the “List of aid beneficiaries”, the online chat launched for enquiries of the public, Eurofon, etc. and on presenting the examples of good practice through own information channels, it is also necessary to improve the quality of ESIF implementation, including the elimination of corruption (see PA 1 SO 1). In order to increase the interest of the public in the EU Funds, the target groups will be more involved in communication activities, which will result in an increase of their interest and especially the knowledge of ESI Funds through interactive communication activities, contests, road shows, more attractive visual presentation, etc.

The overall image of the ESIF shall also benefit from activities that will focus on developing the evaluation environment (SO 1, PA1), and thus will allow an objective measurement of the actual effects of interventions financed from ESIF and a presentation of this information to media and the public.

Apart from publicity activities, a part of the PA will concentrate on developing the absorption capacity from the central level. These activities will be directed exclusively at potential applicants who only look for a suitable OP. Due to the inconsistency of methodologies, procedures and processes of individual OPs in the programming period 2007–2013, the provision of advisory services to potential applicants was fragmented and inconsistent. The UME thus opens up an opportunity to work in a targeted and efficient manner towards increasing the absorption capacity through advisory services offered to potential applicants.

Some activities also contribute to the fulfilment of the Council Recommendations. It concerns mainly the brochures, articles, information activities, Eurofon, chat and promoting culture that condemns fraudulent behaviour.

1. **Preparation and implementation of the Common communication strategy;**
   The common communication strategies (hereinafter referred to as the "CCS") will replace the multi-annual communication plans of individual OPs. The CCS, which will be annexed to the Methodological guideline Publicity, will provide an umbrella to all the OPs and their common objectives in communicating the ESIF and will outline a roadmap to their achievement through the annual communication plans. The CCS will thus guarantee particularly the consistent objectives of communication activities which will make it easier for the general public to navigate through the provided information.

2. **Evaluation of the delivery of communication strategy from the central level;**
   Evaluation of communication activities is an important element of communication in the programming period 2014–2020. Mandatory requisites and the timetable of evaluation of communication activities for the whole programming period 2014–2020 are included in the MG for publicity and communication of ESIF in the programming period 2014-2020. This evaluation of communication activities from the central level will follow this timetable.

3. **Ensuring the cross-cutting communication activities of programmes in compliance with the communication strategies of the PA;**
   Ensuring cross-cutting communication activities across the programmes will help create a uniform image of the ESIF. The performance and management of cross-cutting communication activities from the central level will make it easier for the public to navigate through the ESIF. Separate communication of topics related to individual OPs, arranged for by the MAs, and of cross-cutting topics at the level of MRD-NCA proved its worth in the period 2007–2013, and therefore will also be applied in the next programming period.

4. **Provision, operation and development of a single information network on ESIF (Eurocenters, Eurofon);**
   Building of a single information network and a contact point which would address any enquiries or requirements of the public concerning the ESIF will facilitate an easier access to information on ESIF for the general public. There will be no need to search for more detailed information (e.g. which OP is suitable for the potential applicant, etc.) since any person can approach the single contact point and receive well-founded information. The easier the access to the information for the public, the higher the likelihood that the public will be adequately informed.

5. **Provision, operation and development of an umbrella website portal;**
   Operation of an umbrella website portal ensues from the requirement laid down in Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the EP and of the Council, stating that "the Member State shall ensure the establishment of a single website or a single website portal providing information on, and access to, all OPs in that Member State, including information about the timing of implementation of programming and any related public consultation processes". The lessons learned in the 2007–

2013 period and the conducted questionnaire survey indicated that it is mainly clear information and its availability at a single portal that is essential for applicants and beneficiaries. The operation of the umbrella website portal will result primarily in better accessibility of information for the target groups. These measures will have been adopted by the end of 2015.

6. **Provision of professional information on ESIF to journalists and media representatives;**
   The general public receives information on the EU Funds particularly through media. 69 % of respondents obtained information from the TV, 42 % from newspapers and periodicals. The TV is also considered the best and the most comprehensible source of information on the EU Funds (IBRS 2013). Consistent work with journalists and ensuring their high and quality awareness is therefore necessary in order to increase the awareness and knowledge of the public.

7. **Regular communication of examples of good practice;**
   Examples of good practice are a suitable tool for communication of ESIF benefits and will contribute to improving the overall image of the ESIF. The general public shall be informed on projects, namely with regional targeting, since that way the general public will better understand their positive contributions to everyday life. Otherwise, the general public receives information mainly from media, on which it relies, but which often focus on negative aspects only. The presentation of examples of good practice would then help build a positive image of the ESIF, with limitations explained in the introductory description of activities (especially the orientation of media on negative news).

8. **Information support to potential applicants;**
   Advisory services will zero in on explaining the underlying general principles of the ESIF workings and on directing the potential applicant to a particular OP/MA. Any other activities aimed to increase the absorption capacity will fall within the remit of individual OP/MA.

9. **Ensuring timely preparation of the new programming period 2021+.**
   Experience from the late launch of implementation of the programming period 2007–2013 shows that the failure to prepare the programming period 2021+, including in the area of publicity, can cause delays in absorption of funds, or can make the absorption of EU funds in the programming period 2021+ impossible. Late launch of implementation then results in pressure primarily on absorption capacity regardless of the quality, in drawing down the funds at all costs which has a negative effect on meaningfulness of interventions made. It is therefore necessary to timely coordinate the preparation of the new programming period 2021+. The supported activities will therefore focus on ensuring the awareness of preparation of the programing period 2021+ and on mapping the absorption capacity and its further strengthening in the framework of preparation of the programming period 2021+.

Beneficiaries:

Central authorities ensuring institutional coordination and management of the Partnership Agreement in the Czech Republic.

Target groups:

Implementation structure of ESIF, potential applicants for support from ESIF, the general public, partners involved in the preparation of the 2021+ period (e.g. social partners, organisations associating the self-governing bodies with national scope of operation, Regional Standing Conferences, etc.).

3.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-2

Table 8 Output indicators for SO 1-2

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) total	Source of data
80200	Number of produced information materials	Unique materials	35	A/B
80500	Number of drawn up and published analytical and strategic documents (including evaluation documents)	Documents	5	A/B
80001	Number of conducted information and publicity activities	Activities	60	A/B
80103	Number of created communication tools	Tools	5	A/B
82000	Number of held training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences	Activities	100	A/B
60000	Total number of participants	Persons	2 000	A/B
82300	Number of pieces of newly acquired equipment	Inventory numbers	25	A/B
82200	Purchase of material, goods and services necessary to ensure the implementation of the programme	CZK	35 000 000	A/B

Source: OPTA MA

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-3

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 3: Enhancing capacities for the implementation of the ESIF at lower than national level

The activities supported under SO 3 will be instrumental to the development of capacities of owners of integrated instruments (ITI), and thus to better quality of local development and closing wide gaps at the level of regions, towns and municipalities. The owners of integrated instruments will have their operating costs covered, and will thus be able to create and implement and continuously update a high quality integrated strategy. Arrangements will also be made to ensure the operation of Regional Standing Conferences which will participate in coordinating the territorial dimension of ESIF implementation.

Regional Standing Conferences ensure the fulfilment of objectives of the Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic 2014–2020 in the administrative district of the Region, within the territorial scope of individual Regions of the Czech Republic. They are established based on the principles of partnership, composed of representatives of regional, local, municipal and other public authorities, economic and social partners and bodies representing the civic society, and the Agency for Social Inclusion. The Regional Standing Conferences get involved through the National Standing Conference in drafting the recommendations for decision-making and management at the level of managing authorities, in coordinating the activities in territorial districts of individual Regions. Above all they monitor and support the absorption capacity of the region, issue recommendations regarding the focus and harmonisation of calls for projects under specific calls within the territorial dimension, contribute to alignment of development documents and strategies and development (investment) plans. Hence, they will facilitate interlinking of individual integrated strategies focused on the use of the ESI Funds, initiate the collection of information and data on progress made in the territory and impacts of implemented actions, help provide an umbrella and through their actors deliver the cross-cutting strategies requiring collaboration of the stakeholders involved (RIS3 strategy, Common action plan and others). (For more see the currently valid “Methodological Guideline for the Use of Integrated Instruments in the Programming Period 2014-2020“.)

Last but not least, under this SO capacities will be ensured for closure of activities of the Regional Operational Programmes of the 2007–2013 period.

2.B.2 Result indicators for SO 1-3

Table 9 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-3

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value total	Baseline year	Target value (2023) total	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
80220	Success rate of project applications under integrated instruments	%	N/A	2014	75	MA	Once a year
80710	Closed operational programme	Closed programme	0	2014	7	MA	Once

Source: OPTA MA

Note: More detailed information on individual indicators, including their definitions, is included in the NCI.

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-3

2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-3

Supported activities under SO 3

Activities supported under SO 3 fall into three areas: Support of owners of integrated instruments (Integrated Territorial Investments (hereinafter referred to as the "ITI"), support of activities of Regional Standing Conferences, and ensuring capacities for the closure of the Regional Operational Programmes for the period 2007-2013.

In the first area, for the period 2014 – 2020 a greater emphasis is placed on territorial dimension and associated application of integrated approaches and strategies so as to close the wide gap between socio-economic levels of regions and to enhance the territorial competitiveness of regions, towns and municipalities. These requirements impose higher demands on bodies who are the owners of integrated instruments (organisations responsible for the implementation of ITI). Under this SO support will be channelled to operation, support activities and development of owners of ITI integrated instruments with a view to implement integrated strategy conducive to further development of the territory concerned. The OPTA supported the owners of integrated instruments – ITI already in the programming period 2007–2013. The support from OPTA went to the development of quality integrated strategy for the 2014–2020 period in order to introduce and provide implementation mechanisms of these strategies instrumental to further quality development and positive change in the territory concerned. Apart from ITI, support has also been provided for Integrated Territorial Development Plans (ITDP) and community-led local development strategies for LAG territories that will receive support from other sources.

1. Operating costs incurred in relation to management, implementation and updates of integrated strategies (ITI). It concerns e.g. operating costs, labour costs in terms of salaries and associated statutory deductions, vocational education and training of administrative capacities, including the exchange of experience and best practice, costs of public relations, financial costs, costs of monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and costs incurred in relation to creating quality working conditions and providing adequate technical and material equipment (IT equipment, aid and resources, etc.).
2. Support of individual strategic documents and analyses for ITI.
3. Methodological support and sharing good practice examples among the individual owners of integrated instruments (shared website platform, working groups, seminars).

In the second area, the interlinkage shall be guaranteed between the Mas through the integrated strategies of the so called Regional Standing Conferences, which will be set up in each Region for the purpose of efficient implementation of territorial dimension in line with the National Document on Territorial Dimension (activities of the National Standing Conference are ensured by the MRD under PA1 SO 1).

4. Ensuring the operation of the Regional Standing Conference (especially activities of the Secretariat, including the staffing, organisation of meetings of Regional Standing Conferences, preparation of the technical documents for the meetings).

In the third area, capacities will be ensured for closure of the Regional Operational Programmes (hereinafter referred to as the "ROP"") for the period 2007-2013.

5. Ensuring activities for closure of ROPs starting with 1 January 2016 (especially staffing, operating costs, etc.).

Beneficiaries:

Owners of integrated instruments (ITI);
Organisations ensuring activities of the Secretariat to the Regional Standing Conference;
Managing Authorities of ROPs 2007–2013.

Target groups:

Owners of integrated instruments (ITI) and their partners;
Members of the Regional Standing Conference; working groups of the Regional Standing Conference; staff of the Secretariat to the Regional Standing Conference;
Employees of the Managing Authorities of ROPs 2007–2013 ensuring the closure of these programmes after 2015.

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-3

Table 10 Output indicators for SO 1-3

Odstraně

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) total	Source of data
80500	Number of drawn up and published analytical and strategic documents (including evaluation documents)	Documents	26	A/B
80200	Number of produced information materials	Unique materials	26	A/B
81101	Number of domestic and international business trips	Persons	50	A/B
82000	Number of held training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences	Activities	50	A/B
60000	Total number of participants	Persons	2000	A/B
82500	Number of jobs (FTE) financed from the programme	FTE	[3]	A/B
82300	Number of pieces of newly acquired	Inventory numbers	13	A/B

[3] The target value of indicator 82500 is not requested

	equipment			
82200	Purchase of material, goods and services necessary to ensure the implementation of the programme	CZK	20 000 000	A/B

Source: OPTA MA

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 1-4

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 4: Creating conditions for effective control and audit of the ESIF

Specific objective 4 focuses on functioning and activities of the Audit Authority of the MoF. The Audit Authority is an independent institution as defined in Article 124 and Article 127 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council that ensures the verification of compliance with the Union and national legislation, conducts audits of proper functioning of the system of management and control of the operational programme and audits of a suitable sample of operations based on the declared expenditure. The aim is to maintain and strengthen the already established structures so that they ensure quality performance of audit activities and in cooperation with other horizontal institutions they take part as an independent consultant in compliance with the international standards on auditing also in strategic and methodological management within the implementation of the ESIF. Pivotal is to ensure activities in the field of conduct of controls and audits that shall also provide potential feedback for improvements in this area. The activities of the AA as such will also provide input in the form of recommendations for improvements in functioning of management and control systems and in the UME (e.g. through experience with findings in the field of public procurement, eligibility of expenditure, etc.)

The strengthening of the role of the Audit Authority also aims at satisfaction of its employees with work conditions, staffing policy and system of education. Activities supported under this SO will also comprise the provision of specific training courses for all the AA employees in matters important for the performance of their activities that cannot be delivered through the central System of Education.
This SO generally satisfies the need of the Audit Authority employees within the implementation structure to work under conditions enabling them to perform their work in a quality manner and to further develop their qualification in the framework of available quality system of education, and thus to help improve the quality of their work.

To efficiently fulfil the SO 4, also the use of expert assistance in the area of audits and control is foreseen.

2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 1-4

Table 11 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-4

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value total	Baseline year	Target value (2023) total	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
82410	Satisfaction rate of the relevant actors with conditions for work in the management of the PA/OP	%	63	2014	70	MA Standardised questionnaire survey	Once a year
82110	Satisfaction rate of employees of the implementation structure with human resources policy and system of education	%	65	2014	72	MA Standardised questionnaire survey	Once a year
82520	Number of permanent employees of the implementation structure	FTE	102	2014	125	MA	Once a year
80920	Share of audited funds in the total allocation for the Czech Republic	%	0	2014	30	MA	Once a year

Source: OPTA MA

Note: More detailed information on individual indicators, including their definitions, is included in the NCI.

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives

2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 1-4

Supported activities under SO 4

In the 2007–2013 period, support was continuously directed to strengthening the central role of the AA. Nonetheless, the necessity to address and coordinate at the national level e.g. the implementation of measures adopted in response to findings of the EU audits calls for further reinforcement of central coordination. Hence, the central role of the AA will continue to be promoted and strengthened.
The coordination of activities of the PCA and AA, all the OP MAs, AFCOS and CHU will continue to be intensified which proved its worth in the programming period 2007–2013, while the centralised arrangement of the AA, made in response to identified deficiencies in the course of the 2007-2013 period, will remain in existence. The AA shall now have to deal with new requirements on audit activities ensuing from a greater stress put on financial instruments and from e-Cohesion requirements.

Under SO 4 PA 1, support will be granted to activities that will ensure and facilitate further functioning and development of the AA:

1. **Ensuring administrative capacity of the AA in terms of wages and necessary material, equipment, and administrative and technical support of activities;**

The activity serves to provide financial remuneration of the AA employees, i.e. the OPTA shall finance the wages/salaries, related statutory deductions and various forms of rewards (financial incentives) at the MoF (AA) level. An appropriately set system of wages and rewards (including financial incentives) will, also based on the lessons learned in the 2007–2013 period, result in lower turnover of staff and higher stability of the AA structure. The rules for wages and rewards will be transparent and compliant with the conditions and limits defined in the MG HRD.

The activity shall also satisfy all the other relevant needs (e.g. renting the premises, provision of necessary technical equipment, material, refreshments, purchase of publications, travel expenses, internships, translation, interpretation, telecommunication and other services, company cars running costs).

The AA employees shall perform especially the following activities:

- Ensuring suitable conditions for control and audit activities, including their performance;
- Ensuring suitable conditions for cooperation of experts with a view to strengthening and making more efficient the audit, control and monitoring activities in projects, including prevention of errors;
- Cooperating in methodological management in the field of eligibility of expenditure, public procurement, financial flows, addressing irregularities, 3E principles (effectiveness, economy and efficiency), etc.;

- Cooperating with the other ESIF implementation bodies in the implementation of anti-corruption actions (sharing information on audit findings, specifically focused audits on fraud risks, etc.;
- Activities related to closure of the programming period 2007-2013.

Based on the analysis of staffing needs, 241 FTE is foreseen indicatively.

2. Specific system of education for the AA employees;

The activity comprises the initial identification of educational needs of the AA employees, periodical updates of educational needs since new needs will inevitably arise in response to progress made in the implementation of the ESIF, and the delivery of education to satisfy all the educational needs of employees, particularly the specific activities instrumental to making the AA staff professional, improving the professional and technical education of auditors. An employee who acquires such qualification and avails of the opportunity to update his knowledge and skills will be better equipped for the performance of audit activities.

The AA employees will be trained through:

- Domestic and international training courses;
- Individual professional development of auditors;
- National and international certification for audit activities (e.g. audit, accounting, IT, etc.)

3. Increasing the quality of management of the ESIF implementation through expert assistance

In order to improve the quality and coordination of its activities with the other bodies within the ESIF, the Audit Authority will use also the outsourced expert assistance. This activity will facilitate the use of expert assistance for example in the areas of:

- Consultancy and legal services to ensure certain activities of the AA;
- Ensuring external audit services;
- Expert opinions;
- Workshops, seminars, conferences;
- Internships, etc.

Beneficiaries:

Ministry of Finance – Audit Authority.

Target groups:

Implementation structure of the ESIF.

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 1-4

Table 12 Output indicators for SO 1-4

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) Total	Source of data
82300	Number of pieces of newly acquired equipment	Inventory numbers	40	A/B
82200	Purchase of material, goods and services necessary to ensure the implementation of the programme	CZK	70 000 000	A/B
82000	Number of held training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences	Activities	32	A/B
81101	Number of domestic and international business trips	Persons	600	A/B
60000	Total number of participants	Persons	241	A/B
82500	Number of jobs (FTE) financed from the programme	FTE	4	A/B
82100	Number of participants in education and training	Persons	1 700	A/B
80902	Number of controls and audits conducted by the AA	Controls/audits	5900	A/B
80905	Number of final audit reports	Reports	445	A/B
80500	Number of drawn up and published analytical and strategic documents (including evaluation documents)	Documents	4	A/B

Source: OPTA MA

[4] The target value of indicator 82500 is not requested.

2.B.7 Categories of intervention for PA 1

Table 13 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Priority axis	Code	Amount in EUR
1	0121	151 498 222
	0122	2 475 562
	0123	9 730 798

Source: OPTA MA

Table 14 Dimension 2 – Form of finance

Priority axis	Code	Amount in EUR
1	01	163 704 582

Source: OPTA MA

Table 15 Dimension 3 – Territory type

Priority axis	Code	Amount in EUR
1	07	163 704 582

Source: OPTA MA

2.B.1 PRIORITY AXIS 2: Single monitoring system

2.B.2 Justification for the establishment of a priority axis covering more than one category of region

In accordance with Article 96(1) of the CPR, the support under this PA will be targeted at the whole territory of the Czech Republic, across all types of regions.

