

## Programming of the EU Structural Assistance for 2014–2020: a Search for Efficiency

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*2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework and its legislative package are being drafted in the light of economic recession, when the EU assistance and its financial instruments in particular become sole or one of a few stable inflows to finance national initiatives. This environment strongly influences overall aim and scope of the redistributive assistance and the attempts to use it as efficient as it may be. The texts of Draft Regulations reflect the tendency by elaboration of a number of tools that should lead to better performance and effectiveness. However, the lengthy discussions concerning the text of the aforementioned Regulations indicate that different actors conceive efficiency and tools how it can be achieved by using the EU funding differently. The way how a Member State (MS) approaches the efficient use of the funding is another and it will be reflected in the Partnership Agreement and Operational Programme(s), which shall be accorded with the European Commission in advance to the start of use of the EU funds.*

*The aim of the article is to identify the potential of the tools that contribute to the efficiency and are used/ proposed to use in the EU funds' planning process. Firstly, it is identified, which tools are proposed to be used by the EU by revising the novelties introduced in the Draft Regulations, and which are planned to be implemented in the process of planning the EU assistance for the years 2014-2020 in Lithuania. Secondly, the tools are grouped into separate clusters that distinguish by a different level of a potential to be implemented. The article discusses the potential of instruments of multi-sectorial and converging intervention fields, result oriented cooperation, tools related to performance review and new forms of the initiatives that integrate and supplement the investments result, which are proposed by the EU co-legislators and result oriented cooperation, usability of the results, result and change orientation in monitoring, diversification of sources for national co-financing and consolidation of subsidiarity and regional development, which are used by the MS.*

**Keywords:** *Programming of the EU structural assistance, 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, the EU Cohesion policy, financial instruments, Reform of the Cohesion Policy.*

### Introduction

On 7-8 February 2013 the Council of the European Union agreed on Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 (MFF), however the negotiations within the institutions of the EU about its details lasted for another 5 months<sup>1</sup>. The details of clauses of the Draft Regulations that effect main principles of the absorption of the EU Funds, which shall be open from 1 January 2014, are still being negotiated in the frames of Trilogues between the Council and the European Parliament. Together with the Presidency of the Council in July – December 2013, Lithuania took over the finalisation of negotiations on the Cohesion Policy legislative package<sup>2</sup> and its entry into force. Lithuania is concerned with the final result not only because of the Presidency, but also as the recipient country, where the EU structural assistance magnifies annual growth of GDP by approx. 1,5 per cent<sup>3</sup>.

The negotiations concerning MFF and Cohesion Policy in particular are distinct as for the first time the Regulation, which lays down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion fund (CF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), altogether called as European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds, is being drafted and adopted by two co-legislators: the Council and the European Parliament<sup>4</sup>. Therefore the establishment of the instruments that implement the Cohesion Policy in 2014-2020 have been refreshed by new and very active actor. Secondly, the negotiations are held during the ongoing economic recession and Euro-zone crisis, which strongly influences overall aim and scope of the redistributive assistance and the attempts to use it as efficient as it may be.

However, the lengthy discussions concerning the text of the aforementioned Regulations indicate that different actors conceive efficiency and tools how it can be achieved

<sup>1</sup> The breakthrough was reached on 27 June 2013, when the Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the President of the European Parliament settled the agreement on the next Multi-annual Financial Framework for 2014-2020. The formal conclusion of this political agreement between the Council and the European Parliament is said to be formalised as soon as possible.

<sup>2</sup> In the frames of negotiations on Cohesion Policy legislative package (2014-2020), Lithuanian presidency aims to finalise pending issues in the Common Provision Regulation for ESI funds concerning ex-ante conditionalities, financial management, financial issues, performance reserve and macroeconomic conditionalities.

<sup>3</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos finansu ministerija, 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon, the co-decision procedure becomes the ordinary legislative procedure of the European Union (EU) (Article 294 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU). This procedure gives the European Parliament the power to adopt instruments jointly with the Council. It becomes co-legislator, on an equal footing with the Council, except in the cases provided for in the Treaties where the procedures regarding consultation and approval apply.

by using the EU funding differently. The way how a Member State (MS) approaches the efficient use of the funding is another and it will be reflected in the Partnership Agreement and Operational Programme(s), which shall be accorded with the European Commission in advance to the start of use of the EU funds.

The problem of this article is the tools that are used in the planning process in order to improve the efficiency: which ones are used by the European Union institutions (presuming that the Draft Regulations reflect a common view of the European co-legislators<sup>5</sup>), which ones - by a MS, and their compatibility. The aim of the article is to identify the potential of the tools that contribute to the efficiency and are used/ proposed to use in the EU funds' planning process. In order to achieve this aim, the study will answer two questions. Firstly, it will be identified, which tools are proposed to be used by the EU by revising the novelties introduced in the Draft Regulations, and which ones are planned to be implemented in the process of planning the EU assistance for the years 2014-2020 in Lithuania. Secondly, the tools shall be grouped into separate clusters that distinguish by a different level of a potential to be implemented: tools that are supported by both actors and tools that are supported by one of the actors.

The object of the study is changes proposed in the principles of the planning of the financial instruments of the Cohesion Policy.

The implementation of the EU redistributive policies is being analysed by a number of researchers in Lithuania<sup>6</sup> and abroad<sup>7</sup>. The effects of the EU regional politics in various aspects and levels are also regularly evaluated by the independent analysts hired by national government institutions<sup>8</sup>. However, this study is pilot in Lithuanian discourse as it focuses on the implementation of the newly introduced programming principles of the ESI Assistance in the years 2014-2020 in a national level and fills this gap of the researches that approach the reforms of the EU redistributive policies.

