
STUDY ON THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMS IN ROMANIA DURING 2007-2014

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Abstract: The article is based on a study of the structural funds used in Romania during 2007-2014. The analysis examines all the programs carried out in the mentioned period in Romania. The study focuses on several indicators personally elaborated, which are meant to reveal the major differences between the operational programs and in each operational program by itself by comparing the ratios resulted. This research can be considered as an objective summarized examination of the first stage of EU funding in Romania.

Key words: EU funding, structural instruments, absorption, pre-financing, indicators, state budget contribution

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Introduction

Although it was met with skepticism from some parties, Romania's adherence to the European Union marked an important step in supporting the socio-economic transition process which started after the revolution in 1989. Due to the fact that during 2001-2003 Romania registered a GDP rate per capita under 40% comparing to the European Union's average GDP per capita, it has been decided that Romania benefits from a 3.79% financing from its GDP. This financing should be accessed and used through structural instruments. (Mosteanu T., Meral Ibraim)

Literature review/Theory/Calculation

The 2007-2014 stage of financing from the EU has ended but it is important to analyze the results obtained in order to see which were the strengths and weaknesses of this process of using structural funds in Romania. In this perspective we are going to analyze the ratio of the further indicators:

- Submitted projects/approved projects;
- Approved sum/requested sum;
- Ineligible expenses;
- Beneficiary contribution;
- EU contribution;

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- National Budget contribution;
 - Pre-financing;
 - Payments from the EU;
 - Payments from the National Budget.

At the core of structural funds, on a national level, there are two documents which govern the implementation of the financing instruments, namely, the National Development Plan for 2007-2014 and the National Strategic Reference Framework for the same period. The National Development Plan is represented by a document through which the national objectives and policies regarding development are correlated with the ones of the EU.

The National Strategic Reference Framework is meant to set the fields where intervention is needed in accordance with the National Development Plan. Also, in this document are mentioned the sums allocated by the EU in order to accomplish the set goals on a national level as well as on a European level.

Material and methods/research methodology

For this paper we analyzed the materials from the Ministry of European Funds which provided information regarding the projects situation from 2007-2014. The data was structured by program and year. From this data we extracted the necessary information for our research. The article's study case is based on several indicators personally elaborated which are meant to mirror the real situation of structural funding in Romania during 2007-2014. Also, we carried out a summarized literature review on the structural funding topic, concentrated on scientific articles.

Main text

The National Development Plan represents "*the multi-annual strategic planning and financial programming document. The NDP is developed in broad partnership, and it will be used to guide and boost Romania's social-economic development in line with EU Cohesion Policy.*" (Guvernul Romaniei, 2005)

In other words, the NDP's mission is to analyze the structural funds allocated to our country and elaborate the necessary objectives and national programs in order to use these types of funds. In this context, Romania has developed the following programs:

1. Regional Operational Program (ROP)
2. Sectorial Operational Program Increase of Economic Competitiveness (SOPIEC)
3. Operational Program Development of Human Resources (SOP DHR)
4. Sectorial Operational Program for Environment (SOP E)
5. Sectorial Operational Program for Transport (SOP T)
6. Operational Program Administrative Capacity Development (OP ACD)
7. Operational Program Technical Assistance (PO TA)

I. According to the Eurostat's classification NUTS II, Romania is split into 8 regions: region 1 – the North-East counties; region 2 – the South-East counties; region 3 – the South counties; region 4 – the South-West counties; region 5 – the West counties; region 6 – the North-West counties; region 7 – the Center counties; region 8 – the capital and adjacent county.

This classification was made according to the regions socio-economic development, from the less developed to the most developed.

The main objective of the ROP is to support a balanced economic growth for each of the regions by insuring the necessary infrastructure for the development of the business environment, social environment and human capital. (Ministerul dezvoltarii, lucrarilor publice si locuintelor, 2007)

The situation of the ROP projects for 2007-2014 is presented in the table 1.