2.B.3 Fund and categories of region

Fund	**Cohesion Fund**
Category of region	**Not applicable**
Basis for the calculation (Total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)	**Public eligible expenditure**

2.B.4 Specific objectives and expected results for SO 2-1

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVE 1: Ensuring a single monitoring system based on high degree of data computerization

PA 2 focuses on support to objectives under PA 1 through the technical provision of the monitoring system. Complex architecture of the whole monitoring system in the programming period 2007–2013 placed high requirements on information technologies (hereinafter referred to as the "IT") expertise of its users and led to the risk of errors made not only in entering the data, but also during their processing at diverse levels of administration. Requirements imposed upon the monitoring system (hereinafter referred to as the "MS") for the programming period 2014–2020 are even higher after the inclusion of the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (hereinafter referred to as the "EAFRD") and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (hereinafter referred to as the "EMFF") under the Partnership Agreement, with stronger stress put on territorial dimension, necessity to monitor microdata on participants in ESF projects, increased use of integrated instruments, etc. The MS for the programming period 2014–2020, intended for the entire ESIF implementation structure, will ensure the highest possible computerization of implementation procedures, including the whole process of preparation of project applications, their submission, administration, system of evaluation and selection of projects, monitoring reports and applications for payment and other necessary processes. In keeping with the development of the SMS which will fully respect the EC requirements at the level of e-Cohesion policy and e-Government of the CR, it is necessary to ensure also a comprehensive development of other support ISs. The aim of SMS is, based on experience from the previous periods, to streamline the entire system of monitoring and to interlink the SMS and relevant existing sources of data related to administration. Within the anti-fraud and anti-corruption measures the managing authorities, including the OPTA MA, will through the SMS be provided with access to the ARACHNE system on technical infrastructure of the SMS.

This SO will also meet the need of employees of the implementation structure and representatives of applicants and beneficiaries to have a single and user friendly monitoring system that avails of maximum amount of information necessary for the administration of ESIF projects.

Thanks to the support and interventions from OPTA, the operation and functioning of the SMS will be provided for, including the provision of necessary interfaces for transmission of the data from/to the other systems, also ensured will be the sustainability of all parts of the MS 2007-2013 and the data warehouse (MIS). Applicants, beneficiaries as well as employees of the implementation structure will be able to efficiently use the SMS and will be provided with support in case any problems arise. The monitoring system will be continuously evaluated and further developed.

This SO covers activities on ensuring the operation of MSC2007 throughout the sustainability period, the operation and development of the new MS 2014+, and also on ensuring the operation of ISAO (ISAA) and VIOLA systems at the MoF for the programming period 2014-2020 and sustainability for the 2007-2013 period. Last but not least, this SO will cover the activity on operation and administration of IS ESF.

Within the three building blocks of quality administrative capacity, this SO ensures the key tool in the form of information system.

2.B.5 Result indicators for SO 2-1

Table 16 Programme specific result indicators for SO 2-1

Odstraně

ID	Indicator	Measurement unit	Baseline value Total	Baseline year	Target value (2023) total	Source of data	Frequency of reporting
83420	Satisfaction rate of employees of the implementation structure and beneficiaries and applicants with the information system	%	64	2014	80	MA Standardised questionnaire survey	Once a year
83410	Computerization of processes	%	60	2014	90	MRD-NCA	Once a year
83430	Completeness and correctness of data in the system	%	98	2014	98	MRD-NCA	Once a year

Source: OPTA MA

Note: More detailed information on individual indicators, including their definitions, is included in the NCI.

2.B.6 Actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 2-1

2.B.6.1 Description of actions to be supported and their expected contribution to the specific objectives under SO 2-1

Supported activities under SO 1:

For the implementation of ESIF, it is essential to ensure a quality MS which will create conditions for the fulfilment of PA1 and will meet the requirements of the ESIF implementation structure.

In the programming period 2007–2013, the MS of structural funds (MS2007) was used the management, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and projects financed from the SF/CF at all levels of administration.

The system was designed as a set of information systems communicating with each other, composed of three layers:

1. Central and management – which provided summary monitoring of all the OPs in the CR, it was used for the management, coordination, monitoring of programmes and projects, control, transmission of data to other ISs of the EC and the CR, for central monitoring and management bodies (MSC2007),
2. Executive (of the OP MA/intermediate body (hereinafter referred to as the "IS")) – it was used for the administration and control of the progress of implementation of projects of the given OP, for financial and physical monitoring of projects of the given OP (Monit7+, ISOP, IS of the Ministry of Environment (hereinafter referred to as the "MoE"),
3. Beneficiary/applicant for support (website application) – it was used for the transfer of information by the beneficiary and for bilateral communication between the OP MA and the beneficiary (Benefit7, eAccount, Benefill).

The following activity shall help ensure a smooth transition between the two subsequent programming periods:

1. Ensuring the operation, administration and required development of all parts of the MS for the programming period 2007–2013 in terms of sustainability and accessibility of the implementation structure for the purpose of controls, audits and evaluation of interventions;

Interlinkage of these layers of the MS at the level of centrally binding scope of data, and common technological solution safeguarded the completeness and transparency of the process of administration, together with the definition of binding procedures and deadlines for monitoring of OPs and projects at all levels of implementation. The above referred to set up was not an ideal solution e.g. with respect to the necessity to make data transmissions between databases.

MS 2007 provided all the functions and outputs which it was to provide in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 and Commission Regulation (EC) No 1828/2006 (hereinafter referred to as the "Implementing Regulation"). This system was of fairly good compared to the similar systems of the other EU Member States, but was not designed to meet the EC requirements for the programming period 2014–2020. MS 2007 fails to meet all the requirements placed on the MS for the period 2014–2020:

- It has a complex structure (three providers, three technological solutions);
- It fails to meet all the needs of management and evaluation of programmes and projects;

- It fails to meet the needs of the Uniform Methodological Environment
- It fails to meet all the e-cohesion requirements;
- Its technology is slightly outdated.

The audit of the MS2007 carried out in 2010 recommended to prepare a new SMS for the new programming period. Thus, the development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period was approved by the CR Government on 8 September 2011 by Resolution No 664/2011, including the approval of the basic concept of the MS of Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund for the programming period 2014+ and also the framework timetable of its further preparation, when based on the previous experience the MRD-NCA was tasked to ensure the preparation of MS 2014+ and also to play the role of the central sponsor of MS2014. Since the ensurance of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period represents a horizontal activity covering the needs of the whole implementation structure, it will be financed from OPTA funds. On 6 June 2013 the contract was signed with the winner of the open tender for the acquisition of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application for the programming period 2014–2020. Until the end of 2013, the stage I of the preparation of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period was implemented, the stage I pilot testing took place, the training courses for users from among the future implementation structure were launched and the basic functions of the MS necessary for beneficiaries and the implementation structure were prepared with a view to facilitate the receipt and administration of applications for support. In October 2013, the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period test environment was made ready. As of January 2014 the basic functions of the monitoring system necessary for beneficiaries and the implementation structure have been in trial operation with a view to verifying the basic functionalities. At the end of August 2014, the MRD finished the preparation of Application the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period within the scope of defined monitoring processes, cross-cutting functionalities and other components that are necessary for the system compliance audit and the actual operation of the application to the degree enabling the launch of administration of ESIF programmes and projects. In October 2014, the delivery of hardware was completed and in early November 2014 the services of the data centre were launched as well as the production database of MS2014. In December 2014, the back-up office of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period was made operational. The Stage II of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period preparation was completed in February 2015 through a series of training courses for users of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application.

Following the launch of Application the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period, the application will be further developed, negotiations with representatives of ministries on details of work processes of Application the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will continue, the Working Groups on the project Application the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will continue in their activities, the Working Group for the Preparation of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will meet once a year (with a representative from the MA). Initial training courses for users of the Application the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period and specialised training courses on selected processes will continue to take place.

The MRD as a contractor has become the owner of source codes.

Advantages of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period as against MS 2007 consist primarily of:

- Reducing the costs on the acquisition and operation of the IS for monitoring the EU Funds in the CR;
- Single terminology, common methodological procedures, uniform design of processes – enhanced transparency of processes of administration of project applications and programme management;
- One database for management, control, audit and reporting for the whole CR (elimination of conflicts in interpretations of individual procedures, processes and data from various databases) from the perspective of beneficiaries as well as the implementation structure;
- Using new technologies for easier and more user-friendly work in the system – electronic filing of applications for support with the use of certified signature and data boxes, electronic document

circulation (workflow) and stress on easy and fast communication of the applicant/beneficiary with the respective manager of the MA of the programme (internal communicator, help system);

- Improving the management and efficiency of absorption of support through the use of new instruments (CBA module, simulator of calls and their planning and coordination across programmes);
- Obligation to use the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period for all MAs ensuing from the Government Resolution No 44 of 15 January 2014.

Under PA2 SO1 appropriate room will be dedicated to MS 2014+, it is the largest and also crucial activity, followed up by other activities. The approved basic concept of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period represents a single IS for monitoring of the use of assistance from the ESIF in the CR for all the OPs. the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period is a basic tool for monitoring of the use of financial assistance from ESIF at the national level, it will safeguard conditions for effective work of MAs as well as applicants for support/aid beneficiaries in the administration of projects and programmes financed from the ESIF, and thus create prerequisites for effective use of this support in the programming period 2014–2020. For programmes co-financed from the EAFRD and the EFF, only the data necessary for monitoring and evaluation of the Partnership Agreement will be stored in the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period. The data on all operations necessary for the monitoring, evaluation, financial management, control, audit and other needs associated with the management of these programmes will be primarily recorded, processed and stored in IS SAIF. Data transmissions between the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period and IS SAIF will be safeguarded through the interface.

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period supports the process of assessing the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of funds spent on the implementation of particular projects. To this end effective tools will be included in the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period for the generation of relevant data necessary for analyses, outputs, identifying the trends of processes, planning and evaluation for all levels in the management hierarchy.

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will also enable the employees of the defined bodies to carry out graphic analyses based on the obtained data, to present results in time, to generate statistics and outlooks for effective evaluation and management.

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will also provide a website access for applicants to information on currently published calls and possibilities to submit applications for support, and it will facilitate the implementation of all procedures necessary for a due submission of the application for support or repayable financial assistance and for monitoring of the state of play of administration of project approval, including the processing of results from administrative controls in response to needs of the respective implementation bodies, etc.

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will ensure the necessary control and evaluation mechanisms instrumental in selection and control of submitted applications for support. The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period comprises also the forms and basic templates for administration of the provision of funds, such as the form of the application for support or the monitoring report, template of the legal act on provision of support, etc.

As one of the anti-corruption measures the MAs will get an on-demand access to the ARACHNE system together with the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period.

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will enable the selected applicants / beneficiaries to further administer their information on the project, to efficiently communicate with the MA / IB and to administer further necessary steps in the course of project implementation, such as the regular submission of reports and reporting the state of play of implementation of the project, administration of change proceedings and

submission of applications for release of funds associated with project implementation, including on-line information on the state of play of its processing (approval/reimbursement).

The new concept of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period **is based on reducing the** existing **number of levels** of the MS from **three to two**; i.e. to the level of a single environment for applicant and the level of a single environment for central and managing authorities, all of that **on a single common database** with common data sources e.g. in the form of central codelists. By defining the only used database, from which the output reports are generated, consistency, compatibility and integrity of data across the whole implementation structure will be ensured.

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will record and store data on all the operations which are necessary for their monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit. The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will ensure that every exchange of information between the beneficiaries and the MA, the PCA, the AA, the IB and the EC is carried out through an electronic data exchange. The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will also ensure the exchange of information and documents between the CR and the EC. All these and many other activities will be backed up in the electronic format in the form of supervision and audit logs, identifiable for each particular operation implemented in the system.

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period system is designed to meet the requirements of e-Cohesion policy of the European Commission for digitisation and mutual data sharing (interoperability), when majority of documents is entered and stored in the system in an electronic form, with the potential use of electronic signature. The system will allow for 100 % computerization of all information exchange. The actual degree of computerization is monitored by the indicator “Computerization of processes”. The system facilitates uploading and administration of a large number of annexes, their distribution to and viewing by various types of users (by their role), it will make possible their downloading and other similar functions. The system also respects the principle of identifying the version of the entered documents, adding timestamps and always associating the data with the object (programme, operation, project), with respect to which they were stored. Speeding up the administrative process and reducing the costs of printing and storage should be achieved by introducing the electronic communication and data exchange (including electronic signature) and full replacing the flow of relevant paper documents among all the stakeholders in the process of implementation. Concurrently, the system will administer all the structured or unstructured information in keeping with the rules defined for long-term stored information sources (long-term trusted archive).

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period works on a single common database for storing of structured as well as unstructured data (project annexes, programming documents, control and evaluation forms, etc.). There are two ways in place how to access the application through user portals (KP14+ and CSSF14+), whose functionalities determine the use of particular parts by the respective user. There is a service portal in place for the whole monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period for access to the Service Desk application.

Creation, operation and development of the SMS is the pivotal activity instrumental to reducing the administrative burden. In accordance to Article 27 of Regulation No 1303/2013, each programme shall include actions to achieve a reduction of the administrative burden on beneficiaries, whereas in accordance with Article 122 of Regulation No 1303/2013 all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and a managing authority shall be carried out by means of electronic data exchange system and this system shall allow for the beneficiaries to submit all information only once, and at the same time in accordance with Annex 1 with respect to coordination and complementarity, support is granted to making use of joint e-Governance solutions as well as the widest possible use of “one-stop shops”. Therefore, this requirement on electronic data exchange is being fulfilled through the SMS which enables the beneficiaries/applicants to submit information in this way and which within the whole system considerably simplifies the process of administration. In connection to activities related to the SMS, the OPTA shall ensure the optimal level of

computerisation of agendas and data interoperability which will be conducive to minimisation of the volume of data entered in the system by beneficiaries.

With the view to **reduce the administrative burden** the system also facilitates:

- interconnection of the application for central management and for management of OPs, including the ensurance of the single audit principle, with the optimal use of available e-Government services such as the Basic Registers of the Czech Republic, Data Boxes and other ISs of public administration;
- efficient use of new elements of e-Government (e.g. electronic signature, flow of electronic documents, integration of records management, use of data boxes, etc.) and support databases;
- reduction of the amount of data entered by the applicants to the minimum and automatic adding of information e.g. from accessible ISs of e-Government or central codelists of the the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application, data are entered into the system once only;
- common processes and uniform methodological procedures are used for all the implementation structure bodies;
- Linking to monitoring systems of public procurement will in line with the interoperability principles prevent duplicate entries of identical data in multiple systems, it will enable to provide a broader scope of information support to stakeholders, agenda automation, and result in much more efficient work of individual categories of users, in maximum use of the database of generated data for solving the tasks in public procurement agendas as well as in the absorption and monitoring of the ESIF and reduction of the risk of ineligible expenditure due to erroneously conducted tenders.

In order to reduce the administrative burden of applicant/beneficiary, new functionalities will be available such as a special module for recording the detailed budget linked to the list of invoices, an option for the applicant/beneficiary to on-line administer and monitor his own projects under various operational programmes, a module enabling the application of uniform procedures for conducting a cost-benefit analysis and a feasibility study. Together with the database of socio-economic impacts, a transparent evaluation of projects in terms of the required funds and associated outputs will be conducted.

For more efficient and simplified administration of projects, the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will include a system of automatic tools for work and for monitoring the progress in subsequent steps (e.g. automatic monitoring of key deadlines, system of alerts, data validity control in connection to binding methodological procedures, monitoring of performance of project managers and efficiency of their work, etc.). Thanks to the advanced technical equipment and applications it will be possible to use the tools to reduce the administrative burden (fulfilment of interoperability – mutual data sharing). The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period works on a single common database for storage of data, both structured and unstructured. The aim is to avoid entering duplicate data (to enter data once only and to use the data stored in databases of Basic Registers of the CR) and to prevent any useless and erroneous data transmissions, during which costs of creation and maintenance of interfaces between the systems can be incurred. The shared use of the once entered data will be safeguarded based on competences, rights and roles of the users. Activities supporting the managerial superstructure above the common data inputs will facilitate easier and more transparent access to the stored historical data and specific analytical outputs defined in a uniform manner.

Under activity No 1 the support the CRD projects (wage costs in particular) is anticipated. This activity, to be carried out by the CRD monitoring systems staff, consists in the provision of data and supporting documents (in the form of data sets, data aggregation and processing pursuant to the MA requirements, and also their graphical display) for the purpose of evaluation activities carried out by the MAs of programmes and covering the interventions under these programmes, or individual specific objectives or

themes from the perspective of the programming period 2007-2013, but also the programming period 2014-2020. The obtained data and data projections made by these employees serve mainly the regional, sociometric display of efficiency of results of implementation of the Structural Funds in regions concerned, in operational programmes concerned and in intervention axes.

Another step towards the optimisation will consist in reduction of the number of processes at the level of portal for applicants/beneficiaries in such a way that following the project approval the beneficiary can access, provided he observes all the security aspects, his data/records directly in the single database and common data warehouse for central authorities and MAs, where further monitoring and administration of projects will take place.

The following activities shall ensure the above referred to procedures:

2. Purchase of HW and SW components (SSW licences) and associated services and support services for the operation of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period;
3. Operation, administration and development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application, including its modifications required by individual OP MAs, MRD-NCA and EC;
4. Operation, administration, development and renewal of HW and SSW environment at all the sites of the back-up office;
5. Provision of other IT services related to the operation and development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period (e.g. system integration, national data centres, security supervision, connectivity, certifications, etc.);
6. Development of the monitoring system – evaluation of efficiency of the implementation of assistance – optimisation tools (statistical forecasts, business intelligence, date warehouses, etc.);
7. Development, operation and administration of the DWH and the management information system (hereinafter referred to as the “MIS”);
8. Purchase of state-of-the-art technical equipment and applications for the purpose of efficient implementation.

The whole monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period system will be appropriately connected to external ISs, as necessary, through which the data will be validated or from which the data will be taken over. Another level of external bilateral link/communication is the handing over of structured data sets for the purpose of subsequent processing of information within the remit of the MA. The external systems, with which the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will communicate, can be divided into three thematic groups. Group one includes the ISs relevant for handing over/taking over of data on projects for further processing (IS PCA - VIOLA, IS MoF - CEDR, ISAA, accounting ISs of the MA, SFC). Group two defines the external systems which are relevant in terms of verification of basic registration data (Single Identity Space, Basic Registers). Group three consists of support tools, including the databases that will be accessible for applicants before the submission of their application (CBA). In addition, the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application will be ready to communicate with a number of other external systems that can act as support for beneficiaries and implementation structure. Their final list will depend on methodological needs and potential demand on the part of the implementation structure. Bearing in mind the interlinkage and data communication between MS 2014+ and IS VIOLA, ISAA and IS ESF as systems ensuring horizontal activities, their support from PA2 is desirable. It is essential for IS ESF 2014+ that the development of IS ESF 2014+ is facilitated and enabled also for the partner OPs under ESF 2014+ for the sake of specific modifications and development of the system beyond the framework of requirements of the OP Emp. To this end, the development and operation of the system will be financed from OPTA, namely from PA2 SO1. With respect to development, it concerns specific requirements of all

the involved managing authorities of ESF, including potential needs of the MRD-NCA with respect to monitoring and reporting.

The respective activities are described below:

9. Design, operation and development of technical interface with the EC database - SFC2014+ and with all the external systems to be used for implementation;
10. Development, operation and administration of support ISs used in the implementation structure environment as implementation tools (VIOLA, ISAA);
11. Operation and management of IS ESF, including the development of specific features;
12. Provision of monitoring systems of public procurement co-financed from ESIF;

The monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period (including the interface with external systems) will be updated in response to amendments to legislation and changes of methodological environment and the implementation system;
Through the provision of training courses, the qualification of implementation structure employees will be maintained and increased. Professional consultancy, vocational training of employees of beneficiaries and organisation of technical seminars on operation and development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period will facilitate appropriate administration of the system.