The study is performed mainly by using the qualitative methods, in particular the analysis of the primary sources: Drafts of the Regulations<sup>9</sup> and relevant guidance fiches prepared by the European Commission, Drafts of the Partnership Agreement and Operational Programme, prepared by relevant Lithuanian institutions<sup>10</sup>, Evaluation Reports as secondary sources and analytical studies on the reforms of the EU Cohesion Policy.

### **Approach of the EU Institutions**

In the stage of planning of the EU redistributive policy, the EU institutions use a number of instruments that may contribute to better efficiency; nevertheless, this study

focuses on the tools introduced in the Drafts of the new EU legislative package, which follows every new MFF, due to their institutional and imperative character.

The main issues concerning the EU structural Funds in the years 2014-2020 shall be consolidated in the Common Provisions Regulation, the Regulations for a particular Fund and detailed in relevant guidance fiches, prepared by the European Commission. This time, the Common Provisions Regulation regulates the main principals of the planning and implementation for 5 so called ESI funds: ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and EMFF. Comparing to the EU legislative packages for earlier MFF<sup>11</sup>, coverage of the Regulation and therefore coordination increases to more Funds. Moreover, current Draft Regulations that establish principles of disbursement and administration of ESI Funds distinguish by unprecedented particularity where and how the investments must be done and monitored.

The following section focusses on the tools, which are proposed to be used by the EU co-legislators in the investments' planning process, by revising the novelties of the draft projects of the Regulations that may contribute to the improvement of the efficiency of the EU investments in 2014-2020.

### **Multi-sectorial and Converging Intervention Fields**

The Draft Regulations consolidate the initiative of the European co-legislators to identify the bottlenecks, where the investments by structural assistance should be oriented in order to achieve the aims of Europe 2020 Strategy. National Governments are oriented where to plan the EU investments by the thematic objectives that are short-listed in the Draft Regulations and a detail list of investment priorities that follow each thematic objective. The Draft Regulations identify 11 thematic objectives that distinguish by trans-sectorial and converging interventions' nature. The list is started by one of the Europe 2020 strategy aims – to promote research and development, and innovation and improving access to and quality of information and communication technologies. Further on the list – business support to SMEs and investments related to climate change and movement towards a low-carbon economy.

In order to safeguard that the priority themes are sufficiently financed, Fund specific Regulation<sup>12</sup> indicates criteria and financing proportions to achieve thematic concentration. In addition, specific allocations must be attributed to the Aid to Most Deprived People and Youth Employment Initiative from ESF and Connecting Europe Facility from CF. For example, ERDF Regulation specifies that the Fund can finance investments under all 11 thematic objectives (30 investments priorities), however in Lithuania, which is referred to as less developed region, 50 per cent of investments should be oriented to research, developments and innovations, access and quality

<sup>5</sup> The study is performed based on the text of the Amended Proposal for a Common Provisions Regulation of the European Commission dated 22 April, 2013 and its subsequent changes following the outcomes of the negotiations.

<sup>6</sup> The topics of the EU redistributive policies are analysed in the researches of K. Maniokas, R. Vilpisauskas, D. Trakelis, V. Nakrošis, H. Brožaitis and other analysts.

<sup>7</sup> The reforms and evaluation of the EU Cohesion Policy is analysed by J. Bachtler, F. Wislade, C. Mendez, A. Mairate and F. Barca and others.

<sup>8</sup> The regulations establish the obligation to the MS to perform independent evaluations in different aspects in parallel to the absorption of the EU funds.

<sup>9</sup> Here and further the definition "Draft Regulations" is used for Common Provisions Regulation and the Fund-Specific Regulations.

<sup>10</sup> Lithuanian institutions that are involved in the preparation to use the EU assistance in 2014-2020, their functions and responsibilities are established by the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No 1224 dated 25 August 2010.

<sup>11</sup> For the years 2007-2013, General provisions Regulation (European Council, 2006) covered 3 funds: ERDF, ESF and CF. For the years 2000-2006, the definition of Structural Funds was used for ERDF, ESF, the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF), Guidance Section, and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG) (European Council, 1999), while the provisions regarding the Cohesion Fund were established in a separate Regulation and it did not fall into the definition of Structural Funds (European Council, 1994).

information and communication technologies, support to the SMEs and climate change activities. Funding of the latter should be not less than 10 to 12 per cent. The share to aforementioned thematic objective increases to more developed regions.

Due to its compatibility with the Europe 2020 Strategy, the synergy of the sectors and the conformity of the investments throughout all the MS increase the probability that the aims of the aforementioned strategy can be achieved. Also, having in mind the diversity of the Member States, especially in their experience concerning the promotion of regional R&I capacity and centres of excellence, the integrated approach is plausible. However, as the draft of the Operational Programme and intervention logics is already laid down in the Regulations, it limits the possibilities of the MS Government to use the funding for some national-specific problems and therefore the MS may search the ways how to shift it. The support of the MS of such a tool also depends on the experience of the MS (were such multi-sectorial and converging investments already implemented or not) guidance documentation or alternative means (forums, unions, etc.), which is concurrent to better planning and implementation results.