Table 1. Situation of ROP projects 2007-2014

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of submitted projects	2,828	7,564	7,952	8,221	8,555	10,046
Total value of submitted projects (lei)	29,892,174,379	48,409,405,927	53,792,784,836	57,092,292,386	59,035,287,350	63,052,190,296
Number of approved projects	672	1,3	2,864	369	4,098	5,108
Total value of approved projects (lei)	6,771,351,067	13,652,748,074	22,454,084,388	27,791,801,153	32,134,201,539	36,350,538,188
EU financing	4,118,511,194	8,589,430,615	12,684,608,470	15,580,624,690	18,373,204,274	20,116,388,292
National Budget financing	518,492,132	1,238,018,832	1,817,412,260	2,272,699,439	2,821,279,269	3,082,996,662
Beneficiary's financing	292,465,312	705,543,419	1,314,498,803	1,720,620,261	2,118,546,920	2,439,232,103
Ineligible expenses	1,147,022,873	2,646,464,178	4,262,253,888	5,397,352,948	6,236,352,603	6,787,249,989
Total value of the projects (lei)	6,076,491,511	13,179,457,044	20,078,773,422	24,971,297,337	29,549,383,066	32,425,867,046
Pre-financing	561,836,444	1,638,020,123	2,233,033,777	2,361,939,830	2,455,356,869	2,509,851,798
Payments from the EU	85,646,453	745,178,987	1,812,132,405	3,439,877,914	5,627,582,309	7,623,821,251
Payments from the National Budget	16,419,157	142,295,375	378,303,907	688,748,876	1,095,507,968	1,460,147,783
Total of the payments (lei)	663,902,054	2,525,494,485	4,423,470,089	6,490,566,620	9,178,447,145	11,593,820,832

Source: Ministerul Fondurilor Europene, 2007-2014

We can observe from the table 2 that the ratio for the first indicator regarding the submitted projects over the approved projects was 31.91%, during the period 2007-2014, which is a very low index comparing to other European countries. We also registered a minimum of 4.49% in 2012 which is totally unacceptable. It is

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important to mention that the year 2012 was an election year and all activities were concentrated on the local and parliamentary elections.

Table 2. Indicators' ratio

Year	2007 -2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Submitted projects / approved projects	23,76	17,19	36,02	4,49	47,9	50,85	31,91
Approved sum / requested sum	22,65	28,2	41,74	48,68	54,43	57,65	44,7
Ineligible expenses	18,88	20,08	21,23	21,61	21,1	20,93	20,97
Beneficiary's contribution	4,81	5,35	6,55	6,89	7,17	7,52	6,8
EU's contribution	67,78	65,17	63,17	62,39	62,18	62,04	62,93
National Budget contribution	8,53	9,39	9,05	9,1	9,55	9,51	9,31
Pre-financing	84,63	64,86	50,48	36,39	26,75	21,65	33,72
Payments from the EU	12,9	29,51	40,97	53	61,31	65,76	55,44
Payments from the National Budget	2,47	5,63	8,55	10,61	11,94	12,59	10,84

Source: Author

We see a revival in the years 2013 and 2014, but this is too weak to improve the period's average. In respect to the total amount requested, it was approved by a percentage of 44.70% for the entire period, which leads to the conclusion that small projects were not approved. The percentage of the total ineligible costs of the project lies in a reasonable range of 18-22%, according to the size of the project. With an average of 6.80%, the beneficiary's contribution for the entire period varies from 4.81% in 2007 to 2009 and 7.52% in 2014. This percentage stimulates Romanian beneficiaries of grants because it implies reduced co-financing. In the ROP financing between 2007 and 2014 we find a non-refundable contribution of 62.04%, ranging from 67.78% to 62.93% multi annual average. This process aims to positively influence the massive use of EU grants. Although the national budget went through hard times due to the economic crisis still managed an average of 9.31% co-financing for the entire period of oscillations between 8.53% and 9.55%. A real support in projects in the mentioned period has been pre-financing with a total average of 33.72% , oscillating between 21.65% and 84.63%. The fact that one third of the funding for the projects was provided by pre-financing, this stimulated and encouraged business development projects funded by grants. Although it is located just over 50%, the percentage of EU contribution payments was an important step in the development of Romanian companies. The effort made by the state budget by allocating 10.84% had a significant beneficial effect on the use of EU funds in Romanian projects.