Corresponding activities:

13. Professional consultancy (technical, legal, methodological, expert opinions, certification, etc.) concerning the operation and development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period; initial and continuous training courses on the monitoring system for the whole implementation structure;
14. Vocational training for employees of beneficiaries regarding the building, operation and development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period, other information systems satisfying the needs of the programming period 2014–2020, including related certification examinations;
15. Provision of technical seminars and consultations concerning the operation and development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period;

The following activities will contribute to smooth transition between the two subsequent programming periods 2014–2020 and 2021+ and preparation of the programming period 2021+:

16. Preparation and provision of the MS for the programming period 2021+ and potential modifications and changes in functionalities of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period based on the EC requirements for procedural changes for the programming period 2021+;
17. Preparation and provision of other ISs for the programming period 2021+ and potential modifications and changes of functionalities of these systems for the programming period 2021+, including the cost-effectiveness of other ISs for the programming period 2021+.

The aforementioned supported activities will be monitored and evaluated through a questionnaire survey ascertaining the satisfaction of employees, applicants and beneficiaries with the monitoring system. The questionnaire survey reveals the satisfaction with the monitoring system with respect to the MS work environment and its user friendliness, with respect to data available in the MS, and with respect to quality and availability of technical support. Thus, the results of the questionnaire survey enable to assess the satisfaction of MS users with data interoperability and also to assess the development in the field of administrative burden (it is ascertained how usual is the necessity of repeated data entry). Final results aggregated into a single value of satisfaction with the MS will then be used for reporting the indicator

"Satisfaction rate of employees of the implementation structure and beneficiaries and applicants with the IS". In the framework of baseline survey, the satisfaction of users with Monit7+ and MSC2007 systems was ascertained, whereas in the following years satisfaction of users with the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period system will be mapped. The data collection method and the design of questionnaires make it possible to monitor the satisfaction of users and its development in individual areas. The findings of the questionnaire survey will thus be used for management purposes and for potential proposals for modifications of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period.

In the first half of 2015, the Audit Authority carried out audits of the monitoring systems as requested by the European Commission. Expenditures based on contracts related to the tenders affected by the audits or linked to the ongoing police investigation will not be reimbursed to the beneficiaries nor will such payments be claimed to the European Commission until all of the audits findings and the outcomes of the police investigation are properly tackled. . The expenditures in question are those of the above mentioned activities 2 – 6. Activities that are not directly related to the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period and at the same time are not affected by the performance audit findings will be duly implemented according to the OPTA conditions. Reallocations from PA 2 to PA 1 or vice versa can be made depending on outcomes of investigations and conclusions based on audit reports of the monitoring system.

Beneficiaries:

Central authorities ensuring institutional coordination and management of the Partnership Agreement in the CR;

Center for Regional Development of the Czech Republic (for activity No 1 - 2007–2013 period);

Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

Target groups:

Implementation structure of the ESIF.

2.B.6.2 Output indicators expected to contribute to results under SO 2-1

Table 17 Output indicators for SO 2-1

Odstraně

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) total	Source of data
83300	Number of used electronic signatures of users of the monitoring system	Electronic signatures	45 000	A/B
83100	Number of created interfaces	Interfaces	20	A/B
60000	Total number of participants	Persons	4 500	A/B
82000	Number of held training courses, seminars, workshops and conferences	Activities	150	A/B

ID	Indicator (name of indicator)	Measurement unit	Target value (2023) total	Source of data
82300	Number of pieces of newly acquired equipment	Inventory numbers	150	A/B
82200	Purchase of material, goods and services necessary to ensure the implementation of the programme	CZK	15 000 000	A/B
80200	Number of produced information materials	Unique materials	60	A/B
83200	Number of users of information system*	Users	50 000	A/B
83000	Availability of the monitoring system for the period 2007-2013	Calendar months	108	A/B

Source: OPTA MA

*This indicator is set for both the programming period 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. The other indicators concern the programming period 2014-2020.

2.B.7 Categories of intervention for PA 2

Table 18 Dimension 1 – Intervention field

Odstraně

Priority axis	Code	Amount in EUR
2	0121	46 000 000

Source: OPTA MA

Table 19 Dimension 2 – Form of finance

Odstraně

Priority axis	Code	Amount in EUR
2	01	46 000 000

Source: OPTA MA

Table 20 Dimension 3 – Territory type

Priority axis	Code	Amount in EUR

2	07	46 000 000

Source: OPTA MA

Section 3 Financing plan

3.1 Financial support from each of the Funds and amounts of performance reserve

Table 2021 Financial appropriations envisaged for the support from each of the Funds (EUR)

	Fund	Category of region	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019		2020		Total	
			Main allocation[5]	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve	Main allocation	Performance reserve
(10)	CF	N/A	0	0	60 465 405	0	31 324 638	0	28 503 425	0	29 136 283	0	29 841 090	0	30 433 741	0	209 704 582	0
(12)	**CF**	**Total**	**0**	**0**	**60 465 405**	**0**	**31 324 638**	**0**	28 503 425	**0**	29 136 283	**0**	29 841 090	**0**	30 433 741	**0**	209 704 582	**0**

Source: OPTA MA

[5] Total funding (Union support) less performance reserve

3.2 Amount of the total financial appropriation of the support from each of the Funds and the national co-financing (EUR)

Table 22 Financing plan

Priority axis	Fund	Category of region	Basis for the calculation of the Union support (Total eligible expenditure or public eligible expenditure)	Union support	National counterpart	Indicative breakdown of national counterpart		Total funding	Co-financing rate	For information EIB contributions	Main allocation (total funding less performance reserve)		Performance reserve		Share of the performance reserve (Union support) in the total Union support
						National public funding	National private funding				Union support	National counterpart	Union support	National counterpart	
				(a)	(b)= (c) + (d)	(c)	(d)	(e) = (a) + (b)	(f) = (a)/(e)[6]	(g)	(h)= (a) - (j)	(i) =(b) - (k)	(j)	(k) = (b)* ((j)/(a))	(l) =(j)/ (a)*100
Priority axis 1	CF	N/A	Public eligible expenditure	163 704 582	28 889 044	28 889 044	0	192 593 626	85,00%	N/A	163 704 582	28 889 044	0	0	0
Priority axis 2	CF	N/A	Public eligible expenditure	46 000 000	8 117 648	8 117 648	0	54 117 648	85,00%	N/A	46 000 000	8 117 648	0	0	0
Total	**CF**	**N/A**	**Public eligible expenditure**	209 704 582	37 006 692	37 006 692	**0**	246 711 274	**85,00%**	**N/A**	209 704 582	37 006 692	**0**	**0**	**0**

[6] This rate may be rounded to the nearest whole number in the table. The precise rate used to reimburse payments is the ratio (f).

Source: OPTA MA

Section 4 Integrated approach to territorial development

In the period 2014–2020 major stress is laid on territorial dimension and integrated approach to targeting the interventions within the given region. The main aim is to ensure the orientation of OPs on specific regional needs or regional disparities. The planned interventions should take into account the territorial context and functional links prevailing in the given region and should be interlinked throughout various priority axes of the ESIF programme or programmes. The territorial dimension is applied because of the growing disparities in economic and social area especially in the field of unemployment, standard of living and social situation of the population. Their concept-based solution is perceived as one of the main goals of the regional policy of the CR, or the EU. Following the cooperation of relevant partners and mutual synergy, integrated strategies will be created which will focus on evaluation of problems and potential of the region concerned, and subsequently propose its further development through particular measures.

Given the objective of the programme, the OPTA 2014–2020 interventions are linked to the territorial dimension only indirectly. OPTA pursues the achievement of objectives of the Partnership Agreement and through the planned activities ensures the effective central management and coordination. None of the priority axes of OPTA are targeted on a specific territory or intended exclusively for a specific region. **On account of its focus, the support from OPTA is of a horizontal nature. OPTA can finance activities throughout the territory of the Czech Republic, including the City of Prague.** OPTA will promote the adherence to set out principles of territorial dimension and integrated instruments by providing room to activities associated with their evaluation (PA 1, SO 1). OPTA will also finance the management and coordination of activities associated with the application of integrated strategies. The Working Group for integrated approaches and territorial dimension is set up for the purpose of control of implementation, coordination and evaluation of the integrated strategy.

The OPTA (PA 1 SO 3) provides support to owners of ITI integrated instruments.

Under the OPTA, no funds are earmarked for the implementation of projects included in ITDP.

4.1 Instruments to ensure the community-led local development

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

4.2 Integrated actions for sustainable urban development

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

4.3 Integrated territorial investments

In accordance with priorities of the Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic 2014–2020, the ITI in the CR consists in the implementation of the integrated strategy for the metropolitan area development which covers the key investments addressing the issues of the territory concerned from more than one PA of one or more programmes. The integrated strategy in its analysis and subsequent definition and prioritisation of needs concentrates on main thematic areas of metropolitan area development in keeping with the EU objectives and priorities.

The number of ITI in the CR is indicatively delimited by the number of metropolitan areas defined in the typology of territory in the Regional Development Strategy of the Czech Republic 2014–2020. It concerns seven areas (territory with concentration above 300 thousand inhabitants): Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Plzeň, Hradec Králové-Pardubice, Ústí nad Labem-Chomutov and Olomouc-Přerov-Prostějov. Each of these metropolitan areas can submit for approval and implementation one integrated strategy, which will be implemented through the ITI instrument.
Under the OPTA, support for management and technical of ITI is to be provided, but no funds are allocated to the implementation of projects included in ITI.

4.4 Arrangements for interregional and transnational actions within the operational programme, with beneficiaries located in at least one other Member State

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

4.5 Contribution of the planned programme interventions to the implementation of macro-regional strategies and sea-basin strategies, subject to the needs of the programme area as identified by the Member State

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

Section 5 Specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

5.1 Geographical areas most affected by poverty / target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

5.2 Strategy to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty / target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion and where appropriate, contribution to the integrated approach stated for this purpose in the Partnership Agreement

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

Section 6 Specific needs of geographical areas which suffer from severe and permanent natural or demographic handicaps

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

Section 7 Authorities and bodies responsible for management, control and audit and the role of relevant partners

7.1 Relevant authorities and bodies

OPTA managed by the MRD was approved by the Resolution of the Government No 867 of 28 November 2012. Responsible for sound and efficient management of OPTA in compliance with the EU and national laws is the responsible Department of the OPTA MA that was authorised to perform the function of the MA of OPTA 2014–2020 by Decision of the Minister for Regional Development No 3/2013 of 15 January 2013.

Implementation structure of OPTA is constituted by the following bodies:

- MRD: Managing Authority of OPTA (Department of the OPTA MA), other relevant sections involved in implementation,
- MRD: MRD-NCA,
- MoF: Audit Authority,
- MoF: CCP-AFCOS,
- National Fund at the MoF– Paying and Certifying Authority.

Table 213 Identification of and contact details for the relevant authorities and bodies

Odstraněno: 2

Authority/body	Name of the authority/body and departments or unit	Head of the authority/body (position or post)
OPTA Managing Authority	MRD, Department of the Managing Authority of OPTA	Mgr. Marek Kupsa, Director
Nation Coordination Authority	MRD, National Coordination Authority Section	JUDr. Olga Letáčková, Deputy Minister
Certifying Authority	MoF, Nation Fund – Paying and Certifying Authority	Ing. Veronika Ondráčková, Director
Audit Authority	MoF – Audit Authority	Mgr. Stanislav Bureš, Director
Body to whom payments will be made by the Commission	MoF, National Fund – Paying and Certifying Authority	Ing. Veronika Ondráčková, Director
Department 69 –CCP-AFCOS Unit	MoF	Ing. Barbora Boschat, Director

Source: OPTA MA

Ministry for Regional Development – Managing Authority of the Operational Programme Technical Assistance shall be responsible for managing the operational programme in accordance with the principle of sound financial management and in line with the provisions of the CPR, Article 125 in particular. The OPTA MA manages the whole workings of the

programme and is fully responsible for all the procedures during its implementation. The OPTA MA ensures the implementation of the programme in keeping with procedures defined in the operational manual. It was entrusted with this duty by the Decision of the Minister for Regional Development No 3/2013 of 15 January 2013. The OPTA MA will not be the a direct aid beneficiary under the OPTA 2014–2020, it will, however, be a target group under OPTA 2014-2020.Based on experience from the programming period 2007–2013 thus the conflict between the duties of the MA and the aid beneficiary (as defined in Article 125(4)) will be eliminated. The activities of MA will be safeguarded through projects, whose beneficiaries will be segregated within the organisation of the MRD from the OPTA MA, especially through the project office at MRD, which is in terms of organisation independent of the OPTA MA. The OPTA MA procedures will deal with the situations when the OPTA MA, as a target group of the OPTA 2014 -2020 project, could face a conflict of interest.
In OPTA MA activities account is taken of the State aid related matters.

MA shall be responsible particularly for the following activities:

1) As regards the programme management of the OP, the MA shall:

- support the work of the Monitoring Committee and provide it with the information it requires to carry out its tasks, in particular data relating to the progress of the OP in achieving its objectives, financial data and data relating to indicators and milestones;
- draw up and, after approval by the Monitoring Committee, submit to the EC annual and final implementation reports;
- make available to beneficiaries information that is relevant to the execution of their tasks and the implementation of operations, respectively;
- use the SMS to record and store in computerised form the data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verification and audit, or the data on individual participants in operations, where applicable;
- set out the implementation structure of OPTA.

2) As regards the selection of operations, the MA shall:

- draw up and, once approved, apply appropriate selection procedures and criteria that are non-discriminatory and transparent and take into account the general principles set out in Articles 7 and 8 of the CPR;
- ensure that a selected operation falls within the scope of the Fund or Funds concerned and within a category of intervention identified in the PA or PAs of the OP;
- provide to the beneficiary a document setting out the conditions for support for each operation, including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered under the operation, the financing plan, and the time-limit for execution;
- satisfy itself before approval of the operation that the aid beneficiary has the administrative, financial and operational capacity to fulfil the conditions defined in Article 71(c);
- satisfy itself that, where the operation started before the submission of an application for funding to the MA, the Union and national rules relevant for the operation have been complied with;
- ensure that an applicant does not receive support from the Funds where it has been, or should have been, subject to a procedure of recovery in accordance

with Article 71 of the CPR following the relocation of a productive activity within the Union;
- determine the categories of intervention to which the expenditure of an operation shall be attributed.

3) As regards the financial management and control of the OP, the MA shall:

- verify that the co-financed products and services have been delivered and that expenditure declared by the beneficiaries has been paid by them and that it complies with applicable Union and national law, the OP and the conditions for support of the operation;
- ensure that beneficiaries involved in the implementation of operations reimbursed on the basis of eligible costs actually incurred maintain either a separate accounting system or an adequate accounting code for all transactions relating to an operation;
- put in place effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures taking into account the risks identified;
- set up procedures to ensure that all documents regarding expenditure and controls required to evidence the facts and processes are held in accordance with the requirements of Article 72(g) of the CPR;
- draw up the managing body declaration of assurance on the functioning of the management and control system, the legality and regularity of underlying transactions and the respect of the principle of sound financial management, together with a report setting out the results of management controls carried out, any weaknesses identified in the management and control system and any corrective action taken.

4) Verifications pursuant to Article 125 (5) (a) and (b) shall include the following procedures:

a) administrative verifications in respect of each application for reimbursement by beneficiaries
b) on-the-spot verifications of operations.

5) The frequency and coverage of the on-the-spot verifications shall be proportionate to the amount of public support to an operation and to the level of risk identified by these verifications and audits by the AA in the management and control system as a whole.

6) On-the-spot verifications of individual operations pursuant to paragraph 6 may be carried out on a sample basis. Arrangements for the verifications referred to in paragraph 4(a) shall ensure adequate segregation of duties.

7) The Commission shall adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 149, laying down the modalities of the exchange of information in paragraph 2(d).

8) The Commission shall adopt delegated acts, in accordance with Article 149, laying down rules concerning arrangements for the audit trail referred to in paragraph 4(d).

9) The Commission shall adopt, by means of implementing acts, the model for the management declaration referred to in paragraph 4(e). Those implementing acts are adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 150 (2).

In the framework of combating corruption at the level of OPTA, elements have been incorporated in the management and control system of OPTA which by their nature (i.e. multi-level approval procedure, group decision-making, publishing of results, etc.) prevent the creation of corrupt environment or the possibility to give indirect advantages since automatic control elements in the form of internal management control are incorporated in the management and control system.
Majority of causes conducive to creating a corrupt environment can be nipped in the bud, namely by adopting preventive anti-corruption measures under OPTA with regard to the identified corruption risks and anticipated forms of corrupt behaviour.

With respect to the referred to "Government Anti-corruption Strategy for the years 2013–2014", but also the MRD rules, the OPTA MA also sticks to the ministerial internal anti-corruption programme, which is binding pursuant to Decision of the Minister No 77/2014 of 15 May 2014. It will be regularly evaluated or, where necessary, updated. The Internal anti-corruption programme zeroes in on creating and promoting the anti-corruption climate, transparency, management of anti-corruption risks and procedures in case of suspected corruption.

In the field of **promoting the anti-corruption climate,** each MRD employee takes part in creating the environment in which corrupt behaviour is declined and the culture is built which discourages fraudulent or corrupt behaviour. Promotion of anti-corruption attitude is the responsibility of each senior employee of the MRD. Each senior employee of the MRD also undertakes to introduce his subordinate employees to the Code of Ethics of MRD officers and employees and to the internal anti-corruption programme, as well as to promote the observance of legal and internal rules and regulations.

The Director of the HR Department is responsible for education of employees in anti-corruption matters. The anti-corruption matters are presented in the framework of initial education, and also other special courses on anti-corruption matters are provided on as-needed basis throughout the year.
Finding out about a corrupt behaviour and a suspected act of corruption is notified in line with the relevant provisions of the internal anti-corruption programme and in keeping with the Decision of the Minister No 41/2011 of 1 March 2011 on procedures to be taken by the employees of the Ministry for Regional Development, where the facts suggest that a criminal offence was committed, and on setting out the principles of their cooperation with the law enforcement bodies. Each senior employee of the ministry, who has been notified of a suspected act of corruption, will make sure that the notifying person, reporting in good faith a suspected act of corruption, will be protected by anonymity with a view to avoid any negative effects, discrimination or repression associated with such reporting.

As concerns **transparency,** the MRD discloses as much as relevant information as possible with a view to advise against the corrupt behaviour through increasing the likelihood of corrupt behaviour exposure. The transparency allows for public control of proper stewardship of the assets of the ministry. It is stressed that the disclosed information is comprehensive and clear. In the provision of information the MRD proceeds in compliance with Act No 106/1999 Coll., on free access to information, as amended. The MRD also publishes information beyond the scope of Act No 106/1999 Coll., on free access to information, as amended, in order to ensure the highest possible transparency especially with respect to the spending of public funds.
To be specific, in relation to **public procurement** for example, all the publication obligations associated with the public procurement are described in full on the Portal of Public Procurement and Concessions (www.portal-vz.cz), operated by the MRD as the public procurement sponsor.As a part of control of public contracts the OPTA MA verifies the compliance with the Public Procurement Act and rules applicable to the award of public contracts under the OPTA.

In public contracts especially the conditions of tender, the course of public procurement and the contract itself are checked. More details about the procedures of controls of public procurement are described in the OPTA Operational Manual.

In order to identify the areas with increased corruption potential and to ensure effective detection and prevention of corrupt behaviour, the **corruption risk management** has been put in place at the MRD. Corruption risks are assessed at least once a year, when the catalogue of corruption risks is updated. Stress is laid on the conduct of management controls pursuant to Sections 26 and 27 of Act No 320/2001 Coll., on financial control in public administration and on amendments to certain acts, as amended.
In each unit, included in the respective calendar year in the plan of internal audits, the potential risks of corrupt behaviour are assessed also by the Autonomous Internal Audit Unit. The Autonomous Internal Audit Unit in the conduct of individual internal audits examines particularly the areas assessed as areas at a significant risk.