### **Result Oriented Monitoring**

The architects of the Draft Regulations have strongly elaborated the system of result monitoring towards result orientation. This shift is led by establishing pre-requisites, unifying the indicators and giving stress on qualitative reporting. Pre-requisites or so called ex-ante conditionalities are established in line with the EU intervention logics and indicate the strategic works, etc. that must be done before receiving the ESI funds or finalised in a justified terms. The ex-ante conditionalities that are mainly related with the abilities to pursue the macroeconomic balance and proven link of the ESI funding with growth impact are set in Common Provisions Regulation<sup>13</sup> and Fund-Specific Regulations.

Before 2014, the output and result indicators were formulated by the MS under the guidance of the European Commission. The European Commission collected unified information by using categories of interventions. As the categorisation was very broad and systematic monitoring of the performance was not performed, the possibilities to compare the scope and effect of investments in between the MS were limited.

Lithuanian legal acts<sup>14</sup> identified the cases when the funds were to be recovered if the established results are not achieved in the project level. However, at the level of the Operational Programme the value of the results to be achieved could have been easily changed under dully justification and the situation when they are not achieved was unlikely.

Since 2014, the Fund-Specific Regulations establish the title and measurement units of output and result indicators that can define more clearly how/ if the specific objectives are achieved. The aforementioned categorisation of

intervention has also been complemented and concerted with the logics of intervention<sup>15</sup>. The unification of indicators and detailed categorisation shall now contribute to more consistent comparison of their amount and cost effectiveness and evaluation of “value for money” in between the MS<sup>16</sup>.

The approach towards result oriented monitoring allows to shift from quantitative to qualitative analysis and to perform evaluation that is not confined to national data. Such orientation is beneficial to both sides – the EU institutions and the MS. However, as long as the quality of reporting rests on the MS and it is not clear still, how the outcomes of such comparisons with other MS could affect the funding in the run of the programming period, the effect of unification of indicators is under question. It could be engaged to work for better efficiency, by introducing the encouraging measures from the level of the EU institutions, which would be directly linked to better performance of the MS, and effective long-term maintenance from the national Government level to a successful project promoter.

### **Competition vs. Cooperation**

Though the competition between different MS during the process of the absorption of the EU funds is not apparent, the Draft Regulations implement new mechanism, which can promote the competition between different sectors within a MS. This mechanism is called a performance reserve and refers to a proportion<sup>17</sup> of the total assistance to the MS, which shall be disbursed only to well performing priorities. The operational programme designates the milestones (eligible expenditures paid out and output indicators) to each priority, which should be attained till December 2018. In 2019, after the evaluation of the performance of the priorities, European Commission shall adopt a decision, which shall indicate the well performing priorities, following which the national Government shall decide how to disburse the performance reserve to the successful ones.

In this aspect, the Intermediate bodies in the MS are induced to cooperate while programming the multi-sector-oriented investments and implement them coherently and at the same time – to compete with the Intermediate bodies, which implement other priority activities, hoping to take over their performance reserve in case they are not successful.

As this is a new tool, it is difficult to predict its outcomes, having in mind that competition is always where investments are allocated. It is always more favourable for the national Government to reallocate funding in those sectors, which perform better, especially at the end of the programming period, than in those, where absorption of funds is low and its burst is unpredictable. However, the

<sup>15</sup> European Commission, 2013c.

<sup>16</sup> The comparison was being done up to date, but it was not fully reliable and available in all the sectors and MS, as the intervention fields were too diverse, the indicators very different and put not in relative but in absolute values. E.g. A MS reports its achievement of the indicator „The number of schools renovated“. The value of the indicator can be used for the comparison only knowing, what is the scope of renovation, what part of all the schools does these renovated schools constitute, what part of them are public/ private. Usually, such details are not directly available.

<sup>17</sup> In August 2013, when the article was finalised, the section of the Common Provisions Regulation concerning performance reserve and its allocation procedures was not yet finalised and the value of the final proportion is still under question.

<sup>13</sup> Art. 21, Common Provisions Regulation.

<sup>14</sup> The cases of the recovery are established by the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No 1443 dated 19 December 2007, the procedures of the recovery are detailed by Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania No 590 dated 30 May, 2005.

reallocation of performance reserve would be very visible politically and loss of it would be very awkward to the leaders of the unsuccessful Intermediate Body. As the performance review shall not have any effect on total allocation in the MS, the performance review in 2019 could be a painless and reasonable moment to review the mid-term results, priorities and how the predicted changes are attained at the national level. In summary, the usage of this tool is indifferent to the MS, but at the same time it can inure to benefits of internal policies of the national Government.

### **New Initiatives to Integrate and Supplement the Investments**

The Draft Regulations reflect a holistic view to supplementation of the investments (intervention logics) in different levels of planning of the assistance. First of all, the Partnership agreement is supposed to display the integrated approach, how the investments from the ESI (ERDF, ESF, CF, EARDF and EMFF) funds are accorded. Secondly, the thematic objectives and investment priorities are formulated in such a way that the investments in many cases cover more than one sector. Thirdly, the operational programme indicates the intended change and its numeric value by mid-term and final value of the output and result indicators. In addition, the Draft Regulations present new localised and integrated instruments – Community-led Local Development and Integrated Territorial Investments<sup>18</sup>. The aim of the new instruments is to promote a bottom - up dialogue and strategic approach, how the investments can be concerted in a focused problematic area. These novelties as well as financial instruments are promoted by increasing the intensity of the assistance to the priority, where the whole of a priority axis is delivered through financial instruments, or through community-led local development, by 10 per cent<sup>19</sup>.