II. After 1989 private companies and enterprises were born. In a capitalist society the private sector represents a pylon in the country's economic development. The lack of funding, inexperienced planning and bad management have led to the downfall of many Romania SMEs. Moreover, the economic crisis in 2008 has

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shattered the foundation of many businesses. SOP IEC was elaborated in order to support the birth and growth of SMEs. This support meant making available the path to funding for development, innovation, research and sustainability. The situation of the SOP IEC projects for 2007-2014 is presented in the table 3.

Table 3. Situation of SOP IEC projects 2007-2014

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of submitted projects	5,304	7,667	11,15	15,184	15,82	17,088
Total value of submitted projects (lei)	29,382,497,423	56,306,927,287	68,393,277,854	76,645,623,712	85,190,663,043	90,098,043,180
Number of approved projects	1,236	2,161	3,315	3,664	6,521	824
Total value of approved projects (lei)	4,326,590,926	10,807,934,666	18,530,921,548	25,791,721,134	33,625,960,377	39,718,952,672
EU financing	1,752,513,147	3,291,958,736	4,720,358,796	6,480,186,200	10,714,470,102	12,979,396,526
National Budget financing	303,999,759	552,473,356	814,784,564	1,084,228,412	1,858,510,317	2,246,595,318
Beneficiary's financing	438,559,280	1,167,458,255	2,203,608,676	3,717,120,857	5,331,520,600	5,808,200,374
Ineligible expenses	446,825,568	1,104,351,639	2,419,059,525	3,696,642,015	5,579,001,628	6,327,122,555
Total value of the projects (lei)	2,941,897,754	6,116,241,986	10,157,811,560	14,978,177,484	23,483,502,647	27,361,314,773
Pre-financing	103,170,177	456,562,975	621,763,863	693,406,510	831,741,065	1,082,582,514
Payments from the EU	407,295,321	621,992,172	1,143,117,346	1,604,177,870	3,226,916,244	5,360,466,738
Payments from the National Budget	915,159	66,569,658	203,162,087	395,253,332	4,721,869,811	1,082,911,377
Total of the payments (lei)	511,380,657	1,145,124,805	1,968,043,297	2,692,837,712	4,721,869,811	7,525,960,629

Source: Ministerul Fondurilor Europene, 2007-2014

Table 4. Indicators' ratio

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Submitted projects / approved projects	23,3	28,19	29,73	24,13	41,22	4,82	24,54
Approved sum / requested sum	14,73	19,19	27,09	33,65	39,47	44,08	32,71
Ineligible expenses	15,19	18,06	23,81	24,68	23,76	23,12	23,02
Beneficiary's contribution	14,91	19,09	21,69	24,82	22,7	21,23	21,95
EU's contribution	59,57	53,82	46,47	43,26	45,63	47,44	46,97
National Budget contribution	10,33	9,03	8,02	7,24	7,91	8,21	8,07
Pre-financing	20,17	39,87	31,59	25,75	17,61	14,38	20,41
Payments from the EU	79,65	54,32	58,08	59,57	68,34	71,23	66,6
Payments from the National Budget	0,18	5,81	10,32	14,68	100	14,39	34,85

Source: Author

The importance of this program lies in the fact that endowments provide SMEs with high performance machines that increase economic competitiveness. However, only 32.71% of the submitted projects were approved. This shows a

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negative aspect which slows down the development of the acquisition of modern equipment. The relatively low accepted value is revealed also from the large number of rejected cases, over three quarters of those submitted. This program should be better exploited especially if we consider pre-financing was in the average of 20.41%, which was a starting point for acquisitions. The EU contribution was about half the value of the projects, which was a real help for SMEs that were applying for the modernization of fixed assets. A significant difference can be noticed regarding the payments from the state budget. This situation is due to the budget allocation for co-financed projects from European funds. In some cases the projects approved were severely affected because of the lack of budgetary allocations.

III. *"The overall objective of SOP DHR is the development of human capital and increasing competitiveness, by linking education and lifelong learning with the labor market and ensuring increased opportunities to participate in a modern, flexible labor market and inclusive to 1.65 million people."* (Ministerul Muncii, Familiei si Egalitatii de Sanse, 2007)

The situation of the SOP DHR projects for 2007-2014 is presented in the table 5.