The internal anti-corruption programme also presents the **procedure** to be taken in case **an act of corruption is identified.** With regard to each identified act of corruption, the MRD implements measures to eliminate the repetition of such behaviour. These measures assume three different forms: amending internal rules, a disciplinary action, and addressing the damages caused.

Bearing in mind the above referred to facts, the OPTA MA has adopted e.g. the following anti-corruption measures in order to create and strengthen the anti-corrupt climate. In the first place, there is an effort to build a stable team by selecting employees in line with the set out rules. Each employee of the department is introduced to the Code of Ethics and undertakes professional training courses relevant for his job description. This helps increase the awareness of employees and avoid the risk of inadequate knowledge of the given matters or currently addressed topics, or it reduces the risk of potential corrupt behaviour in consequence of inadequate knowledge of the context. The OPTA MA also makes sure that the project administration rules are transparent and comply with the principles of impartiality and unbiasedness. The set out and approved procedures are strictly adhered to in the administration of projects. Specific criteria are defined for the submission, evaluation and selection of projects for the absorption of resources from the ESIF. Uniform and equal approach to all final beneficiaries is promoted and observed, including the attending to the request for information. The principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency are adhered to in the selection of contractors. All the relevant information on the programme is made available on the OPTA website. The rule of “four eyes control” is observed in corruption risk management at OPTA MA. The risks of fraud and corruption are regularly identified, updated and evaluated within the MRD, as stated above. The information on the identified potential risks of fraud will be shared with the other MAs. If irregularities are identified, including the suspected irregularity, there is a system in place for reporting the irregularities.

Ministry for Regional Development - National Coordination Authority
Similarly as in 2007–2013 period, the MRD (MRD-NCA) has been authorised based on the Resolution of the Government No 687 of 28 November 2012 to act as the central methodological and coordination authority for the preparation and implementation of programmes co-financed from ESIF for the programming period 2014–2020 in the CR.

MRD-NCA shall be responsible particularly for:

1) Ensuring a uniform methodological environment for the implementation of OPs by the MAs;

2) Ensuring the management of the Partnership Agreement and achievement of its objectives at the national level;
3) Coordination of the implementation of programmes falling under the PA and close cooperation with the involved bodies at the national and regional level;
4) It shall be the administrator of the MS and the central authority for publicity, administrative capacity and education and for absorption capacity building;
5) Ensuring cooperation with the EC and being its partner on behalf of the Czech Republic.

Ministry of Finance – Department of the National Fund

In line with the CPR, Article 126 in particular, the PCA shall be responsible for the overall management of funds granted to the Czech Republic from the EU budget.

The PCA shall be responsible particularly for:

1) drawing up and submitting to the EC payment applications and certifying that these result from reliable accounting systems, are based on verifiable supporting documents and have been subject to verifications by the MA;
2) drawing up the annual accounts;
3) certifying the completeness, accuracy and veracity of the annual accounts and that the expenditure entered in the accounts complies with applicable Union and national rules and has been incurred in respect of operations selected for funding in accordance with the criteria applicable to the OP and complying with Union and national rules;
4) ensuring that there is a system which records and stores, in computerised form, accounting records for each operation, and which supports all the data required for drawing up payment applications and annual accounts, including records of amounts recoverable, amounts recovered and amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation or OP;
5) ensuring for the purposes of drawing up and submission of payment applications that it has received adequate information from the MA on the procedures and verifications carried out in relation to expenditure;
6) taking account when drawing up and submitting payment applications of the results of all audits carried out by or under the responsibility of the AA;
7) maintaining accounting records in a computerised form of expenditure declared to the EC and the corresponding public contribution paid to beneficiaries;
8) keeping an account of amounts recoverable and of amounts withdrawn following cancellation of all or part of the contribution for an operation. Amounts recovered shall be repaid to the general budget of the EU prior to the closure of the OP by deducting them from the next statement of expenditure.
9) administering the resources provided by the EC to financing the programmes;
10) executing the transfer of funds provided by the EC to the state budget based on submitted aggregate applications for payment;
11) methodology governing the financial resources from the ESIF.

Ministry of Finance – Department of the Audit Authority

In compliance with Article 127 of the CPR, the AA shall ensure that audits are carried out on the proper functioning of the management and control system of the OP and on an appropriate sample of operations on the basis of the declared expenditure, and shall be responsible particularly for the following other activities:

1) The Audit Authority shall ensure that audits are carried out on the management and control systems, on an appropriate sample of operations and based on the expenditure

declared and the annual accounts. The EC shall be empowered to adopt delegated acts in accordance with Article 149 to set out the conditions which those audits shall fulfil.

2) Where audits are carried out by a body other than the Audit Authority, the AA shall ensure that any such body has the necessary functional independence.
3) The AA shall ensure that the audit work takes account of generally accepted auditing standards.
4) The AA shall, within eight months of adoption of an OP, prepare an audit strategy for performance of audits. The audit strategy shall set out the audit methodology, the sampling method for audits on operations and the planning of audits in relation to the current accounting year and the two subsequent accounting years. The audit strategy shall be updated annually from 2016 until and including 2022. Where a common management and control system applies to more than one operational programme, a single audit strategy may be prepared for the OPs concerned. The AA shall upon request submit the audit strategy to the EC.
5) The AA shall draw up:
    a) an audit opinion on the annual accounts for the preceding accounting year, whose scope shall cover the completeness, accuracy and veracity of the annual accounts, including the declaration of the MA on functioning of the management and control system and the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions;
    b) an annual control report setting out the findings of the audits carried out during the preceding accounting year.

    The report under point (b) shall set out any deficiencies found in the management and control system and any corrective measures taken or proposed to be taken. Where a common management and control system applies to more than one OP, the information required under point (b) may be grouped in a single report.

Ministry of Finance – Department 69, CCP-AFCOS Unit

1) Performs the tasks ensuing from the harmonisation of methodology for the agenda of irregularities in cooperation with the AA, PCA and International Relations departments;
2) On behalf of the Czech Republic completes the tasks related to the fulfilment of the role of CCP- AFCOS, cooperates in this field with the EC – Directorate General (hereinafter referred to as the “DG”) OLAF;
3) Coordinates and on behalf of the MoF rounds off the negotiations with individual DG of the EC when discussing the methodology in the field of addressing irregularities and combating fraudulent behaviour;
4) Elaborates the respective methodological documents in the field of reporting irregularities;
5) Cooperates on legal aspects of addressing irregularities;
6) With respect to irregularities it is responsible for relations between the MoF and the Supreme Public Prosecutor's Office, MoJ, DG OLAF (except for SAPARD programme) and the Financial Mechanism Office for the EEA/Norway grants;
7) Ensures reporting and addressing of irregularities in the field of implementation of the Swiss-Czech cooperation programme vis-à-vis SDFC/SECO.

OPTA for the period 2014–2020 has not included in its structure any IB and the OPTA MA has decided not to delegate any of its powers to an IB.

7.2 Involvement of the relevant partners

7.2.1 Actions taken to involve the relevant partners in the preparation of the operational programme, and the role of the partners in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the operational programme

In the preparation of the programming period 2014–2020, which compared to the preparation of the previous period started early enough, it was necessary to ensure the adherence to principles described by the EC in the Common Provisions Regulation for ESIF (CPR). One of these principles is respecting the principle of partnership as defined in Article 5 of the CPR which imposes upon the Member State to cooperate with partners in the preparation of the PA and new OPs. The Member State is obliged to do so in accordance with the national law and practice. The article defines regional and local partners, social and economic partners, partners representing civil society and non-governmental organisations.

Definition of future OPs in the CR was approved on 28 November 2012 by the CR Government through its Resolution No 867, by which the CR Government took note of the document entitled "Supporting document for the preparation of the Partnership Agreement for the 2014-2020 Programming Period – Definition of programmes and next steps in the preparation of the Czech Republic for efficient absorption of the CSF Funds" – MRD. The MRD was tasked to coordinate the drawing up of draft programmes. For the purpose of preparation of the next programming period 2014–2020, the MRD has created a methodological environment and commenced activities of platforms and working groups, in which, in line with the principle of partnership, the representatives of future MAs and other relevant entities are involved. By Decision of the Minister for Regional Development No 3/2013 of 15 January 2013, the performance of function of the MA of OPTA 2014–2020 at the MRD was entrusted to the Department of the OPTA MA.

The MRD-NCA ensures the respecting of the partnership principle at the national level through organising the working groups, workshops, round tables, conferences, etc. The implementation of ESIF is continuously communicated with all the above referred to partners also on platforms established to this end and defined in the document entitled "Definition of platforms for the programming period 2014–2020" that was submitted to the Government on 20 February 2013 and taken note of by the Government.

Based on the partnership principle the OPTA MA pursuant to Article 5 of the Regulation of the EP and of the Council laying down common provisions on the ESIF set up the Steering Committee of OPTA 2014–2020 (hereinafter referred to as the "SC OPTA 2014–2020") for the preparation of OPTA 2014–2020. The SC OPTA 2014–2020 is an executive body of the Managing Authority of OPTA and it is tasked to discuss and approve the procedures in the preparation of implementation of OPTA 2014–2020. The SC OPTA 2014–2020 follows the Statute of the SC OPTA 2014–2020 and the Rules of Procedure of the SC OPTA 2014–2020. Members of the SC OPTA 2014–2020 are representatives of the institutions below:

- Ministry for Regional Development – Department of the OPTA MA;
- Ministry for Regional Development – Department of Management and Coordination of NSRF;
- Ministry for Regional Development - Department of EU Publicity;
- Ministry for Regional Development – Autonomous Unit of Administrative Capacity;

- Ministry for Regional Development - Department of Monitoring System Administration;
- Ministry for Regional Development - Department of Preparation of the Programming period 2014–2020;
- Ministry for Regional Development – Department of European Affairs;
- Ministry for Regional Development – Budget Department;
- Ministry for Regional Development – Department of Operational Programmes Management;
- Ministry for Regional Development – Department of the European Territorial Cooperation;
- Ministry for Regional Development – Department of Regional Policy;
- Ministry of Finance – Audit Authority;
- Ministry of Finance – Paying and Certifying Authority;
- Ministry of Finance - Control – CCP AFCOS;
- Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs;
- Ministry of Agriculture;
- Ministry of the Environment;
- Ministry of Transport;
- Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports;
- Ministry of Industry and Trade;
- Representative of the City of Prague;
- Office of the Government;
- Association of Regions of the Czech Republic;
- Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic;
- Association of Non-Governmental Non-profit Organisations in the Czech Republic;
- Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic;
- Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions.

The spectrum of institutions involved in the activities of the SC OPTA 2014–2020 is broad and reflects the nature of the programme. Identification and selection of relevant partners for the preparation of OPTA and also for its actual implementation were made in line with the OPTA focus and priorities and took into account the division of competences in the preparation of the programming period in the CR and subsequent implementation of programmes, with regard to the existing experience with the preparation and implementation of the previous programming period, and last but not least with regard to the anticipated contribution of partners to analysis and identification of needs, setting out of the objectives and priorities, designing the structure and management of the programme, designing the coordination mechanism, etc. Ranking among the involved institutions are predominantly the relevant departments of the MRD, departments involved in the implementation of the current period 2007–2013, ministries, OG, Association of Regions of the Czech Republic, Union of Towns and Municipalities, Association of Non-Governmental Non-profit Organisations, Confederation of Industry, Czech-Moravian Confederation of Trade Unions, and the Prague City Hall. In keeping with the Statute, the meetings can be attended also by other invited persons (other experts, ex-ante evaluator, etc.).

In May and June 2013, two meetings on the preparation of OPTA were convened, attended apart from the MRD representatives also by other partners in compliance with the MG for the preparation of programming documents for the programming period 2014–2020 (bodies responsible for the OPs that are under preparation at the national level, representatives of regional self-governing bodies, representatives of non-profit and business sectors).

At the **first meeting** the members were introduced to the vision of the new OPTA, global and strategic objectives, division and focus of individual PAs and supported activities, and also the allocation of financial resources was discussed. All the members had the opportunity to express their opinion, submit proposals and raise comments on the submitted draft OPTA. At the **second meeting**, the MRD-NCA comments on the submitted draft OPTA were presented to the

members. Attention was also paid to specific indicators of the programme. Important ideas were suggested during the discussion, concerning primarily the centralisation of financing of human resources, relationship between the central level and OPTA under individual OPs, direct training of applicants and beneficiaries under the then foreseen PA4, stronger links between the national and regional level. These ideas were referred to the relevant working groups, especially to the WG for the preparation of OP and WG for the MS. **The third meeting** of the SC 2014–2020 planned for mid-September 2013 was cancelled and only the **fourth meeting** took place approximately a month later. At this meeting the demarcation line between the OPTA and TA of the other OPs was again on the agenda. Consensus was reached in two areas, namely regarding the MS and building the absorption capacity. The topics of administrative capacity and education still remain open since the MoF, all the OP MAs and the other partners raised convincing arguments why not to opt for a central alternative through OPTA in these two specific areas. Based on the comments of the SC OPTA 2014–2020, but also of the MRD-NCA, the "November" version of OPTA was drafted which was sent to the EC for the purpose of informal dialogue that took place on 30 January 2014 in Prague. In this version the OPTA MA reflected the requirements of members of the SC OPTA 2014–2020, ensuing from the main arguments raised, and in this version a new narrower scenario for administrative capacity and education was introduced, i.e. these areas remain under the responsibility of individual OP MAs even in the period 2014–2020. Before the informal dialogue held in January, the OPTA MA received observations concerning this version from the EC. Following the January informal meeting in Prague and the follow-up March technical meeting in Brussels, where the intervention logic of the programme, the set of the indicators and other outstanding issues from the Prague meeting were clarified, the **fifth meeting** of SC OPTA 2014–2020 was convened on 13 March 2014. At this meeting, information from the two previous meetings with the EC was presented to the members of the SC OPTA 2014–2020 and next steps were outlined. The OPTA MA is not aware of any disagreement with the members of the SC OPTA 2014–2020 in relation to the strategy and objectives of OPTA 2014–2020. The OPTA MA has prepared the "March" version of OPTA 2014–2020 and another informal meeting with the EC took place in Brussels, scheduled for 13 May 2014. Once the key points were made clear with the EC, the version intended for an internal comment procedure was compiled. On 6 June 2014 already the **sixth meeting** of SC OPTA 2014–2020 was convened, on the occasion of which the conclusions from the informal May meeting with the EC and the timetable of work on OPTA were presented. Incorporated were also the comments raised in the interministerial comment procedure. Based on the above referred to meetings of the SC OPTA 2014–2020, the core areas have been identified, reflected in the preparation of the OPTA:

- Design/financing of administrative capacity (PA 1 - SO 1)
- Education of administrative capacity (PA 1 - SO 1)
- Building absorption capacity under OPTA (PA 1 - SO 2)
- MS (PA 2 SO 1)

Apart from the meetings of SC OPTA 2014–2020, also bilateral meetings are held in line with the principle of partnership, whose aim is inter alia to take into account the interests of partners in selected areas of preparation and implementation of OPTA. It concerns e.g. the definition and selection of priorities of the relevant SOs, design of implementation approaches, design of financial allocations, provision of mechanism for coordination and integration of Funds, policies and other EU instruments, etc.

On 27 May 2013, an order was signed with the entity conducting an ex-ante evaluation which is an integral part of the OPTA preparation. The process of ex-ante evaluation is under way

simultaneously with OPTA preparation and in compliance with Article 55 of the CPR. Representatives of the entity conducting the ex-ante evaluation of OPTA participate in meetings regarding the preparation of the programme and closely cooperate with the MRD-NCA, which is responsible for the overall coordination of preparation of the next programming period 2014 - 2020.

Below you will find the timetable of contract delivery. The table illustrates the fact that the preparation of OPTA 2014+ took longer than expected, mainly due to the postponements in the timetable of preparation of the EU legislation and subsequently also the delays in the preparation of the Partnership Agreement.

This is why the second column gives the original deadlines for individual stages of the contract scheduled in line with the approved Baseline report, whereas the third column gives the dates of actual delivery of individual stages of the contract. In tasks of the evaluator that have not been completed as yet, the third column named “actual date” is empty and will be filled in only during the future implementation of the contract.

Table 224 Timetable of contract delivery

Odstraněno: 2

Activity/output of contract delivery	Original deadline	Actual date
Handing over the order to the representative of the evaluation team	31. 5. 2013	31. 5. 2013
Holding the introductory meeting of the head of the evaluation team with the representatives of the contracting entity	31. 5. 2013	31. 5. 2013
Handing over the Baseline report to the contracting entity in the electronic form	13. 6. 2013	13. 6. 2013
Incorporation of comments of the contracting entity in the wording of the Baseline report and submission of the final version of the Baseline report to the contracting entity (2 printed copies, 1 electronic copy)	13. 7. 2013 (and simultaneously within 10 working days following the receipt of comments from the contracting entity)	3. 7. 2013 (acceptance protocol of the contracting entity)
Presentation of the Baseline report to the contracting entity (if the contracting entity wishes so)	Upon agreement with the contracting entity	Presentation of the report was not requested by the contracting entity
Handing over of the 1st Interim report to the contracting entity in the electronic form	30. 6. 2013	28. 6. 2013
Incorporation of comments of the contracting entity in the wording of the 1st Interim report and submission of the final version of the 1st Interim report to the contracting entity (2 printed copies, 1 electronic copy)	30. 7. 2013 (and simultaneously within 10 working days following the receipt of comments from the contracting entity)	2. 8. 2013 (acceptance protocol of the contracting authority)
Presentation of the 1st Interim report to the contracting entity and to persons invited by the contracting entity	Upon agreement with the contracting entity	Presentation of the report was not requested by the contracting entity
Handing over of the 2nd Interim report to the contracting entity in the electronic form	15. 7. 2013 (and simultaneously within 15 working days following the receipt of the later version of OPTA 2014+ comprising also the financial allocation)	15. 7. 2013
Incorporation of comments of the contracting entity in the wording of the 2nd Interim report and submission of the final version of the 2nd Interim report to the contracting entity (2 printed copies, 1 electronic copy)	15. 8. 2013 (and simultaneously within 10 working days following the receipt of comments from the contracting entity)	4. 9. 2013 (acceptance protocol of the contracting entity)
Presentation of the 2nd Interim report to the contracting entity and to persons invited by the contracting entity	Upon agreement with the contracting entity	Presentation of the report was not requested by the contracting entity
Handing over of the Final report to the contracting entity in the electronic form	16. 9. 2013 (and simultaneously within 1 month following the handing over of the final draft OPTA 2014+ by the contracting entity)	2. 4. 2014 (version number seven of OPTA 2014+ was handed over by the contracting entity in the electronic form on 3 March 2014)
Incorporation of comments of the contracting entity in the wording of the Final report and a repeated submission of the Final report to the contracting	10. 10. 2013 (and simultaneously within 10 working days following the receipt of comments	19. 5. 2014

Activity/output of contract delivery	Original deadline	Actual date
entity in the electronic form	from the contracting entity)	
Handing over of the Final report elaborated with respect to the May version of OPTA 2014 - 2020 to the contracting entity in the electronic form	20. 6. 2014	20. 6. 2014
Incorporation of comments of the contracting entity in the wording of the Final report elaborated with respect to the May version of OPTA, and a repeated submission of the Final report to the contracting entity in the electronic form	Within 10 working days following the receipt of comments from the contracting entity	
Handing over of the final version of the Final report to the contracting entity (2 printed copies and 1 electronic copy)	Within 30 calendar days following the approval of OPTA 2014+ by the EC	
Elaboration and handing over of the Summary of outputs in the Czech and English languages (2 printed copies and 1 electronic copy)	Within 30 calendar days following the approval of OPTA 2014+ by the EC	
Presentation of the Final report to the contracting entity and to persons invited by the contracting entity	Upon agreement with the contracting entity	
Ongoing activities of ex-ante evaluator		
Participation in ad hoc meetings with the representatives of contracting entity, participation in meetings of the SC OPTA 2014+, participation in meetings of other relevant platforms and working groups set up for the purpose of preparation of the programming period 2014+	Continuously throughout the implementation of the contract and upon agreement with the contracting entity	Continuously throughout the implementation of the contract and upon agreement with the contracting entity

Main results of consultations with partners, including major problem areas, comments and recommendations obtained from more partners and their contribution e.g. to setting out the objectives and priorities, ex-ante evaluation, designing the structure and management of OPTA, designing the mechanism of coordination, will be factored in, following the evaluation of all the comments/consultations with partners.