Moreover, the Draft Regulations allow financing the activity / project from more than one fund. This means that a project promoter is no longer obliged to segment its necessary investments according to the Fund-specific rules and communicate with a number of Intermediate Bodies in order to advance one object or purpose. This possibility would contribute to more friendly system to project promoters, but it is a challenge to the national administrative system, which is constructed following mono-Fund approach.

As the instruments that contribute to integration of the investments in the activity/project level are not elaborated in detail, comparing to other instruments, it is presumed that it is left to the MS to decide, how intensively to use it, and its success shall strongly depend on the competence and experience of the potential project promoters.

### **Approach of the National Programmers**

2014-2020 MFF and its legislative package are being drafted in the light of economic halt, when the EU assistance and its instruments of the Cohesion policy in

particular become sole or one of a few stable inflows to finance national initiatives. The texts of Draft Regulations reflect this tendency by elaboration of a number of tools that should lead to better performance and effectiveness. The tools like multisectorialism of the interventions, performance review and its reserve, result orientated monitoring – all of them could contribute to the search of the “value for money” and reflect the approach of the EU co-legislators towards pursue for a change. Though they are the prerequisites from the European Commission and the European Parliament, the other part of job is done by the MS, which is to decide what the strategic changes to be invested in are and how the achieved results will be used in order to maintain and use them for further development of the state.

This section of the article elaborates on the instruments that are used by the national programmers in the process of the planning the EU assistance that contribute to the issue of efficiency of the use of the EU assistance.

### **Result Oriented Cooperation**

The first section of the article stressed the issue and obligations that follow multisectors-oriented investments. As the EU Institutions made their work by prioritising the possible investments, it is up to national Government to find its way, how to organise different independent agencies to form the policy of investments together in order to achieve a synergy.

Firstly, before the MFF and its legal package have been drafted, Lithuanian Government has approved a national long-term development strategy “Lithuania 2030”. The strategy envisages value-based priorities and most important initiatives of multisectorial character that should have been reflected in strategic planning documents. Secondly, “Lithuania 2030” was operationalized and implemented via a single program - National Development Program as a medium-term planning document for the years 2014-2020. The aforementioned was already directly linked with the thematic objectives and proposed an integrated approach to the investments.

The Draft Operational Program proceeds further and proposes that 7 out of 10 priorities (excl. technical assistance) or 70 per cent of the priorities are implemented by more than one institution. In 2007-2013, it was respectively 5 out of 12 or 42 per cent of the priorities.

The attempts to coordinate the investments between the sectors have strengthened, this especially should concern the investments under the thematic objectives “Strengthening research, technological development and innovation”, “Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises” and “Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility”. The aforementioned investments could fall under the competencies of executive powers in the sectors of economy, education and social security and labour. However, as the practice shows, the short-term aims of each actor are different; therefore their cooperation is rather aggravated.

One of the poor examples in Lithuania could be science and/or technology parks in the Valleys, the establishment and basic infrastructure of which, were supported by the

<sup>18</sup> The attention to territorial development is strengthened by creating a new platform for urban areas and up-dating cross-cutting issues (Mendez, Wishlade, Bachtler, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> European Commission, 2012a, Art. 110.5.

ERDF in 2007-2013<sup>20</sup>. One of the aims of such projects was to bring together science and business, providing premises and technological infrastructure. Now, in the process of the programming of the new financial perspective, it was proposed to establish new valleys, this time they would be within free economic zones, the owner would be different, but the aim would remain the same. The integration in 2007-2013 was not realised? Does the problem concerns the culture and values of cooperation, ownership or better involvement in discussion on long-term national aims? The independent evaluators point to issue of many actors and lack of common understanding: "The initial idea that the valleys should be centres of the business and science collaboration has passed three levels of bureaucracy (university internal bureaucracy in shaping the vision of valleys, the Structural Funds administration bureaucracy in allocating the funding for valleys and approving projects, public procurement bureaucracy in the implementation of specific activities) and is distorted, amended with unnecessary procedures, administrative mechanisms, a fight for spheres of influence is at each level, so the initial purpose is 'forgot' in the end user (business) benefit phase"<sup>21</sup>.

As the practice shows, the coordination of the investments already in the programming phase is of utmost importance if it envisages the maintenance issues, further employment and usage of the established/ ameliorated object or activity. Also it ensures that the problem, which is being solved with the EU funds' assistance shall be discussed from the different perspectives and that the financial assistance from different sources will be even, furthermore, it will not be double financed from different sources and striving for different aims<sup>22</sup>.

The activities to achieve cooperation and make it result (change) oriented are compatible with the tool, which is proposed by the EU institutions, i.e. multisectorial and converging intervention fields. It is likely that the EU institutions could be a catalyst or even a moderator in case the coordination in the national level is not in place. However, in order to achieve better efficiency and synergy from the coordination, it should be well presided, controlled and monitored through specific national institutions.

### **Usability of the Results**

Usability of the results is an integrate part of the approach of the national institutions that the EU funds must be used as a mean to achieve a change, which can be further elaborated, i.e. can be useful not only for project promoter, but also for broader environment. In many cases it means that the objective point should be made attractive to consume or usable, notwithstanding which sector – public or business – is the owner.

Though the commercialisation of the results is rather an issue for the project promoters or beneficiaries, it is also a

concern for national programmers – shall the planned investments attract the "clientele", which is potential to claim for patents, maintain the start-up, create the long-term workplace or attract further investments in a field?