Following the approval of OPTA 2014–2020 by the EC, the partners, members of the SC OPTA 2014-2020 will in keeping with the principle of multi-level governance participate in decision-making processes related to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. SC OPTA 2014-2020 will transform into a Monitoring Committee of OPTA.

7.2.2 Global grants (for ESF)

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

7.2.3 Earmarking for capacity building (for ESF)

This part is not applicable to OPTA.

Section 8 Coordination between the Funds, the EAFRD, the EMFF and other Union and national funding instruments, and with the EIB

The global objective of the OPTA is uniform central management and coordination of the OPs in the programming period 2014–2020, ensurance of management of the OPs while respecting the principles of financial management, retention of quality administrative capacity and improvement of public opinion, and strengthening the absorption capacity.

OPTA as the main instrument contributes to the ensurance of professional capacity and expertise for the Council for the ESI Funds, including the operation of platforms for the implementation of the programming period 2014–2020 and respective working groups with a view to manage and coordinate the PA.

Through PA 1 – Management and coordination of the PA – the OPTA contributes to specific beneficiaries (MRD-NCA) with respect to administrative and technical infrastructure for management, organisation and activities of the platforms and working groups.

By promoting this design, the OPTA stabilises the uniform methodological environment, ensures the operation of platforms for exchange of information and experience, including rectifications and evaluation of the EU funds implementation.

The main focus of the programming period 2014–2020 is directed towards achieving quality and demonstrable results of interventions, which requires also an efficient set up of the system of coordination mechanisms. The coordination mechanisms between the OPTA and the other operational programmes within ESIF, with an emphasis on determining the demarcation line between the OPTA and individual TAs of the OPs, are described below. In the framework of preparation of OPTA, discussions were held with the managing authorities at the platform of the Steering Committee of OPTA 2014–2020 and duplications with other OPs are prevented or eliminated.

Ensuring coordination with the other ESIF programmes

The OPs co-financed from ESIF for the programming period 2014–2020, in which a link to OPTA was identified, include:

- Operational Programme Research Development and Education (OP RDE),
- Operational Programme Employment (OP Emp),
- Operational Programme Transport (OP T),
- Operational Programme Environment (OP Env),
- Operational Programme Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness (OP EIC),
- Integrated Regional Operational Programme (IROP),
- Operational Programme Prague – Growth Pole of the Czech Republic (OP PGP),
- Operational Programme Fisheries (OP F),
- Rural Development Programme (RDP).

The following overview provides information on identified borderlines between the OPTA and the TA of OPs. Mechanism of cooperation consisted in discussions on the actual focus of the respective areas. A mechanism of coordination is also the respective methodologies creating

the UME, guaranteed by the MRD-NCA. The below referred to points 1 and 2 concerning human resources are covered by the “MG HRD in the programming period 2014–2020 and in the programming period 2007–2013“, and also point 3 will be underpinned in the methodology concerning publicity activities. Point 4 will be provided for by the “Methodological guideline for monitoring of implementation of ESIF“ and by the methodology called “Process of managing the development of MS2014 application“.

1) Financing labour costs of administrative capacity

In **OPTA, PA 1 SO 1** will ensure financing of labour costs of central authorities involved in the implementation of ESIF at horizontal level within the institutions of MRD and MoF, i.e. the OPTA MA, MRD-NCA, PCA, CCP-AFCOS and the ETC. The wage costs of the AA will be supported under PA1 SO4.

The **technical assistance of individual OPs** will then cover the costs associated with persons implementing the respective OP.

The system of potential central financing of personnel costs, which was lively discussed, as opposed to the financing of personnel costs in 2007–2013 did not suggest any significant added value. Therefore, the existing system was maintained also for the programming period 2014–2020 in order to avoid an increased administrative burden and to prevent any ineligible expenditure. This solution was communicated at multi-lateral meetings as more cost-effective.

2) System of education of administrative capacity

The aim is to establish a comprehensive system that will provide the implementation structure employees with a consistent education and vocational training for the sake of successful application of the obtained knowledge and skills necessary for dealing with the tasks ensuing from strategic objectives of ESIF implementation in the programming period 2014–2020 and for the closure of the programming period 2007–2013, which simultaneously eliminates fraudulent or corrupt behaviour. Education of employees encompasses two levels, i.e. the system of education implemented by the MRD-NCA and a specific education organised by implementation bodies, i.e. the MAs of the OPs. In both the cases, it concerns continuous/further education responding especially to amendments to legislation or changes in professional setting, it safeguards the deepening of knowledge following the already attained education, or it ensures professional and personal development of employees. More information on the system of education is given in Chapter 12 of the Methodological guideline for the development of human resources in the programming period 2014–2020 and in the programming period 2007–2013.

Under **PA 1 SO 1** of OPTA, education at horizontal level will be financed and educational activities concerning the common topics, considered cross-cutting for all OPs will be provided (for example education and training events focused on Public Procurement Act or its amendment, non-discrimination, state aid, etc.). This education will be provided by the MRD-NCA, just like in the programming period 2007–2013, since this system of education has proven its worth.

The **technical assistance of individual OPs** will be dedicated to the provision of educational activities in specific areas of the respective OP. It is vital for ensuring smooth implementation of programme that the employees are provided with made-to-measure professional education. It is, therefore, undesirable that this type of education is coordinated within the central education, namely due to the different focus and specific nature of agenda of individual OPs e.g. under the ESF (for example specific training courses on requirements ensuing from the regulation on ESF programmes). This way, the need of flexible response to the results of continuously conducted analysis of educational needs of employees of individual OPs will be met. This specific education shall differ in its content or lecturers from the educational events organised by the MRD-NCA, therefore duplication of educational events is unacceptable.

3) Preparation of the programming period 2021+

Under individual SOs of **OPTA,** funds will be channelled to the preparation of the Partnership Agreement or a similar document at the national level and to potential preparation of a successor OP focused on technical assistance. The **technical assistance of individual OPs** will finance the preparation of potential successor OPs.

4) Ensuring absorption capacity

In **PA 1 SO 2** of **OPTA** the support to absorption capacity is primarily focused on communicating the Partnership Agreement and creating basic awareness of ESIF, with the main target group being the so called potential applicants who at the given moment have no idea to which OP they should submit their project application (e.g. organisation of "signposts" on the occasion of which summary information on all OPs is presented).

Based on experience from the programming period 2007–2013, the main part of absorption capacity upon agreement with the **MAs** was left **at the level of their technical assistance** since they are in closer contact with applicants/beneficiaries. Absorption capacity cannot be efficiently built without the link to the respective OP or the prepared call (for example specific events eligible for support from the OP intended for children, or what can be applied for by research centres, or holding events in regions to address their specific problems).

5) Single monitoring system 2014+

PA 2 SO 1 of OPTA will provide funding for all activities relating to operation, administration, system support, upgrade of technical equipment, licences, DWH, implementation of technical interface and training of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period users and other accompanying systems connected to the provision of SMS 2014+. In addition, the requirements for central development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application ensuing mainly from the requirements of Union and national legislation, including the associated Government documents, methodological guidelines for implementation of ESIF at the central level and proposals for optimisation of delivery of certain functionalities, agreed by all the MAs, will also be covered from OPTA (for example the amendment to Act No 218/2000 Coll. on budgetary rules, as amended).

Any requirements for development of the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period application will be specified in the Methodological guideline for management processes and monitoring of ESI Funds in the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period.

6) Support for owners of integrated instruments

Under **PA 1 SO 3** of **OPTA** funds will be channelled to activities for the development of owners of integrated instruments (ITI) through covering the operating and other costs of support activities. In the framework of **Priority axis 4 of the Integrated Regional Operational Programme**, focused on community-led local development, or on improving the quality of life and capitalising on the potential of rural areas, support will go to entities implementing the projects within the approved strategies of community-led local development in the territory of Local Action Groups (hereinafter referred to as the "LAG"). The running and animation costs will thus be covered from IROP. The physical activities instrumental in achieving the objectives of LAG strategies will be covered from the individual operational programmes.

Ensuring coordination with the other EU instruments, with the relevant national funding instruments and the European Investment Bank

OPTA does not directly reckon with ensuring coordination with the other EU instruments, with the relevant national funding instruments and the European Investment Bank.

In fight against corruption, the main coordination mechanism is the national anti-corruption strategy of the Government, which fully covers all the key areas. The Strategy for 2015-2017 reckons with the Anti-Corruption Action Plans that will apart from national priorities comprise also the recommendations articulated as a result of the membership of the Czech Republic in international organisations, or in the European Commission (OLAF programmes, Internal Security Fund, etc.). The Czech Republic is also a member of the Group of states against corruption (GRECO) and EPAC, UNCAC, IACA.

Section 9 Ex-ante conditionalities

For each ex-ante conditionality, which can have an impact on absorption of OPTA, which is applicable to the OPTA, an assessment is made of whether the ex-ante conditionality is fulfilled at the date of submission of the PA and the OP, and where ex-ante conditionalities are not fulfilled, a description is given of the actions to fulfil the ex-ante conditionality, the responsible body and a timetable of such actions in accordance with the summary submitted in the PA.

9.1 Ex-ante conditionalities

Table 25 below sets out all the applicable ex-ante conditionalities (hereinafter referred to as the "EAC") for the OPTA, the fulfilment or non-fulfilment of which affects the implementation of the programme. No thematic EACs have been set out for technical assistance. Nevertheless, since the general EACs are applicable to technical assistance, Tables 25 and 26 are relevant also for the OPTA.

The OPTA MA is not the sponsor of any EAC included in the table below. It, however, is responsible for their specific fulfilment at the programme level and for specific actions within the general EACs. Bearing in mind the importance of general EACs and the fact that horizontal principles do not apply to the TA, also the EAC 1-3 are fulfilled by the programme. Support under PA 1 SO 1 is directed to sponsors ensuring the fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities.

Table 23 Identification of applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment

Odstraně

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
1. The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds	Thanks to the importance of general EACs and removal of TA from horizontal principles, also EAC 1 is fulfilled at the level of the programme.	Yes (It is being fulfilled continuously and will be fulfilled throughout the programming period 2014-2020)	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for the promotion of equal treatment of all persons throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on equality in ESI fund-related activities;	Yes	http://www.ochrance.cz/en/discrimination/ http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/zmocnenec-vlady-pro-lidska-prava/organizace-sekce-lp/organizace-sekce-lidskych-prav-107606/	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment YES Tasks related to the ex-ante conditionality "The Existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of the ESI Funds" are the responsibility of the Office of the Government. MA: Fulfilment YES To systematically secure and strengthen administrative capacity for efficient application and implementation of anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds, the OPTA MA has appointed a specific contact person, who deals with these matters and is responsible for coordinating the activities in this field and closely cooperates with the Office of the Government – Human Rights Section and the MoLSA. This person will continuously educate himself in this field.
			Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management	Yes		EAC: Fulfilment YES In cooperation with the Office of the Government and the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
			and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union anti-discrimination law and policy.			Public Defender of Rights (Ombudsman) training programmes on the topic of equal treatment and non-discrimination have been prepared for all relevant employees. This criterion is already being fulfilled and will be fulfilled throughout the programming period. The MRD-NCA within the System of education provides trainings at the horizontal level for employees implementing the EU Funds, the Human Rights Section of the Office of the Government provides the content of education and the lecturers.
2. The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds	Thanks to the importance of E importance of general EACs and removal of TA from horizontal principles, also EAC 2 is fulfilled at the level of the programme.	Yes (It is being fulfilled continuously and will be fulfilled throughout the programming period 2014-2020)	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the involvement of bodies responsible for gender equality throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes, including the provision of advice on gender equality in ESI Fund-related activities;	Yes	http://www.ochrance.cz/en/discrimination/ http://www.mpsv.cz/cs/12152	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment YES The tasks related to the applicable ex-ante conditionality are the responsibility of the Office of the Government as the national coordinator of the agenda of equal opportunities of men and women, together with the designated contact persons of the MAs for the respective ESI Funds. MA: Fulfilment YES To systematically secure and strengthen administrative

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						capacity for efficient application and implementation of gender equality and policy in the field of ESI Funds, the OPTA MA has appointed a specific contact person, who systematically deals with the implementation and application of gender equality law and is responsible for coordinating activities in this area and collaborates with the Office of the Government - the Human Rights Section. This person will continuously educate himself in this field.
			Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of Union gender equality law and policy as well as on gender mainstreaming.	Yes		The MRD-NCA within the System of education provides trainings at the horizontal level for employees implementing the EU Funds, the Office of the Government provides the content of education and the lecturers. The area of education is covered by the Methodological Guideline for Human Resources Development in the Programming Period 2014-2020 and in the Programming Period 2007-2013 (Resolution of the Government of the Czech Republic No 444 of 16 June 2014).

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
3. The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC	Thanks to the importance of E importance of general EACs and removal of TA from horizontal principles, also EAC 3 is fulfilled at the level of the programme.	Yes (It is being fulfilled continuously and will be fulfilled throughout the programming period 2014-2020)	Arrangements in accordance with the institutional and legal framework of Member States for the consultation and involvement of bodies in charge of protection of rights of persons with disabilities or representative organisations of persons with disabilities and other relevant stakeholders throughout the preparation and implementation of programmes;	Yes	http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/vvzpo/dokumenty/narodni-plan-vytvareni-rovnych-prilezitosti-pro-osoby-se-zdravotnim-postizenim-na-obdobi-2010---2014-70026/	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment YES The prevailing part of tasks related to the applicable ex-ante conditionality is the responsibility of the MoLSA in close cooperation with the Government Board for People with Disabilities and the designated contact persons of the MAs of individual programmes. MA: Fulfilment YES To systematically secure and strengthen administrative capacity for efficient application of the UN convention in the field of ESI Funds, the OPTA MA has appointed a contact person, who systematically deals with the implementation and application of the law related to persons with disabilities and is responsible for coordinating activities in this area and collaborates with the MoLSA and with the Government Board for People with Disabilities This person will continuously educate himself in this field.
			Arrangements for training for staff of the authorities involved in the management	Yes	http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/vvzpo/dokumenty/zprava-o-plneni-opatreni-narodniho-planu-vytvareni-rovnych-prilezitosti-pro-osoby-se-zdravotnim-postizenim-na-obdobi-	EAS sponsor: Fulfilment YES Under the National Plan for

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
			and control of the ESI Funds in the fields of applicable Union and national disability law and policy, including accessibility and the practical application of the UNCRPD as reflected in Union and national legislation, as appropriate;		2010-2014-v-roce-2012-110987/	the Creation of Equal Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2010 - 2014, each year – report on accomplishing the actions. The action – education of employees of the bodies involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds is already being fulfilled. The MRD-NCA within the System of education provides trainings at the horizontal level for employees implementing the EU Funds, the MoLSA provides the content of education and the lecturers.
			Arrangements to ensure monitoring of the implementation of Article 9 of the UNCRPD in relation to the ESI Funds throughout the preparation and the implementation of the programmes.	Yes	http://www.vlada.cz/cz/ppov/vvzpo/dokumenty/narodni-plan-vytvareni-rovnych-prilezitosti-pro-osoby-se-zdravotnim-postizenim-na-obdobi-2010---2014-70026/	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment YES The National Plan comprises actions to provide equal opportunities for people with disabilities. Fulfilment of these actions is assessed annually. The NP is outlined to mirror the relevant CRPD articles and Chapter 4 is dedicated directly to the Accessibility of buildings, transport and access to information. Requirements for accessibility of public buildings, the share of vehicles in public transport that shall facilitate transportation of people with limited mobility and orientation are defined in Act No

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						183/2006 Coll., Decree No 398/2009, Government Order No 63/2011). In accordance with the Anti-discrimination Act No 198/2009 Coll., all providers of public services are obliged to adopt appropriate actions for people with disabilities. Actions to ensure the access to information related to the performance of public administration, published in a way facilitating the remote access also for persons with disabilities are laid down in Act No 365/2000 Coll. and Decree No 64/2008 Coll.
4. The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	All priority axes of OPTA	Partially (It is being fulfilled continuously and will be fulfilled throughout the programming period 2014-2020)	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	No	http://www.portal-vz.cz http://www.strukturalni-fondy.cz/cs/Fondy-EU/Narodni-organ-pro-koordinaci/Dokumenty http://www.mfcr.cz/cs/legislativa/metodiky/2014/metodika-financnich-toku-a-kontroly-prog-17121	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY Adopted and published have been legislative and non-legislative actions (Acts No 137/2006 Coll., No 139/2006 Coll., amendment to Act No 55/2012 Coll.), implementing legislation to the Public Procurement Act (Decree No 230/2012 Coll., No 231/2012 Coll., No 232/2012 Coll., No 133/2012 Coll.), statutory measure of the Senate No 341/2013 Coll., MG for Public Procurement for the Programming Period 2014-2020 (Resolution of the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						Government of the CR No 44 of 15 January 2014). WG Public Procurement and WG for the OPC have been set up. MA: Fulfilment PARTIALLY OPTA MA conducts ex-ante and other controls of public procurement procedures and tenders. Specific fulfilment under the OPTA will consist e.g. in consultations concerning the award of public contracts within the implementation structure of the programme, including applicants and beneficiaries, organisation of educational activities concerning the award of public contracts in challenging areas, and conduct of controls of the preparation and course of the contract award procedure and also ex-post controls, regular education and training of its own employees on the award of public contracts, etc. Based on the results of conducted controls, the OPTA MA for example identifies the most frequently repeated errors in the award of public contracts and adjusts the focus of its future control activities accordingly.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						Therefore, the OPTA MA responds flexibly to these conclusions and modifies also the plan of its control activities correspondingly.
			Arrangements which ensure transparent contract award procedures.	Yes	http://www.portal-vz.cz/cs/Jak-na-zadavani-verejnych-zakazek/Legislativa-a-Judikatura/Legislativa/Narodni-legislativa-aktualni-a-uplne-zneni-z-(1) http://www.portal-vz.cz/cs/Jak-na-zadavani-verejnych-zakazek/Metodiky-stanoviska/Metodicke-pokyny http://www.vestnikverejnychzakazek.cz/ http://www.portal-vz.cz/cs/Aktuality/Informace-k-postupu-pri-uverejnovani-v-souvislosti	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment YES Adopted, published: Act No 55/2012 Coll., methodology for the award of public contracts; methodological opinion on the annex to Decree No 9/2011 Coll.; methodology to Decree No133/2012 Coll., technical amendment to Act No 137/2006 Coll., on Public Contracts (Public Procurement Act), Methodology to the Decree on the publication of the contract notice for the purpose of the Public Procurement Act and requisites of the contracting entity profile; Public Procurement Bulletin. MA: Fulfilment YES At the OPTA MA, the relevant legislation will always be incorporated in the methodological documents of the programme. The OPTA MA staff attended for example the educational events on electronic marketplace. The OPTA MA considers the potential use of

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						ARACHNE tool, where necessary. Currently, the access rights have set up for MA.
			Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	No	Consultations with respect to the contract award procedures; Provision of replies to enquiries concerning the award of public contract; organisation of seminars; active participation in the working groups on public procurement. http://www.portal-vz.cz/cs/Spoluprace-a-vymena-informaci/Info-forum/Otazky-a-odpovedi http://www.mmr.cz/cs/Verejne-zakazky/Verejne-zakazky-a-PPP/Informace-Udalosti/Konference-Pripravovane-zmeny-v-oblasti-verejneho	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY WG Public Procurement: Educational seminars for aid beneficiaries and for bodies of the implementation structure of programmes; Provision of interpretation of the Public Procurement Act and methodological guidelines applicable to the award of contracts. The MRD-NCA within the System of education provides trainings at the horizontal level for employees implementing the EU Funds, the Department of Law on Public Contracts and Concessions of the MRD provides the content of education and the lecturers. MA: Fulfilment YES The OPTA MA takes part in the meetings of the WG for Public Procurement and cooperates in an active manner, or uses the information obtained at these meetings for its own activities carried out within the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						management of the OP (sharing information on the interpretations, acting upon the recommendations of the Public Procurement Act sponsor, participation in training courses, etc.). The OPTA MA employees also undergo training courses within the System of education. The OPTA MA also provides consultations to applicants/beneficiaries in a proactive manner.
			Arrangements to strengthen the administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the Union public procurement legislation.	No	Hiring additional employees for posts in the Department of Law on Public Contracts and Concessions at the Ministry for Regional Development of the CR. .	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY New obligations laid down by the Public Procurement Act and a higher number of public contracts awarded in accordance with the Public Procurement Act have called for hiring additional employees for the Department of Law on Public Contracts and Concessions at the MRD (sponsor of the Public Procurement Act). The MRD-NCA has elaborated the Summary Final Report based on the analysis of needs of administrative capacity of individual MAs. MA: Fulfilment PARTIALLY When setting particular measures the OPTA MA will

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						take into account especially the OP specifics, or the impact on the number and complexity of public contracts, and thus also on the number of administrative capacities. Currently, the action is also fulfilled by the OPTA MA – 2 FTEs for control of public contracts and 1 agreement on work activities, in the future it will also depend on progress made and on the number of announced calls. In this area the beneficiaries receive above-standard support from the MA, which is conducive to minimum error rate in the OP. Thus, the MA to some extent already avails of experts, experienced employees/ controllers who receive special training for the performance of ex-ante checks and who continuously educate themselves also in other related areas. In the programming period 2014-2020, an increase by at least one full time employee, with law degree, if possible, is anticipated. This increase is necessitated mainly by the fact that in the programming period 2014-2020 the OPTA Managing Authority will assume also the role of the IB, which was in the previous

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						programming period played by the CRD.

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
7 The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. **The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.**	All priority axes of OPTA	Partially	Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: • the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation,	No		EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY On 9 August 2013 by Government Resolution No 597 the binding methodological guideline was approved which lays down the rules for creation of the set of indicators (MG Indicators 2014-2020). A technical solution under the monitoring system the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period is being developed. During the preparation of the set of indicators, individual indicators are assessed with regard to their relevance, clarity and also accessibility. The preparation also involves the cooperation with ex-ante evaluators of programmes. In relevant result indicators, derived from central statistics, cooperation is established (with the CSO) for the sake of regular supply of necessary data. MA: Fulfilment PARTIALLYOPTA MA respects the rules of creation of the sets of indicators (MG Indicators 2014-2020).
			Arrangements for timely	Yes	http://www.s-f.cz/cs/Fondy-EU/2014-2020/Metodicke-	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment YES

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
			collection and aggregation of statistical data with the following elements are in place: • arrangements for publication and public availability of aggregated data;		pokyny	In terms of methodology it has been fulfilled through the following binding methodological guidelines: MG Evaluation (approved by Government Resolution No 597/2013), where a requirement is incorporated for obligatory publication of all the evaluation outputs. MG Monitoring (approved), which stipulates the content and regular publication of reports on progress of implementation MG Publicity (approved by Government Resolution No 44/2014) which lays down the binding rules for creation of the uniform ESI Funds website
			An effective system of result indicators including: • the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme,	No		EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY The set of indicators of programmes are being compiled and cooperation with the CSO on defining the sources of statistical data is under way. Intensive cooperation takes place with the MRD-NCA, the MAs and ex-ante evaluators on drafting the programming documents, stress is laid on proper design of the intervention logic of the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						programme, including the set of indicators. The sets of indicators and programme specific indicators are being created in line with the binding MG Indicators 2014-2020, while respecting the EC requirements, including the content of this ex-ante conditionality. In keeping with the MG Monitoring and MG Evaluations, the fulfilment of set out objectives will be regularly evaluated. Conclusions of conducted evaluations will serve as leads for potential revisions of the strategy or the programming document MA: Fulfilment YES Within the preparation of the set of indicators, the OPTA MA closely cooperates with the sponsor of NCI (MRD-NCA). In the framework of preparation of the programming document, intensive cooperation takes place among the MRD-NCA, the OPTA MA and ex-ante evaluator, when apart from other topics, an emphasis is put on appropriate design of intervention logic of the programme (or theory of

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						change), including the related set of indicators. The set of indicators under the OPTA and creation of programme-specific indicators is coordinated in line with the binding methodological guideline for creation of indicators (MG Indicators 2014-2020) and respects the EC requirements. Rules for the selection of indicators under each operation / project are defined in the binding methodological guideline (MG Selection and evaluation of projects 2014-2020).
			An effective system of result indicators including: • the establishment of targets for these indicators,	No		EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY They will be included in programming documents. The baseline and target values are set during the preparation of programmes. Expert evaluation of the relevance of values with respect to the allocation to the given theme is done continuously in cooperation with ex-ante evaluators. MA: Fulfilment PARTIALLY Establishment of baseline and target values is carried out within the preparation of the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						programme.
			An effective system of result indicators including: • consistency of each indicator with the following requisites shall be ensured: robustness and statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data,	No		EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY It is included in programming documents. The same rules are included in the MG Indicators (approved by the Government Resolution No 597/2013). MA: Fulfilment PARTIALLY In the framework of preparation of the programming document, intensive cooperation takes place among the MRD-NCA, the MA and ex-ante evaluator, when apart from other topics, an emphasis is put on appropriate design of intervention logic of the programme (or theory of change), including the related set of indicators according to experience MA and coordinators of SO.
			Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.	No	http://www.s-f.cz/cs/Fondy-EU/2014-2020/Metodicke-pokyny	EAC sponsor: Fulfilment PARTIALLY Obligatory procedures to fulfil the criteria are included in the approved binding methodological environment: MG Indicators (Government Resolution No 597/2013 and MG Selection and Evaluation of Projects (approved by the

Ex-ante conditionality	Priority axis or axes, to which the applicable ex-ante conditionality applies	Is the applicable ex-ante conditionality fulfilled Yes / No / Partially	Criteria	Criteria fulfilled YES / NO	Reference (reference to the strategies, legal act or other relevant documents, including references to relevant chapters, articles or sections, accompanied by weblinks or access to full text)	Explanations
						Government Resolution No 873/2013), which define the binding rules for selection and fulfilment of at least one indicator in relation to the specific objective. The referred guideline also reflects the 3E principle for selection and evaluation of operations. The binding and uniform methodological constructs of all the indicators used in programmes and each operation are defined in the so called NCI2014+. MA: Fulfilment PARTIALLY The OPTA will comply with the set uniform methodological environment.

9.2 Description of the actions to fulfil the ex-ante conditionalities, the responsible bodies and a timetable for such actions

Table 246 Actions to be undertaken to fulfil applicable general ex-ante conditionalities

Odstraně

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadlines (date)	Bodies responsible for fulfilment
4. The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds.	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	A brand new Public Procurement Act will be drafted which will transpose the new EU Public Procurement Directives. 18 April 2016 The key principles of the new Act are the following: 1) Transposition of all relevant (mandatory) provisions, 2) Similar regime for below-the-threshold public contracts, 3) Reduction of administrative intensity of public procurement, 4) Increased computerization (use of electronic tools) in the award of contracts will correspond with the obligations laid down in the new Public Procurement Directives, As of 18 April 2016 the Czech Republic shall adopt legal arrangements on mandatory e-procurement in compliance with Directives 2014/23/EU, 2014/24/EU and 2014/25/EU. The introduction of computerisation by the deadlines requested by Directive 2014/24/EU. b) Going live of the National Electronic Tool (NET), 1 October 2015 c) The Government of the Czech Republic shall decide on the obligation to use the NET for individual types of contracting entities 31 December 2016 5) Reflecting the proportionality principle in the contract award procedure 6) Based on the analyses of the OPC decision-making practices and control and audit findings, proposals for amendments to legislation will be elaborated. 31 December 2015	31 December 2016	MRD
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	Implementation of a series of actions aimed at higher efficiency and effectiveness of supervisory activities of the OPC – particularly with respect to shortening the deadlines for decision-making. Non-legislative actions: 1) Standardisation of petitions to initiate the proceedings on the review of acts of the contracting entity, filed with the MA.	18 April 2016	MRD, OPC

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadlines (date)	Bodies responsible for fulfilment
		30 June 2015 Legislative actions: 2) On 6 March 2015 the technical amendment to the PPA, amending the proceedings at the OPC, came into effect. The subject matter of the amendment is the obligation of participants in the proceedings to submit all the petitions and evidence as soon as possible, no later than 15 days following the initiation of the proceedings. 3) During the preparation of the new act, degree of computerization of the proceedings at the OPC will further increase (obligation to send the documents in electronic form), and thus the OPC activities will become more efficient. 18 April 2016 The MRD will forward to the European Commission the information on progress achieved with respect delays in decision-making of the OPC. 30 June 2016 Report on progress in the OPC activities, including points 1), 2) and 3)		
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	The MRD will annually elaborate the report on activity and progress, the so called Progress report that will serve as the key tool for identification of most frequent errors and issues in the contract award procedures. Once the problems are identified, also the actions will be defined in order to eliminate them. The report will comprise: a) List of analysed documents – decisions of the OPC, courts, the European Court of Justice, reports from audits carried out in the Czech Republic by the ECA and EC auditors, focusing on the analysis of negative and positive findings b) Evaluation of compliance of the design of the methodological environment with the applied practice and relevant legislation c) Evaluation of the applied practice in the field of controls d) Evaluation of functioning of the prevention system e) List of adopted measures (compiled methodological recommendations, potential amendments to legislation or methodologies) f) Analysis of impacts of adopted measures and analysis of the causes of errors. g) Proposals for legislative and non-legislative actions defined based on the points above, including the timetable. 31 December 201531 December 2016	31 December 2016	MRD, MA
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	Ensuring the compliance of the design of the methodological environment across the MAs with the applied practice and the relevant legislation: 1) The PPA sponsor will verify, with the use of drawn up checklists, whether each managing authority has included the Methodological Guideline for Public Procurement for the	31 December 2016	MRD, MA

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadlines (date)	Bodies responsible for fulfilment
		Programming Period 2014-2020 in the controlled documentation of the programme. 2) Annually, as a part of the Progress report, the need to update the Methodological Guideline for Public Procurement for the Programming Period 2014-2020 will be assessed. Where such an update is considered necessary, it will be done no later than within five months from the issuance of the progress report. 30 June 2015 (in dependence on the approval of projects, but no later than by 31 December 2015) 31 December 2015 31 December 2016		
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	Alignment and improvement of the applied practice in the field of controls. Based on the analyses of individual findings, recommendations will be issued for the MA with respect to controls of public contracts. Methodological recommendations will be discussed at the WG Public Procurement. Progress made in this field will be described in the Progress report. 31 December 2015 31 December 2016	31 December 2016	MRD
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	Creation of efficient prevention system for the purpose of ex ante implementation of preventive measures. Measures to be adopted: • The WG Public Procurement composed of the network of experts from across the MAs, apart from the MA and MRD representatives the members are also the experts from the MoF, OPC and the Regions. The group's activities are primarily of preventive nature (it serves as a communication channel). • In relevant cases Recommendations will be issued that will be discussed at the WG Public Procurement and made formal through the update of the Methodological Guideline for Public Procurement for the Programming Period 2014-2020, which is binding for the MA. • Through the intermediary of the MA, recommendations will be made for the beneficiaries (contracting entities) concerning the correct award of public contracts and procedures that shall be avoided. • Between the individual updates, in urgent cases the methodological opinions of the Minister of Regional Development will (can) be issued that will be binding for the MA. Each year the MRD will elaborate the report on activity of the group and especially on the content and on acting upon the recommendations. This report shall be included in the Progress report. 31 December 2015 31 December 2016	31 December 2016	MRD, OPTA MA

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadlines (date)	Bodies responsible for fulfilment
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	Measures to improve the system of dissemination of information: In order to improve the system of dissemination of information and to increase the awareness of all bodies in the field of public procurement, the following measures will be adopted: 1)Technical modification of the Info-forum on the Portal of Public Procurement and Concessions so as to make it more user friendly and to make easier the search of good and bad practice in preparation and conduct of the contract award procedures based to the key words. The portal is publicly accessible for bodies of the implementation structure and for beneficiaries (contracting entities). 2) Extending the database of the sponsor of the PPA (given in point 7 of non-legislative actions in the previous table) by additional key decisions of the Office for the Protection of Competition, Czech courts and the European Court of Justice and selected anonymized most frequent audit findings in this area so that the database forms a comprehensive framework for the whole area of public procurement.	31 December 2015	MRD
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	The sponsor of anti-corruption strategy undertakes to reflect the EU directives aimed at transparency of public procurement in the obligations defined always in the next version of anti-corruption strategy. Similarly, immediately after the adoption of relevant legislation, both the directives mentioned above and the provisions of related national legislation will be reflected in the uniform methodological environment for the ESI Funds. In response to current developments in adoption of Union legislation, the new obligations will be reflected in the updates of anti-corruption strategy and in the uniform methodological environment for the ESI Funds.	It cannot be defined	OG/MRD
	Arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement rules through appropriate mechanisms	Public procurement rules will be defined in the Operational Manual of the OPTA and in the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries. They will fully respect the applicable Union and Czech national legislation and the Methodological Guideline for Public Procurement for the Programming Period 2014-2020.	30 June 2015	OPTA MA
	Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules.	Hiring additional 4 employees by the EAC sponsor (some of the activities of methodological nature referred to above will be performed also by other employees of the PPA sponsor who are not designated directly to the ESI Funds agenda since these are general methodology-related activities carried out by the PPA sponsor within his remit)	30 June 2015	MRD
	Arrangements to ensure administrative capacity for implementation and application of Union public procurement rules.	At present time, the action is also being fulfilled by the OPTA MA – 2 FTE on control of public procurement and 1 agreement on work activities, in the future it will also depend on progress and number of published calls. The programming period 2014-2020 reckons with an increase by at least one full-time employee, preferably with a law degree. This increase is mainly caused by the fact that the OPTA Managing Authority in the programming period 2014-2020 assumes also the role of the IB that was played by the CRD in the previous	30 June 2015	OPTA MA

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadlines (date)	Bodies responsible for fulfilment
		programming period.		
	Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Elaboration of final evaluation of the System of education 2007-2013	31 December 2015	MRD
	Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Creation of the System of education 2014-2020, built on the tried and tested System of education 2007-2013 and further innovated. The following education modules will be offered in the field of public procurement: 1. Basic terms of the PPA 2. Preparation of the conditions of tender, definition of the subject matter of the public contract 3. Evaluation criteria 4. Qualification requirements 5. Most frequent errors made by the contracting entities in the contract award procedure 6. Exemptions from the PPA	31 December 2015	MRD
	Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Provision of training to all relevant employees of the MAs and IBs dealing with public procurement in relation to the adoption of the new Methodological Guideline for Public Procurement: 1) The PPA sponsor will provide trainings to the managing authorities and intermediate bodies in the field of public procurement in line with the procedures stipulated in the PPA and in keeping with the procedures laid down in the Methodological Guideline for Public Procurement for the Programming Period 2014-2020 (full-time educational events). 2) In cooperation with the NCA and MA and upon its request, the PPA sponsor will provide the same education also to beneficiaries (contracting entities).	30 June 2015	MRD, OPTA MA
	Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	The PPA sponsor will pinpoint provisions in the new EU Public Procurement Directives that he considers troublesome/risky (e.g. because they have not applied earlier or have substantially changed as against the previous period), and organise educational events on this topic for the implementation structure bodies. 31 December 2015 31 December 2016	31 December 2016	MRD
	Arrangements for training and dissemination of information for staff involved in the implementation of the ESI funds.	Submission of the application for Public Investments Academy project: (the content of the project is mainly as follows: cooperation with the MAs, applicants and beneficiaries in preparation and implementation of projects from the ESIF, sharing of best practice, training of the implementation team and a team of experts, training of applicants and beneficiaries, technical conferences and working meetings)	31 July 2016	MRD
7 The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake	Arrangements for timely collection and aggregation of	Finalizing the National Code list of Indicators for the programming period 2014-2020 that shall ensure a uniform methodological construct of all indicators used across the ESI Funds programmes.	31 December 2015	MRD, OPTA MA, CSO

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadlines (date)	Bodies responsible for fulfilment
evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. **The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.**	statistical data with the following elements are in place: • the identification of sources and mechanisms to ensure statistical validation	Setting up the cooperation with the CSO for the sake of regular supply of necessary statistical data.		
		In cooperation with the ministries concerned and with the Office for Personal Data Protection (OPDP) to prepare and subsequently approve by the OPDP and issue the interpretation regarding the processing of personal data of participants during the provision of financial support from the European Social Fund.	31 December 2015	MRD, Office of the Government, (Office for Personal Data Protection) + MAs of ESF programmes that are obliged to monitor the projects' participants under the mandatory common indicators (MoLSA, Prague City Hall, Moseys)
	An effective system of result indicators including: • the selection of result indicators for each programme providing information on what motivates the selection of policy actions financed by the programme,	Finalizing the National Codelist of Indicators for the programming period 2014-2020. Finalizing and approving the strategies of programmes and necessary related programme documentation. Preparation and approval of the evaluation plans of programmes and the Partnership Agreement that will define the indicative timetable of planned evaluation activities of programmes.	31 June 2016	MRD, OPTA MA
	An effective system of result indicators including: • the establishment of targets for these indicators,	Approval of programmes	31 October 2015	MRD, OPTA MA, Office of the Government, EC
	An effective system of result indicators including: • consistency of each indicator with the following requisites shall be ensured: robustness and	Setting up the cooperation with the CSO for the sake of regular supply of necessary statistical data. Finalizing the monitoring system that ensures the collection and aggregation of data from operations (the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period). In cooperation with the OP Emp MA to prepare the technical solution for collection of data on participants in interventions, the so called IS ESF2014+ that will ensure automatic prolinks to selected data sources of the Czech Social Security Administration and the Labour Office, which are necessary for assessing the success rate of the ESF interventions.	31 March 2016	MRD, OPTA MA, CSO, CSSA, LO

General ex-ante conditionality	Criteria not fulfilled	Actions to be taken	Deadlines (date)	Bodies responsible for fulfilment
	statistical validation, clarity of normative interpretation, responsiveness to policy, timely collection of data,			
	Procedures in place to ensure that all operations financed by the programme adopt an effective system of indicators.	Drafting the programming documentation (Handbooks for Applicants and Beneficiaries) that will reflect the already approved binding methodological rules. OPTA MA: The OPTA OM and the Rules for Applicants and Beneficiaries under the OPTA have already been elaborated.	31 October 2015	MRD, OPTA MA

Section 10 Reduction of the administrative burden for beneficiaries

Pursuant to Article 27(1) of the CPR each OP shall include actions related to the reduction of administrative burden for beneficiaries. Beyond the framework of this requirement, the EC also requests pursuant to Article 96(6)(c) of the CPR as a part of the OP, in compliance with the PA, a summary of assessment of administrative burden for beneficiaries.