The low commercialisation of the results, achieved with the intervention of the EU funds, is stressed by the European Commission, especially when this concerns the partnership between Business and Research and Innovation sectors<sup>23</sup>. The independent evaluators take the second part and highlights that cooperation between business and science and higher education institutions is unsatisfactory. Following the results of the survey of the project promoters, one of the main reasons behind poor relations between business and science sectors is the lack of free funds for the purchase of external R&D services, also both business and science have insufficient information about each other's needs and possibilities, and quite often likely benefits of co-operation are hardly understood, in some cases it is even alleged that business is not interested in any co-operation at all<sup>24</sup>.

However, the issue of commercialisation must be seen more widely and be applied also in the sectors of environment, employment and labour mobility, social inclusion and lifelong learning. After application of the wider approach, the commercialisation would contribute to the effective elaboration of achieved results for further changes. The instrument of result usability is related to the achievement of the result indicators. The EU institutions are involved in monitoring of their implementation, but the technics, how it is achieved and how wide the commercialisation is applied, is left for the institutions of the national level. Therefore the successful implementation of this instrument is under MS concern. The involvement of the European Commission may be intensified if the link between commercialisation and its contribution to reinforce the synergy of the priority sectors along the thematic objectives was proven.

### **Result and Change Orientation in Monitoring**

In the programming period of 2007-2013, the politicians and media seemed to be interested in how much of the funds have been allocated and absorbed, also how Lithuania is ranked comparing the financial data to the other MS. The monitoring corresponded to the tendency: the attention was paid to financial performance and its comparison between the institutions and economy sectors.

Certainly, the financial data are more tangible, especially in the start of the programming period, as they show the level of preparedness of the MS/ sectors to use the funds and are friendlier for comparison. Further on, especially when the assistance is oriented towards the changes, the reporting should pass towards output and results indicators.

The European Commission guidance documents stress the issue of change – what shall be different after the absorption of the EU funds from the current situation, what

<sup>20</sup> The hard – part of the activities are funded by Operational Programme No 2 Priority No 1 "Research and development for competitiveness and growth of the economy", soft parts – by Operational Programme No 1 Priority No 3 „Strengthening the researchers abilities“.

<sup>21</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos ukiu ministerija, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Independent evaluators have identified four main sectors, where the risk of double financing is the biggest: R&D, public administration, education and technical assistance (Lietuvos Respublikos finansu ministerija, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> The Position of the Commission Services on the Development of Partnership Agreement and Programmes in LITHUANIA for the Period 2014-2020, p. 5 states that "The innovation system is characterised by weak market orientation of research, insufficient marketing and commercialisation of R&I results, dispersed investment, uncompetitive funding and low participation of research centres and enterprises in the international market."

<sup>24</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos ukiu ministerija, 2011.

change shall be directly linked with the use of the EU assistance. The change in attitude, what is important in monitoring, implies the change in implementation. Project promoter, who intends to use all the funds allocated to his project and project promoter, who wants to increase the export of his enterprise may take different decisions.

Therefore it is likely, that the attention to better performance and indicators, also ability to compare the indicators throughout all the MS, with the support and requirements of the EC would naturally graduate current national style of monitoring towards results and change reporting.

### **Diversification of Sources for National Co-Financing**

In Lithuania, the EU interventions can be co-financed from the State budget, public and private funds, the source of co-financing depends on the financial status and organisation of the project promoter and Priority Measures of the Operational Programme. Depending on the financial status of the MS, the national co-financing from the State budget influences the deficit and lending policy of the State.

In the light of the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (also known as the "fiscal compact"<sup>25</sup>) and outcomes of the joining the euro area<sup>26</sup>, the decisions regarding minimisation of State budget share in national co-financing would strongly contribute to the reduction of the deficit of national budget. As the type of co-financing is strongly linked with the project promoter, its financial abilities and possibilities to respond to the call of proposals, it must be discussed and assessed already in planning phase.

Converging investment fields could help as one Operational Programme priority would merge project promoters from different sectors and therefore having different abilities to attract own funds for co-financing. The average would lead to the required level of co-financing and minimise the financial burden to the MS State Budget.

The diversification of the national co-financing is though a concern of the national government only and the EU institutions are likely to be neutral and opt out of discussions.

### **Consolidation of Subsidiarity and Regional Development**

According to the National Development Plan<sup>27</sup>, the share of allocations, addressed to Regional Development, increases to almost 20 per cent, comparing to 10,6 per cent<sup>28</sup>, redistributed in the years 2007-2013. The coordinator of the national regional policy in Lithuania is

the Ministry of Internal Affairs, though a part of the assistance is redistributed by sectorial ministries. Therefore, the independence of the regions in planning the assistance is limited by investment headings and amounts ex-ante approved by other institutions<sup>29</sup>. The need for partnership between the coordinator and other Implementing institutions is reinforced by the increased share of financial assistance that shall be attributed to regional development, but also by the integrity of the investments and new types of projects (activities) that were discussed in the first section.

Additionally, in the phase of planning the principles that would safeguard the subsidiarity in the process of administration are being updated, i.e. the project would not only be implemented in the regions, but the decisions concerning the investment headings and selection of the projects would be also made in a regional level.

The EU institutions declare the principles of subsidiarity and increase the financial share of the assistance to support the specific regions, however the organisation and quality of the maintenance of the subsidiarity in the national regions is left to the competence of the MS.

### **Conclusions**

The article has discussed the following instruments that are proposed by the European co-legislators to be used in the process of planning the EU assistance for the years 2014-2020 and that contribute to better efficiency: multi-sectorial and converging intervention fields, result oriented monitoring, competition combined with the cooperation (performance review) and new forms of the initiative that integrate and supplement the investments. The National programmers use a different approach how efficiency can be achieved and use the following instruments in the planning process: result oriented cooperation, usability of the results, result and change orientation in monitoring, diversification of sources for national co-financing and consolidation of subsidiarity and regional development.