In order to reduce the administrative burden, major steps have been taken at the national level, coordinated by the MRD. The MRD subsequently, in line with the Resolution of the CR Government No 184 of 21 March 2012, drafted proposals for easing the administrative burden for applicants and beneficiaries within the preparation of the next programming period. The OPTA reflects these recommendations and incorporates actions in individual priority axes that aim to reduce the administrative burden under the ESIF programmes.

The MRD-NCA will as a sponsor perform activities aimed at reducing the administrative burden and at the same time increasing the quality of activities of all the managing authorities of the operational programmes. The Systems thinking framework will be used to evaluate the design of processes of the managing authorities. The evaluation will focus especially on those attributes of the design of processes which give rise to higher administrative burden unrelated to accomplishment of the mission of the managing authorities. The MRD-NCA will make sure that the data base of the existing and future information systems of the ESIF, providing data for the conduct of basic analyses of performance in the individual operational programmes, is fully exploited. It will elaborate a thorough comparison of performance of the managing authorities, which will help them get a better insight in processes and their attributes related to the administrative burden that limits their performance. The managing authorities will thus also be provided with extensive methodological support in conducting the evaluation of processes with the use of the Systems thinking framework.

The concept of UME which provides an umbrella for individual methodological guidelines concerning the relevant aspects of implementation of the ESIF, aligns the implementation processes and thus increases the transparency and clarity of rules and processes for potential aid beneficiaries. This concept together with the methodological guidelines is binding, or is recommended to all the MAs and their programming and implementing documents, the OPTA inclusive.

The tools for UME aimed to reduce the administrative burden for beneficiaries and thus also the closely related administrative burden for implementation structure bodies are predominantly the computerisation of administration processes, setting out the standardised processes with fixed deadlines with a view to cut short the time limits for approval and reimbursement of support, harmonisation of control activities, reduction of the number of methodological documents, design and use of uniform terminology, preparation and use of single websites for publication of calls, information and documentation, setting out the basic rules for publicity and awareness of support from the ESIF, introducing standardised, binding and enforceable rules of the provision of support from the European Structural and Investment Funds, etc., while respecting the statutory procedures, including the position of the MoF ensuing from Sections 12 and 13 of Act No 218/2000 Coll., as amended.

Also applied were the provisions of Article 67 (1) (b), (c) and (d) of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the EP and of the Council which enables the application of simplified costs and thus also the simplification of control and audits.

Main activities actions to reduce the administrative burden under OPTA in the period 2014–2020 are described under PA1 SO1, SO2 and PA2 SO1:

1. Provision of UME is one of the key activities under PA 1 SO 1. Absence of uniform terminology (especially in calls, Handbooks for applicants and beneficiaries), unclarity and ambiguity of provisions constituted the crucial problems of the previous period in terms of administrative burden. A large part of UME was adopted through the Government Resolution in 2013, the remaining part will be completed in 2014.

2. Removal of legal and implementation barriers is another significant activity in relation to reduction of administrative burden. Most of the changes and suggestions were submitted to the Czech Government by the NCA after 2010 as a reaction to evaluations and various control bodies' findings. In 2012 the Government approved measures to reduce legislative barriers to implementation for the 2014-2020 period. NCA will keep monitoring the impact of new legislation on implementation.

3. Creation of a single website portal for all the OPs (PA 1 SO 2). Its operation and development throughout the programming period will be ensured under the OPTA. The experience from the period 2007–2013 and the conducted questionnaire survey showed that the clarity of information and its availability on a single portal are most important for applicants and beneficiaries. These measures will be adopted by the end of 2015.

4. Following the activities related to the SMS (PA 2 SO 1), the OPTA shall ensure an optimal level of computerization of agendas and data interoperability, which will be instrumental in minimizing the volume of data entered into the system by beneficiaries. The SMS will be fully operational by the end of 2014.

5. At the level of OPTA implementation structure, the primary processes (Wauters 2013, p.78-79). will be organised in such a way that especially the selection and approval of projects and control of monitoring reports and applications for payment are performed by the fewest possible number of organisational units. These measures should accelerate these primary processes, increase the comfort of beneficiaries through retention of contact persons and reduce the error rate by means of concentrating the responsibility of individual administrators. These measures will be adopted by the end of 2015. The OPTA MA will repeatedly assess the design of processes and optimize it through the methods of Systems thinking (Seddon 2008).

Section 11 Horizontal principles

Pursuant to Article 27 (5) of the CPR this part is not applicable to OPTA.

11.1 Sustainable development

Pursuant to Article 27 (5) of the CPR this part is not applicable to OPTA.

11.2 Equal opportunities and non-discrimination

Pursuant to Article 27 (5) of the CPR this part is not applicable to OPTA.

11.3 Equality between men and women

Pursuant to Article 27 (5) of the CPR this part is not applicable to OPTA.

Section 12 Separate elements

12.1 Major projects for which the implementation is planned during the programming period

Not applicable to OPTA.

12.2 Performance framework of the operational programme (Article 22(1) of the CPR; performance framework rules are not applicable to technical assistance)

Not applicable to OPTA.

12.3 List of relevant partners involved in the preparation of the operational programme

Table 257 Members of the Steering Committee for the preparation of OPTA 2014 - 2020

Odstraněno: 2

Institution	Member of the SC	E-mail	Substitute member of the SC	E-mail
MoE	Mgr. Reda Ifrah	reda.Ifrah@mzp.cz	Ing. Marta Levíčková	marta.levickova@mzp.cz
MRD-AUAD	Ing. Hana Kiliánová	hana.kilianova@mmr.cz		
MoEYS	RNDr. Marek Štoud	marek.Stoud@msmt.cz	Ing. Helena Barbořáková	helena.Barborakova@msmt.cz
MRD-DEUP	Ing. Radek Kobza	radek.kobza@mmr.cz	Mgr. Michal Klusák	michal.klusak@mmr.cz
City of Prague	Ing. Jiří Netík	jiri.netik@praha.eu	Ing. Roman Havel	roman.havel@praha.eu
MRD-DMSA	RNDr. Blanka Fischerová	blanka.fischerova@mmr.cz	Ing. Jiří Eisenhammer	jiri.eisenhammer@mmr.cz
CMCTU	Josef Středula	stredula.josef@cmkos.cz	Ing. Jaroslav Šulc, CSc.	sulc.jaroslav@cmkos.cz
MRD-Dpt. of Regional Policy	Ing. David Koppitz	david.koppitz@mmr.cz	Mgr. František Kubeš	frantisek.kubes@mmr.cz
MIT	Mgr. Jana Vopátková	vopatkova@mpo.cz	Ing. Hana Důrasová	durasova.hana@mpo.cz
MoLSA	Mgr. Jiří Kinský	jiri.kinsky@mpsv.cz	Ing. Petr Chuděj	petr.chudej@mpsv.cz
MoF PCA	Ing. Diana Damborská	diana.damborska@mfcr.cz	Mgr. Petra Benáková	petra.benakova@mfcr.cz
MRD-Dpt. of Mgt and Coord. of EU Funds	Mgr. Kateřina Neveselá	katerina.nevesela@mmr.cz		

Institution	Member of the SC	E-mail	Substitute member of the SC	E-mail
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MRD-DEA	Ing. arch. Daniela Grabmüllerová, MBA, Ph.D.	daniela.grabmullerova@mmr.cz		
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Annexes (uploaded to the SFC as separate files)

Annex 1 Conclusions of ex-ante evaluation

The main conclusions and the most significant longstanding recommendations of the ex-ante evaluation are summarised in the table below. Conclusions and recommendations are structured according to the individual evaluated areas and given evaluation questions.

Table 26 Conclusions of ex-ante evaluation (Annex 1)

Odstraněno: 28

Evaluated area / evaluation question	Conclusion of evaluation / answer to the evaluation question
Programme strategy, including the proposed intervention logic of the programme and including the described contribution of the strategy to addressing the defined problems	
EQ 1 To what extent can the programme strategy of OPTA 2014+ be considered adequate, namely both in terms of its justification and its relevance?	As against the previous evaluated version of the programme, it shall be stated that the current description of the programme strategy of OPTA 2014+ is far more fine-tuned. The fine-tuning of OPTA 2014–2020 strategy removed a number of previously ascertained deficiencies, but on the other hand the much clearer strategy enabled to identify also a few new deficiencies. Specifically, overlaps of some identified main causes of the problems on which the OPTA 2014–2020 focuses. As concerns the relevance of the proposed strategy of OPTA 2014+, it can be considered to be pretty high in the evaluated version of OPTA 2014–2020, nonetheless the chosen programme strategy is not fully satisfactory as yet, namely due to insufficient analysis of causes of the addressed problem and their mutual internal links. The so far inadequate analysis of causes of the main problem thus ultimately results in inadequacy of some activities and measures adopted in order to eliminate the existing problems in the CR with the use of ESIF.
EQ 2 To what extent can the intervention logic of the programme be considered adequate?	The individual supported activities in general match the overall objectives of OPTA 2014–2020, but through a more detailed analysis partial shortcomings can be identified in the intervention logic of the programme. To be specific, the stakeholder analysis carried out at the level of individual specific objectives is still missing and the justification of the selected division of PA and SO of this programme is unclear. In some cases, the partial overlaps permeate down to the structure of monitoring indicators, which ultimately prevent any relevant aggregation of target values at higher level than the PA. Nevertheless, recommendations concerning the intervention logic rely on the perception of the system of OPTA management as a dynamic system.
Setting individual levels of the programme (structure of the programme)	
EQ 3 To what extent do the individual supported activities as well as the intended interventions as a whole match the overall objective of OPTA 2014+?	Description of supported activities and their planned focus is in general in line with the overall objective of OPTA 2014–2020. A partial deficiency was identified only in case of provision of methodological support to ESIF implementation structure bodies in interpreting and applying the rules introduced by the single methodological guidelines, which was not adequately reflected in the draft OPTA 2014–2020 under SO 1 PA 1. On

Evaluated area / evaluation question	Conclusion of evaluation / answer to the evaluation question
	the other hand, though, it is essential to emphasize not only the physical focus of individual activities, but also the planned way of their performance by individual aid beneficiaries of this programme. As concerns the focus of individual proposed activities of OPTA 2014+, it is still unclear whether the own needs of the actual OPTA MA 2014+ ensuing from the requirement for proper management and implementation of this programme, are adequately covered.
Contribution of the programme to the fulfilment of objectives of European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020) and other relevant EU and national instruments	
EQ 4 To what extent does the OPTA 2014+ contribute to the fulfilment of objectives of the European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (Europe 2020) and to other relevant EU and national instruments?	By ensuring key horizontal activities of MRD-NCA and other bodies involved in the implementation of programmes financed from ESIF in the territory of the CR in the programming period 2014+ (incl. MoF), the OPTA 2014+ will significantly contribute to safeguarding proper implementation of all programmes implemented in the given period in relation to the Partnership Agreement. Bearing in mind the fact that all the other programmes shall clearly contribute to the fulfilment of targets of Europe 2020 strategy, it can be stated that also the prepared OPTA 2014+ will contribute to the achievement of these targets, even though not directly, but rather indirectly.
Adequacy of financial allocations	
EQ 5 To what extent can the financial allocations for OPTA 2014+ set out at the level of individual priorities be considered adequate to objectives which are to be accomplished by the individual priorities?	Financial allocations at the level of individual priority axes and specific objectives are based on the total amount of financial allocation set in the Partnership Agreement and are divided mainly with regard to experience from the implementation of OPTA 2007–2013. They are supported by individual estimates of allocations for individual priority axes, where especially in Priority axis 1 and 2 the allocations to individual planned activities are given indicatively, based on expert estimates building on experience gained in the course of the current programming period 2007 – 2013.
Design of the set of indicators and their values, including the milestones	
EQ 6 To what extent can the monitoring indicators of OPTA 2014+ be considered appropriately and adequately set out?	The design of monitoring indicators at the level of individual priority axes in the submitted version of OPTA 2014+ has been elaborated at a much higher level than it was the case of the previously evaluated versions of this programme. Even though in some cases the monitoring indicators have so far not been considered sufficient and fully suitable, namely with regard to their definition. Not quite clear are the particular prerequisites, based on which the OPTA MA quantified the monitoring indicators in individual specific objectives. It shall also be stated that the evaluation team has no study available which would confirm that the existence of target values at the level of the programme would have a positive effect on the overall programme outputs and results. With respect to OPTA, as a very specific programme, account has also be taken of the fact that the target values of indicators set at the level of the programme represent rather a formal obligation than an effective tool of management and control of this programme, which should be reflected not only by the MA, but also by all the other superior and horizontal bodies.

Evaluated area / evaluation question	Conclusion of evaluation / answer to the evaluation question
EQ 7 To what extent can the milestones of OPTA 2014+ be considered appropriately and adequately set out?	This question is not relevant pursuant to the current version of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. OPTA 2014+ is not obliged to set out the performance framework of the operational programme.
Design of horizontal themes, equal opportunities, regional dimension and integrated approaches, where relevant	
EQ 8 To what extent can the design of horizontal themes for OPTA 2014+ be considered adequate?	This question is not relevant pursuant to the current version of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013. OPTA 2014+ is not obliged to describe in the prepared programme the individual horizontal principles – sustainable development, equal opportunities and protection against discrimination, equality between men and women.
Adequacy of administrative capacity and involvement of partners	
EQ 9 To what extent can the existing, or planned, administrative capacities intended for management and implementation of OPTA 2014+ be considered adequate?	Based on the conducted evaluations of the current OPTA, however, it can be stated that the administrative capacity of OPTA MA as well as of beneficiaries has been repeatedly considered inadequate. In terms of administrative capacity, particularly risky can currently be especially the period of closure of the current programme, because it will run in parallel with the implementation of OPTA 2014-2020. Yet another risk may be the lack of timely strengthening of capacities of OPTA MA, intended directly to ensure the management and implementation of OPTA 2014-2020, namely with regard to the planned change in the implementation structure of this programme, when the delegation of performance of a part of the MA activities to the IB is not reckoned with for the programming period 2014-2020. On the other hand, it shall be underlined that crucial for the administrative capacity is not only the number of employees, but also the degree of their experience and optimization of processes carried out by them. In this context, it shall be stated that within the preparation of OPTA 2014+ the MA considers another optimization of processes and also the introduction the competency model for its individual employees, i.e. measures clearly conducive to further reinforcement of administrative capacities of the MA. As concerns the programme management, the programming document lacks the description of responsibilities, powers and procedures of the NCA in the implementation of OPTA 2014+ vis-à-vis the OPTA MA. Since the NCA is responsible for setting out the specific rules for management which shall be observed also by the OPTA MA (see the uniform methodological environment), it is also not obvious why an agreement has not been concluded between the NCA and the MA on delegating these powers (because it continues to be the MA that is responsible for proper implementation of OPTA).
EQ 10 To what extent can the involvement of partners in the preparation of OPTA 2014+ be considered adequate?	In line with the principle of partnership, the Steering Committee of OPTA 2014–2020 has been set up, whose members represent the institutions listed in its Statute. The spectrum of institutions involved in the Steering Committee of OPTA 2014–2020 can be perceived to be extensive and adequate to the nature of the programme. During the preparation of the programme six meetings of this body have so

Evaluated area / evaluation question	Conclusion of evaluation / answer to the evaluation question
	far been convened. In the period of implementation of OPTA 2014 – 2020, a transformation of this SC OPTA 2014–2020 into the MC OPTA 2014 – 2020 is anticipated.
Overall internal consistency of proposed OPTA 2014+ and its link to other relevant tools (complementarities, synergies, borderlines, etc.)	
EQ 11 To what extent can the overall internal consistency of the proposed OPTA 2014+ and its link to other relevant tools (i.e. complementarity, synergy, etc.) be considered adequate?	As concerns the internal consistency of the proposed OPTA 2014 – 2020, we need to state again that partial deficiencies prevail. On the other hand, provided the recommendations proposed in this report by the programme evaluators are adopted, we suppose the overall internal consistency of this programme is guaranteed. As to the complementarities and synergies with other instruments, they can be identified with respect to OPTA 2014+ in all the other newly prepared programmes, especially in the following areas: financing the labour costs of administrative capacity, system of education and training of administrative capacity, ensuring absorption capacity, single monitoring system 2014+, and publicity intended for the general public. In these areas the draft programme defines activities to be financed from OPTA 2014+ and activities to be financed from individual operational programmes. As concerns the content of the programme, it is crucial to set effective borderlines between the OPTA 2014+ and the other operational programmes, while the currently set borderline can already be considered adequate.
EQ 12 How can the overall process of preparation of OPTA 2014+ be evaluated, namely not only with regard to the cooperation with the ex-ante evaluator, but also with other relevant partners and bodies?	The process of preparation of OPTA 2014+ is influenced by an overall progress of preparation of the Partnership Agreement and by a postponement of the timetable as against the original plan due to the preparation of legislation of the EC and subsequently also of the CR for the programming period 2014–2020. Cooperation and communication with the ex-ante evaluator takes place continuously and can be perceived as standard. Cooperation with the relevant partners and bodies follows the requirements for the preparation of individual operational programmes that facilitate the absorption of resources from ESIF in the CR in the course of the programming period 2014+ stipulated in the EC and CR legislation and also complies with the Statute of the Steering Committee of OPTA 2014 – 2020.

Annex 2 Conducted evaluations and analyses with links to the objectives of 2014–2020

Table 27 Evaluations and analyses (Annex 2)

Odstraněno: 29

Name of conducted evaluation/analysis	Main recommendations for the next period (conclusions)	Link to the period 2014-2020 - SO/activity
Evaluation of administrative capacity of OPTA MA/IB, including the evaluation of the system of education	Administrative capacity – recommendations for 2014-2020 1. "To continue to stabilise (retain) the staffing capacity especially at OPTA MA and at the same time to increase the expertise of MA staff through the tools of non-financial and financial motivation." (Page 4 of the Executive summary) 2. "To simplify the structure of management of the operational programme by cancelling the intermediate body and entrusting the respective agenda directly to the MA, with relevant increase in the number of posts at the OPTA MA." (Page 4 of the Executive summary) 3. "To clearly separate/detach within the organisation the unit performing activities of the MA from the units acting as beneficiaries (in case these units are the same ministry)." (Page 4 of the Executive summary)	1. PA 1, SO 1 2. IB is no more included in the implementation structure 2014–2020 3. Implementation structure of OPTA
	System of education of employees of the implementation structure of OPTA – recommendations for 2014-2020 1. "To exploit the experience gained in the course of implementation of the system of education of NSRF in the programming period 2007-2013 and to use it to ensure a system approach to education of employees implementing the operational programmes also in the next programming period, it would be particularly fitting to make sure that follow-up projects focusing on education are implemented." (Page 5 of the Executive summary) 2. "To exploit also the negative experience from implementation of the system of education in the preparation of the next programming period – in particular to ensure early preparation and implementation of a system of education for the next programming period in order to avoid the mistakes made in the current programming period regarding the timing." (Page 5 of the Executive summary) 3. "To ensure that the educational activities in the next programming period are conducted at various levels of difficulty, i.e. they reflect the diverse levels of knowledge and skills of individual participants in these educational activities." (Page 5 of the Executive summary) 4. "To consider the adoption of steps safeguarding higher efficiency of language education for the next	Reflected in PA 1, SO 1

Name of conducted evaluation/analysis	Main recommendations for the next period (conclusions)	Link to the period 2014-2020 - SO/activity
	programming period." (Page 5 of the Executive summary)	
Evaluation of mid-term progress of OPTA	Relevance of OPTA, strategies and objectives; programming document of OPTA 1. "To conduct and periodically (e.g. semi-annually) update the analysis of physical priorities and needs for the provision of a single central management and coordination of programmes co-financed from the EU funds in the CR and also for focusing the support from the EU Structural Funds in the field of technical assistance in the next programming period (2014+) with respect to the development of discussions on the future cohesion policy of the EU after 2013." (Page 11 of the Executive summary) 2. "To maintain a separate operational programme, or a separate budget for financing the activities ensuring the highest (national) degree of coordination and management of the economic, social and territorial cohesion policy in the CR for the period 2014-2020." (Page 11 of the Executive summary) 3. "To strengthen the role of the national coordination and management authority in the next programming period. To initiate a discussion on potential "separation" of the implementation structure of the future "NSRF" from the existing structure of public administration bodies, making it autonomous (e.g. in the form of a government agency) with a separate budget chapter." (Page 11 of the Executive summary)	Reflected in PA 1, SO 1
Evaluation of mid-term progress of OPTA	Set of indicators 1. "In the new operational programme (if it is adopted), to set out a multi-level set of indicators that would cover all the levels of hierarchy. At the level of intervention areas to propose a broad portfolio of mostly output indicators, directly linked to individual supported activities; at the level of priority axes to define a few (2-3, according to the number of priority axes) result indicators expressing the progress made (in relative terms – e.g. in %); at the level of OP to define result and impact indicators." (Page 14 of the Executive summary) 2. "To compile a "Catalogue of unit costs" by type of output from implementation of projects in the field of technical assistance." (Page 14 of the Executive summary) 3. "Based on the Catalogue of unit costs and in the light of experience from the implementation of OPTA in the programming period 2007-2013, to set out realistic target values of indicators of the new OP." (Page 14 of the Executive summary)	Reflected in the relevant documents

Name of conducted evaluation/analysis	Main recommendations for the next period (conclusions)	Link to the period 2014-2020 - SO/activity
	Selection criteria "To introduce scaling using a scale in the system of evaluation of quality of submitted project applications and to determine the minimum score of project admissibility. To put stress on the evaluation of efficiency of planned activities by using a broad variety/range of output indicators and the Catalogue of unit costs." (Page 14 of the Executive summary)	
Evaluation of the set of indicators of OPTA	"The evaluator recommends, apart from the inclusion of new indicators (such as the indicator of the number of trained beneficiaries), to extend the definition of indicators, or their description, so that they could cover also the outputs and results of activities that have not so far been monitored by the indicators or to divide some of the indicators since they are too general. As a follow-up thereto, the evaluator recommends to conduct an analysis and identification of needs of individual beneficiaries concerning the extension of definition of indicators or inclusion of new indicators. Considered a cross-cutting recommendation is a proper setting out of methodology for calculation of the indicator No 48.27.00 – Degree of shortening of the administrative process in project administration, which is extremely important for the monitoring of achievement of programme objectives, and especially an early conduct of the first evaluation (or the introduction of annual repetition of this evaluation until the end of the programming period). The evaluator recommends the evaluation of fulfilment of monitoring indicators in the management control and especially in some output indicators to achieve stronger alignment of physical and financial monitoring (to identify average costs of a unit of indicator and to evaluate them based on the statistical characteristics of centrality and variability)." (Page 4 of the Executive summary)	Some recommendations are reflected in the set of indicators.
Analysis of implementation of OPTA and proposals for its potential modification	"The analysis resulted especially in recommendations concerning the full absorption of OPTA in the period 2007-2013, but also in minor recommendations for the next period: reinforcing the staffing capacity of OPTA MA, reinforcing of staffing capacity of the existing as well as future OPTA beneficiaries at the MRD, extension of the group of potential OPTA beneficiaries by the so called secondary beneficiaries at the MRD and also by other units of the MoF CR which are directly involved in agendas associated with meeting the obligations of the CR in financial management and audit of programmes." (Page 9-10	Reflected especially in PA 1 SO 2 and in the area of potential beneficiaries.

Name of conducted evaluation/analysis	Main recommendations for the next period (conclusions)	Link to the period 2014-2020 - SO/activity
	of the Executive summary)	
Recommendations for easing the administrative burden for applicants and beneficiaries in the absorption of financial resources from the EU Funds in the programming period 2014–2020	"It was confirmed in the debate that the main task is to achieve the maximum uniformity in setting out the rules, namely wherever possible. This indicates that it is necessary for the programming period 2014–2020 to introduce uniform, clear basic rules across the all necessary implementation processes, which will be an integral part of the uniform and binding methodology, and to make these rules enforceable. The system of absorption from the European Funds should on the one hand be as simple and streamlined as possible and concurrently it shall respect the applicable Union and national legislation. In this light it is necessary to introduce a single terminology across all the implementation structure bodies with the basic interpretation of terms that shall be used." (Conclusions from the conference, page 1)	Reflected in PA1 SO1.
Recommendations for easing the administrative burden for applicants and beneficiaries in the absorption of financial resources from the EU Funds in the programming period 2014–2020	"In the course of project implementation it is appropriate to conduct ex-ante controls of public contracts, namely before the opening of the public procurement procedure/tender and concluding a contract, this helps eliminate the issues associated with the eligibility of expenditure and the occurrence of irregularities. As to the irregularities and approach to irregularities if it concerns an error to the tune of hellers, a debate shall be launched potential amendment to the national legislation which would simplify the rules for reporting and addressing irregularities. It is necessary to clearly define the rules and procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of project sustainability." (Conclusions from the conference, page 2)	Reflected in PA1 SO1.
Mid-term evaluation of physical and financial implementation of NSRF	"Indicators: The evaluation concerns the quality of indicators and it aims to ensure that these indicators reflect the physical substance of the programme and its intervention areas. Indicators should correspond to SMART / QQTTP or any other relevant method for evaluation of criteria, and should be set out at the central level and monitored for each project so that the evaluation of effects of interventions could be carried out at all levels." (page 12 -13)	Some recommendations are reflected in the set of indicators.
Mid-term evaluation of physical and financial implementation of NSRF	"In preparation of the OP for the next programming period 2014+, a stress shall be put on the quality design of the set of indicators, i.e. to choose not only the relevant indicators in terms of their physical focus, but also to set out the target values of indicators in such a way to avoid, if possible, their modification in the course of the programming period. Indicators also	Some recommendations are reflected in the set of indicators.

Name of conducted evaluation/analysis	Main recommendations for the next period (conclusions)	Link to the period 2014-2020 - SO/activity
	have to be objectively measurable and aggregable in order to facilitate efficient and direct quality evaluation of physical progress in achieving the objectives identified in the respective development strategies of individual programming documents. In this context the inappropriate use of the so called context indicators in the current programming period shall be pointed out. These indicators can be used when drafting the strategies for description of socio-economic situation, nonetheless they are unfit for evaluation of physical progress since apart from the implemented interventions also other factors have an effect on their development." (page 20, 23)	
Mid-term evaluation of physical and financial implementation of NSRF	"Unstable and insufficient administrative capacity – stability of human resources is a basic prerequisite for ensuring adequate administrative capacity and at the same time for maintaining the unique know-how concerning the implementation of EU Funds. In order to ensure this stability, it is necessary to adequately apply the appropriate tools in the field of management of human resources (system of evaluation of employees and the related mechanism of remuneration, motivation and career growth, system of education of employees, etc.). With respect to ensuring adequate administrative capacities, it is effective to conduct an analysis of needs of human resources focused on the period of overlap of the two programming periods and to reflect the results of this analysis in planning the system positions. Another step to eliminate this risk would also be an effective Civil Service Act." (page 62)	Reflected in PA1 SO1.
Mid-term evaluation of physical and financial implementation of NSRF	"Powers associated with the provision of assistance should be concentrated at the level of the MAs, whereas the IBs should be reporting to the MAs. Legal acts, by which some of the powers of the MAs will be delegated to the IBs, should clearly define the responsibilities of both the parties, including the penalties for their violation, so that the MAs have adequately efficient tools for imposing and enforcing the remedial measures." (page 68, 87)	

Annex 3 Summary of context indicators

External factors have been identified for OPTA which impact the achievement of objectives of OPTA, but cannot be influenced by OPTA interventions. OPTA also has an indirect effect on achieving the objectives of the PA and the overall workings of the ESIF, whose progress cannot be expressed through result and output indicators. Nevertheless, we find useful to monitor these external factors and the overall development of situation in the field of ESIF by means of context indicators. “Statistical (context) indicators are convenient for monitoring the national or regional situation, not the current state of play of physical achievements of the programme. From the viewpoint of implementation management, no target values shall be set out for context indicators or they shall not be used as milestones since their development is impacted also by other factors than the implementation of the given intervention, i.e. in these indicators the net effect of interventions cannot be evaluated (MRD 2014j)”. Based on the progress made in context indicators and analysis of the current socio-economic situation in the CR, which has an effect on the values of context indicators, a change or modification can be made in the OPTA strategy.
The following table gives the context indicators for individual specific objectives of OPTA.

Table 30 Context indicators (Annex 3)

Context indicator	Source
PA 1 – SO 1 Creating conditions for the achievement of objectives of the Partnership Agreement and coordination of management of the ESIF	
Corruption perceptions index	TI
Turnover rate of employees of the ESIF implementation structure	MRD-NCA
Date of commencement of preparation of 2021+ by the EC	EC
Fulfilment of ex-ante conditionalities	MRD-NCA
PA 1 – SO 2 Ensuring quality awareness of the ESIF among the target groups	
Confidence of the general public in the EU	Eurobarometer
Interest in the EU Funds among the general public	MRD-NCA

Annex 4 Legislative framework

Strategic documents

Strategic documents

The key documents for the preparation of OPTA are the Partnership Agreement and the "Rules governing the management and coordination of the PA in the programming period 2014–2020" covering the basic framework of MRD-NCA activities in relation to the management of achieving the objectives of the PA, which also constitute the basis for activities of OPTA 2014–2020. The MRD – NCA as the body responsible for the preparation and negotiation of the Partnership Agreement with the EC has elaborated the PA in cooperation with a number of partners from among ministries, regions, towns and municipalities, economic and social partners, non-profit organisations, academia, scientific and research institutes and other outstanding bodies. During the discussions common main strategic objectives have been set out which represent the outcome of the PA strategy. The emphasis is also put on inclusion of territorial dimension, integrated approaches and their management, which are the key elements of the programming period 2014-2020.

Effective central management and coordination of the PA is the main vision of OPTA for 2014–2020. Creating the environment for achievement of the PA objectives is reflected in the SO No 1 of the programme.

In order to fulfil the priorities of the Czech Republic and to spend the ESIF funds in line with the principle of effectiveness, efficiency and economy it is necessary to pursue the set out strategic objectives of the PA:

- Enhancing the competitiveness of economy;
- Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty in an effective manner;
- Developing transport and technical infrastructure and protection of the environment;
- Balanced development of the territory.

In order to achieve these objectives, the OPTA shall focus on supporting, increasing and enhancing the quality of single methodological management and coordination of the OPs co-financed from the EU funds, especially through activities of PA 1 under SO 1 and 2. The objectives of the Partnership Agreement will also be appropriately accomplished through activities of PA 1 SO 1 which focuses on the development of human resources at the level of Partnership Agreement, specifically on maintaining high standard of administrative capacity.

The OPTA fully respects the priorities of financing set out in the PA, on which the CR wishes to focus in the programming period 2014–2020 through the respective programmes. Transparent and efficient public administration with low level of administrative and regulatory burden is the priority of activities financed from OPTA.

Other strategic documents for the preparation of OPTA:

- Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth and thematic objectives of the EU: indirect link, OPTA assists in creating the setting for the achievement of targets of Europe 2020 strategy;
- NRP 2014: it reckons with the fact that management and coordination of future interventions will be provided by the OPTA for the whole system of OPs, moreover it concentrates on improving the functioning of public administration, it proposes reform measures and also focuses on combating corruption, with stress put on transparency of decision-making processes;
- Strategic Framework for Sustainable Development of the CR;
- Regional Development Strategy: improving the quality of institutional framework for the development of regions and support of cooperation at the local and regional level are the goals pursued also by the Partnership Agreement;
- Position Paper of the EC: up-to-date, transparent and professional administration is one of the basic priorities of ESIF;

- Strategy to combat fraud and corruption in the absorption of ESIF in the period 2014–2020;
- Strategic Framework for the Development of eGovernment 2014+ (currently under preparation, following its approval the OPTA will be amended in order to comply with this document.

Based on the experience from the programming period 2007–2013, the above mentioned document called Strategy to combat fraud and corruption in the absorption of ESIF was prepared with the view to avoid and prevent the misuse of resources granted from the EU Funds. In the programming period 2007–2013, in response to addressing individual cases, some measures were adopted to reinforce the conduct of control activities and to enhance the transparency of processes, nevertheless for the programming period 2014–2020 this area shall be approached in a more comprehensive manner, and mechanisms and tools shall be adopted that prevent fraudulent behaviour as early as in the preparation of rules. The Strategy itself follows up in its concept also on other relevant documents in this field and preparation of the programming period 2014–2020. One of them is the "Government Strategy in the Fight Against Corruption for 2013 and 2014", with multiple measures leading also to the fulfilment of individual criteria of ex-ante conditionalities. Under PA 1 SO 1, one of the supported activities is the ensurance of anti-corruption mechanisms also in connection to this strategy, and the support of bodies responsible for ex-ante conditionalities.

EU legislation

- 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, 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 and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006;
- Regulation (EU) No 1300/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1084/2006 (hereinafter referred to as the Regulation on the CF).

The related pivotal document for setting out the system of management and coordination will be the ESIF for the period 2014–2020, which also comprises a proposal for closer coordination of Funds. The Common Strategic Framework identifies the main challenges for various territories in the EU and sets out the strategic objectives and horizontal principles for the use of ESIF.

Legislative and methodological documents of the CR

In terms of national legislation, the following legal norms are essential:

- Act No 218/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules, as amended;
- Act No 248/2000 Coll., on regional development support, as amended;
- Act No 250/2000 Coll., on budgetary rules of territorial budgets, as amended;
- Act No 320/2001 Coll., on financial control, as amended;
- Act No 137/2006 Coll., on public contracts, as amended;
- Act No 2/1969 Coll., on setting up of ministries and other central authorities of public administration of the Czech Republic, as amended;
- Act No 255/2012 Coll., on inspection (Inspection Order), as amended.

At the level of national preparation of the programming period 2014–2020, the OP is linked to the relevant and binding resolutions of the Government and related approved documents:

- Resolution of the Government No 650 of 31 August 2011 and related document called Summary proposal for the focus of future cohesion policy of the EU after 2013 in the CR, comprising also a proposal for development priorities of the absorption of EU Funds after 2013, which apart from other things entrusts the MRD with the preparation of the PA for development and investments and its negotiation with the EC and with the coordination of preparation of the future programming documents;
- Resolution of the Government No 664 of 8 September 2011 concerning the future steps to be taken in the preparation of the monitoring system of the Structural Funds and the CF for the programming period 2014+;
- Resolution of the Government No 42 of 18 January 2012 and the related Set of framework positions to proposals for a Regulation on CSF of the EU for the period 2014–2020 concerning the Structural Funds (ERDF and ESF), the Cohesion Fund and the European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation, which apart from other things imposes upon the ministers concerned to continuously cooperate in the analysis of ex-ante conditionalities;
- Resolution of the Government No 184 of 21 March 2012 on Recommendation to simplify the administrative burden of applicants and beneficiaries in the absorption of resources from the EU funds in the programming period 2014–2020;
- Resolution of the Government No 610 of 22 August 2012 concerning the proposal for bringing down the legislative barriers to the implementation of the Structural Funds and the CF of the EU in the programming period 2014 - 2020;
- Resolution of the Government No 867 of 28 November 2012 concerning the preparation of programmes co-financed from the CSF Funds for the programming period 2014 - 2020 in the Czech Republic;
- Resolution of the CR Government No 313 of 2 May 2012 on the Method of selection of employees implementing the EU Funds in the programming period 2007 - 2013 and in the programming period 2014+;
- Resolution of the Government No 794 of 31 October 2012 on the updated Framework position to proposals for a Regulation on the cohesion policy 2014–2020;
- Resolution of the Government No 345 of 15 May 2013 concerning the Concept of the UME as a part of achievement of objectives of the PA;
- Resolution of the Government No 401 of 29 May 2013 concerning the Methodological guideline for the preparation of programming documents in the programming period 2014–2020;
- Resolution of the Government No 302 of 24 April 2013 concerning the proposal for the Statute and Rules of Procedure of the Council for the Funds (in the course of preparation of the programming period 2014 – 2020 the original name “Council for the CSF Funds” was changed into the “Council for the ESIF”);

Other methodological documents

- Methodological guideline for the preparation of programming documents for the programming period 2014–2020;
- Methodological guideline for management of calls, evaluation and selection of projects in the programming period 2014 - 2020;
- Methodological guideline for the processes of management and monitoring of ESI Funds in the monitoring system for the 2014-2020 period;
- Definition of platforms for the programming period 2014–2020;
- Territorial and urban dimension of the programming period 2014–2020;

- Action plan for management and coordination of ex ante conditionalities in the programming period 2014–2020;
- Methodological guideline for the development of human resources in the programming period 2014–2020 and in the programming period 2007–2013 (following the adoption by the CR Government and in compliance with the Civil Service Act);
- Methodology for the preparation of public strategies;
- Methodological guideline for monitoring the implementation of ESI Funds in the programming period 2014-2020;
- Methodological guideline for public procurement for the programming period 2014-2020;
- Methodological guideline for eligibility of expenditure and its declaration in the programming period 2014–2020;
- Methodological guideline for principles of creation and application of indicators in the programming period 2014–2020;
- Methodological guideline for risk management in the programming period 2014–2020;
- Methodological guideline for the preparation of guidance documents of programmes in the programming period 2014-2020;
- Methodological guideline for evaluations in the programming period 2014–2020;
- Methodological guideline for publicity and communication of ESI Funds in the programming period 2014-2020;
- Methodological guideline for the use of programming tools in the programming period 2014-2020;
- Methodological guideline for the use of integrated instruments in the programming period 2014-2020.

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List of tables

Table 1 Description of external factors of OPTA 17
Table 2 Causes and actions supported from OPTA 20
Table 3 Justification of the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities 30
Table 4 Overview of the programme investment strategy 34
Table 5 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-1 42
Table 6 Output indicators for SO 1-1 51
Table 7 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-2 53
Table 8 Output indicators for SO 1-2 58
Table 9 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-3 60
Table 10 Output indicators for SO 1-3 62
Table 11 Programme specific result indicators for SO 1-4 65
Table 12 Output indicators for SO 1-4 68
Table 13 Dimension 1 – Intervention field 69
Table 14 Dimension 2 – Form of finance 69
Table 15 Dimension 3 – Territory type 69
Table 16 Programme specific result indicators for SO 2-1 71
Table 17 Output indicators for SO 2-1 79
Table 18 Dimension 1 – Intervention field 80
Table 19 Dimension 2 – Form of finance 80
Table 21 Financial appropriations envisaged for the support from each of the Funds (EUR) 82
Table 23 Identification of and contact details for the relevant authorities and bodies 89
Table 24 Timetable of contract delivery 100
Table 25 Identification of applicable ex-ante conditionalities and assessment of their fulfilment 107
Table 26 Actions to be undertaken to fulfil applicable general ex-ante conditionalities 125
Table 27 Members of the Steering Committee for the preparation of OPTA 2014 - 2020 135
Table 28 Conclusions of ex-ante evaluation (Annex 1) 137
Table 29 Evaluations and analyses (Annex 2) 141

Odstraněno: 59
Odstraněno: 62
Odstraněno: 64
Odstraněno: 67
Odstraněno: 70
Odstraněno: 71
Odstraněno: 71
Odstraněno: 71
Odstraněno: 73
Odstraněno: 80
Odstraněno: 81
Odstraněno: 82
Odstraněno: 83
Odstraněno: 90
Odstraněno: 101
Odstraněno: 108
Odstraněno: 126
Odstraněno: 136
Odstraněno: 138
Odstraněno: 142