The tools were grouped into three clusters. The first comprises of the instruments that are of common interest to both actors – the EU co-legislators and the MS – and have the highest potential to be implemented while planning the EU assistance. Result oriented cooperation, result oriented monitoring (in the EU approach) or result and change orientation in monitoring (in the MS approach), new forms of the initiatives that integrate and supplement the investments fall into the first cluster.

The second cluster comprises of the variables that belong to the interest of the EU, but the MS shall be induced to incorporate them into the operational programme, otherwise the negotiations regarding the operational programme could be prolonged and the start of the EU funds absorption might be aggravated. Instrument related to performance review belongs to this cluster. Multi-sectorial and converging intervention fields and usability of the results are treated as marginal as the expectations and demands of the MS and the EU do not correspond. The potential of these tools can be increased

<sup>25</sup> Though Lithuania does not belong to euro area and the treaty is not legally binding, the state politicians (President D. Grybauskaitė, Prime Minister A. Butkevicius, Minister of Finance R. Sadzius) claim to follow the steps indicated in order to strengthen the fiscal stability.

<sup>26</sup> Lithuanian Government has resumed the National Changeover Plan in 26 June 2013 and aims to adopt euro in 2015.

<sup>27</sup> The National Development Plan establishes, consolidates the main provisions and tasks implementing the long-term State's priorities, which are established in Lithuanian Development Strategy "Lithuania 2030" and the EU strategy "Europe 2020", and determine proportions of the EU financial assistance attributed to the aforementioned tasks.

<sup>28</sup> According to the data provided in the Appendixes of the Operational Programmes, approved by the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania.

<sup>29</sup> Lietuvos Respublikos vidaus reikalų ministerija, 2010.

by successful communication between the actors or its combination with the instruments from the first cluster.

The third cluster consists of the tools of the lowest potential as they are maintained only by the MS and the

EU institutions leave aside their planning. This concerns the instruments like diversification of sources for national co-financing and consolidation of subsidiarity and regional development.

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#### **ES struktūrinės paramos 2014–2020 m. programavimas: efektyvumo paieškos**

Santrauka

2014-2020 m. Daugiametė finansinė perspektyva ir jai įgyvendinti rengiamas teisės aktų paketas sudaromi Europos Sąjungos valstybėms narėms tvarkantis su ekonominės krizės padariniais, kai daliai valstybių ES persikirstomųjų politikų finansiniai instrumentai lieka vieninteliu ar vienu iš nedaugelio prieinamų šaltinių finansuoti nacionalines investicijas. Tokios aplinkybės stipriai įtakoja persikirstomųjų politikų apimtį ir bendruosius tikslus, ir įpareigoja panaudoti ES finansinę paramą kuo efektyviau. Reglamentų projektai, nustatantys bendrąsias nuostatas dėl Europos regioninės plėtros fondo, Europos socialinio fondo, Sanglaudos fondo, Europos žemės ūkio fondo kaimo plėtrai ir Europos jūrų reikalų ir žuvininkystės fondo, kartu sudarančius Europos struktūrinių ir investicinių fondus, ir konkretaus fondo įgyvendinimo taisykles, atspindi šią tendenciją ir įtvirtina eilę instrumentų, kurie turėtų prisidėti, gerinant veiklos rezultatus ir siekiant efektyvumo. Tikimasi, kad siūloma intervencijų logika, veiklos peržiūra ir jos rezervas, sustiprinta orientacija į rezultatus gali padidinti ES struktūrinės paramos vertę ir labiau prisidėti, siekiant pokyčio tiek nacionaliniu, tiek ES lygiu. Tačiau, užsitęsusių diskusijų dėl reglamentų projektų rodo, kad skirtingos institucijos skirtingai suvokia, kaip būtų galima didinti ES paramos panaudojimo efektyvumą. Valstybės narės savo požiūrį, kaip efektyviausiai naudoti ES fondų paramą aprašys Partnerystės sutartyje ir Veiksmų programoje (-se), kurios bus derinamos su Europos Komisija, ir šis taip pat nebūtinai sutaps su ES institucijų siūlymais. Šio darbo problema yra planuojant ES paramą ir rengiant pagrindinius programavimo dokumentus ES institucijų (daroma prielaida, kad Reglamentų projektai atspindį bendrą ES institucijų poziciją) ir valstybės narės naudojamos priemonės, kuriomis siekiama sustiprinti ES lėšų panaudojimo efektyvumą, ir jų suderinamumas. Darbo tikslas yra įvertinti siūlomų naudoti / naudojamų priemonių potencialą. Siekiant šio tikslo, pirmiausia, nustatyta, kokias priemones siūlo naudoti ES, įvertinus Reglamentų projektų naujoves, ir kokias naudoja nacionalinės institucijos, rengdamos pagrindinius ES fondų lėšų 2014-2020 m. programavimo dokumentus. Antra, priemonės yra sugrupuojamos į grupes pagal jų potencialą: priemonės, kurių įgyvendinimą remia abi pusės, ir priemonės, kurių įgyvendinimu yra suinteresuota tik viena iš pusių.

ES persikirstomųjų politikų įgyvendinimą nagrinėja eilė tyrinėtojų tiek Lietuvoje (K. Maniokas, R. Vilpišauskas, D. Trakelis, V. Nakrošis, H. Brožaitis), tiek užsienyje (Bachtler, F. Wishlade, C. Mendez, A. Mairate, F. Barca ir kiti). ES regioninės politikos poveikį skirtingais pjuvais ir lygmenimis, įgyvendinant ES reglamentų nuostatas, analizuoja ES paramą administruojančios ministerijos, įsigydamos nepriklausomų vertintojų paslaugas. Tačiau Lietuvoje tai pirma studija, kurioje nagrinėjamas naujų principų, kurie bus taikomi 2014-2020 m. Europos struktūrinių ir investicinių fondų paramai programuoti, efektyvumas nacionaliniu lygmeniu, taip papildant minėtus tyrimus, nagrinėjančius ES persikirstomųjų politikų reformas.

Analizuojant dokumentus, remtasi kokybiniais tyrimo metodais. Atlikta pirminių šaltinių – ES reglamentų ir Europos Komisijos parengtų gairių projektų, ir antrinių šaltinių – vertinimo ataskaitų analizė, taip pat remtasi tyrinėtojų, nagrinėjančių ES Sanglaudos politikos reformas, darbais.

Darbą sudaro dvi dalys. Pirmojoje dalyje yra apžvelgiami Sanglaudos politiką įgyvendinančių Europos struktūrinių ir investicinių fondų planavimą ir įgyvendinimą reglamentuojančiuose ES reglamentų projektuose nustatyti nauji su paramos planavimu susiję ir efektyvumą didinantys instrumentai: daugiasektorinių intervencijų logika, veiklos peržiūra ir veiklos rezervas, orientaciją į rezultatą ir naujos integruotos teritorinės iniciatyvos ir aptariamą jų efektyvumas valstybės narės požiūriu. Antroje dalyje nagrinėjamos nacionaliniuose ES fondų paramą apibrėžiančiuose dokumentuose naudojamos priemonės paramos panaudojimo efektyvumui didinti: į rezultatą orientuotas institucijų bendradarbiavimas, rezultatų panaudojamumas, gilesnė regioninė plėtra ir subsidiarumo principo taikymas ir kitų nei valstybės biudžeto lėšų į nacionalinį bendrąjį finansavimą pritraukimas.

Pirmojoje darbo dalyje, nagrinėjant Europos Parlamento ir Europos Tarybos reglamentų pasiūlymus, pastebimas intervencijų logikos arba kitaip investicijų integravimas įvairiais lygmenimis. Pirmiausia, tematiniai tikslai ir investiciniai projektai formuluojami taip, kad investicijos ir siekiami pokyčiai daugeliu atveju tiesiogiai veikia ne vieną sritį. Tematiniai tikslai suformuluoti taip, kad ES struktūrinė parama būtų orientuota pasiekti Europos 2020 strategijos tikslus, pirmiausia, siekiant apčiuopiamų rezultatų tyrimų, plėtros ir inovacijų srityje, SVV konkurencingumo, taip pat siekiant energijos efektyvumo ir prisitaikymo prie klimato kaitos. Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad jau reglamentuose pateikiama labai detalios daugiasektorinės intervencijų sritys, valstybės narės turi mažiau galimybių finansavimą skirti savo nacionalinėms, specifinėms problemoms. Taip pat, turint omenyje skirtingą valstybių narių patirtį, derinant skirtingų sektorių inovacijas, integruoto požiūrio rezultatai gali skirtis tarp šalių ir, siekiant efektyvumo, siūlytina nuolat stebėti

įgyvendinimo procesą, naudojant ir alternatyvias priemones (gaires, koordinacinių komitetų susitikimus ir pan.). Antra, derinamos investicijos, įgyvendinamos skirtingų fondų lėšomis. Derinimas vyksta, rengiant Partnerystės sutartį, prieš pereinant į konkretaus fondo/ fondų veiksmų programos rengimo etapą. Trečia, reglamentas, nustatantis konkretaus fondo įgyvendinimo taisykles, taip pat nustato siektinų rezultatų ir jų matavimo reikšmių sąrašą. Tokiu būdu yra tarp valstybių narių suvienodinami bendrieji indikatoriai ir tuo pačiu visiems nustatoma, kokių pokyčių turi būti siekiama.

Rodiklių suvienodinimas prisideda prie kelių tikslų. Iš vienos pusės tai pagerins galimybes nuosekliai ir efektyviau lyginti rodiklių pasiekimo lygį ir kainą tarp valstybių narių, iš kitos pusės tai įpareigos valstybę narę tobulinti priežiūrą ir atsiskaitymą EK. Tačiau kol nėra aišku, kaip bus panaudojami rezultatų kainos lyginimo tarp valstybių narių išvados, šio suvienodinimo reikšmė prisidės prie didesnio skaidrumo, bet įtaka didesniai efektyvumui yra abejotina. Šią įtaką galėtų sustiprinti ES institucijų taikomos skatinamosios priemonės, kurios būtų tiesiogiai susijusios su sėkmingesne už kitas valstybės narės veikla, siekiant efekto ar rezultato rodiklių, arba nacionalinės vyriausybės taikomos priemonės, susijusios su projekto vykdytojo sėkminga veikla, išlaikant ar panaudojant gautus rezultatus jau po projekto pabaigos.

Konkurencijai tarp sektorių valstybėje narėje paskatinti, reglamentai siūlo naują instrumentą – veiklos peržiūrą ir nuo jos rezultatų priklausanti veiklos rezervo paskirstymo mechanizmą. Tai yra naujas įrankis, dėl to sudėtinga numatyti jo efektyvumą, juolab, kad konkurencija neišvengiama ten, kur yra skirstomos lėšos. Nacionalinei vyriausybei yra lengviau paaiškinti lėšų perskirstymą sektoriams, kurie lėšas panaudoja geriau, ypač programavimo laikotarpio pabaigoje, nei jas skirti tiems, kurie lėšas panaudoja lėčiau ir jų proveržis sunkiai prognozuojamas. Tačiau veiklos rezervo praradimas būtų labai matomas ir politiškai nenaudingas kiekvienai įgyvendinamajai institucijai. Tuo pat metu, kadangi veiklos rezervo perskirstymas neįtakoja bendros šaliai skirtos paramos dydžio, veiklos peržiūra 2019 m. gali būti patogi proga įvertinti tarpinius rezultatus, prioritetus ir tai, kaip nacionaliniu lygmeniu siekiama užsibrėžtų pokyčių.

Antroje darbo dalyje, apžvelgus nacionalinį ES paramos planavimo procesą, nustatytos nacionalinių programuotojų taikomos priemonės, siekiant padidinti ES fondų paramos efektyvumą. Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad ES institucijos pabrėžia poreikį intervencijas derinti ir integruoti tarpusavyje, siekiant sinergijos, siekiama suaktyvinti koordinavimą tarp institucijų. Tikėtina, kad investicijų koordinavimas planavimo etape išspręstų rezultatų išlaikymo problemas, tolesnį sukurto/ pagerinto objekto ar veiklos panaudojimą. Taip pat tai prisidėtų prie problemos detalaus aptarimo įvairiais požiūriais, finansavimas būtų tolygesnis, mažai to, būtų išvengiama tos pačios veiklos dvigubo finansavimo, siekiant skirtingų tikslų. Nuosavybės, tolesnio finansavimo po projekto pabaigos ir klientūros plėčia prasme klausimų būtina išspręsti planavimo etape, kitaip pasiektų rezultatų panaudojimas tolesnei šaliai plėtrai yra abejotinas.

Nuo rezultatų tolesnio panaudojimo problemos neatsietinas rezultatų panaudojamumo klausimas. Nors, atrodytų, tai – projektų vykdytojų ar naudos gavėjų reikalas, tai būtina apgalvoti jau programuojant paramą ir nustatant investicijų sritis, kadangi nuo to priklauso pasiektų rezultatų „įdarbinimas“ ir tolesnis panaudojimas strateginiams tikslams siekti. Taip pat rezultatų komercializavimas turėtų būti nagrinėjamas ne tik tyrimų ir inovacijų srityse, bet ir aplinkos, įdarbinimo ir darbo jėgos judumo, socialinės įtraukties ir mokymosi visą gyvenimą srityse.

Taip pat siūloma tobulinti paramos panaudojimo priežiūrą, ją perorientuojant nuo finansinių duomenų vertinimo į produktų ir rezultatų indikatorių stebėjimą. Tam sąlygos turi būti numatytos programavimo laikotarpiu ir jų keitimas turėtų būti atidžiai vertinamas. Atsižvelgiant į tai, kad Europos Komisija numato daugiau dėmesio skirti veiklos ir indikatorių pasiekimo kokybei, taip pat indikatorių lyginimui tarp valstybių narių, permainos stebėsenoje neišvengiamos.

Siekiant efektyviau suplanuoti ES struktūrinę paramą, atkreipiamas dėmesys į bendrojo finansavimo šaltinių diversifikavimą, pritraukiant daugiau privačių lėšų, ir subsidiarumo principo taikymo tobulinimas, paskirstant regioninei plėtrai padidėjusias ES paramos lėšas.

Darbo išvadose nustatyta, kad priemonės, susijusios su į rezultatą orientuotu institucijų bendradarbiavimu, rezultato ir pokyčio stebėsenai ir naujomis teritorinių investicijų iniciatyvomis, turi didžiausias galimybes būti įgyvendintos planavimo procese ir įtrauktos į programavimo dokumentus todėl, kad joms pritaria abi pusės – valstybė narė ir ES teisės aktų leidėjai. Priemonėmis, susijusiomis su veiklos peržiūra, bus įgyvendintos, nes tokia prievole nustatyta reglamentų projektuose, ir kitu atveju valstybei narei būtų apsunkintos galimybės laiku suderinti ir gauti veiksmų programą (-as) patvirtinti Europos Komisijos sprendimą ir sklandžiai pradėti ES fondų lėšų panaudojimo procesą. Daugiasektorių intervencijų logikos ir rezultatų panaudojamumo galimybės yra neapibrėžtos, kadangi ES institucijos ir valstybė narė šių priemonių turinį supranta skirtingai. Potencialą galima pakelti, padidinus bendravimą tarp institucijų šiais klausimais arba suderinus minėtas priemones su priemonėmis iš pirmosios, didžiausias galimybes turinčiomis priemonėmis. Pačios prasčiausios galimybės priskirtos gilesnės regioninės plėtros ir subsidiarumo principo taikymo ir kitų nei valstybės biudžeto lėšų į nacionalinį bendrąjį finansavimą pritraukimo priemonėms. Kadangi tai – valstybės narės kompetencija, ES institucijos neturėtų apskritai kištis į jų įgyvendinimą.

Raktažodžiai: *ES fondų paramos programavimas, 2014-2020 m. daugiametė finansinė perspektyva, ES Sanglaudos politika, finansiniai instrumentai, Sanglaudos politikos reforma.*

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