Table 5. Situation of SOP DHR projects 2007-2014

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of submitted projects	5,202	8,265	10,204	10,375	14,892	15,418
Total value of submitted projects (lei)	32,083,136,025	38,008,785,067	43,187,037,473	43,592,827,079	67,218,823,147	70,064,614,676
Number of approved projects	912	2,434	2,993	3,016	6,285	4,321
Total value of approved projects (lei)	3,584,644,236	14,768,864,910	16,144,856,435	16,198,092,969	16,290,523,751	22,283,386,728
EU financing	2,202,517,840	11,509,732,464	12,474,101,273	12,592,473,289	12,604,053,164	18,600,962,627
National Budget financing	376,305,955	1,247,836,522	1,311,251,862	1,353,747,703	1,358,715,216	2,037,685,676
Beneficiary's financing	98,288,312	723,275,579	799,906,800	841,146,572	839,811,931	1,292,505,696
Ineligible expenses	44,207,010	417,355,234	460,763,921	477,293,150	472,216,674	471,750,806
Total value of the projects (lei)	2,721,319,117	13,898,199,799	15,046,023,855	15,264,660,713	15,274,796,984	22,402,904,804
Pre-financing	227,130,667	1,789,536,992	2,392,210,753	2,459,670,933	2,455,569,312	2,766,519,892
Payments from the EU	26,067,825	204,655,178	1,270,686,392	2,558,042,272	4,798,832,370	6,193,751,288
Payments from the National Budget	5,377,321	45,276,875	228,447,577	467,815,202	826,945,415	1,021,440,165
Total of the payments (lei)	258,575,813	2,039,469,045	3,891,344,722	5,485,528,406	8,081,347,097	9,981,711,345

Source: Ministerul Fondurilor Europene, 2007-2014

Human resource development is crucial for a good economic development of a country. However, the degree of absorption of funds allocated under SOP HRD is reduced. The average of absorbed funds during the analyzed period is 30.35%, far below necessary. The absorption degree is influenced largely by the number of

rejected projects (over two thirds). Yet those who have accessed these funds have benefited from EU contribution of over 80%.

Table 6. Indicators' ratio

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Submitted projects / approved projects	17,53	29,45	29,33	29,07	42,2	28,03	31,02
Approved sum / requested sum	11,17	38,86	37,38	37,16	24,24	31,8	30,35
Ineligible expenses	1,62	3	3,06	3,13	3,09	2,11	2,77
Beneficiary's contribution	3,61	5,2	5,32	5,51	5,5	5,77	5,43
EU's contribution	80,94	82,81	82,91	82,49	82,52	83,03	82,72
National Budget contribution	13,83	8,98	8,71	8,87	8,9	9,1	9,08
Pre-financing	87,84	87,75	61,48	44,84	30,39	27,72	40,66
Payments from the EU	10,08	10,03	32,65	46,63	59,38	62,05	50,62
Payments from the National Budget	2,08	2,22	5,87	8,53	10,23	10,23	8,73

Source: Author

The high percentage of pre-financing (40.66%) enabled the completion of the started projects. These types of projects were among those who benefited from more favorable financing conditions. And in these programs we witness a relatively low contribution from the state budget, probably due to the above issues.

IV. SOP E was developed in order to financially support projects that wish to implement activities which are in accordance with the national and European objectives, policies and strategies regarding environment protection, sustainability and improving the quality of the environment. Also, SOP E was a program that continued the initiative started by pre-adherence programs such as PHARE or ISPA.

The situation of the SOP E projects for 2007-2014 is presented in the table 7.

Regarding the SOP M we can note that all values are around the average multi annual average. The approval indicator is between 48.12% and 74.25%. This approval ratio demonstrates that the percentage of projects is very different from one year to another. Also of note is that the value of total approved amount from the one requested knows significant values, up to 94.13%, with an average of 76.86%. This is a significant positive share in approving and developing projects with European grants. It is obvious that in the implementation of projects financed from European funds the use of ineligible expenses is indispensable, in a proportion of 24.67%, in this case, the oscillations being between 21.74% and 25.3%. The EU contribution in financing projects is crucial hovering at an average of 61.85% for the entire period, with very little variation between 60.90% and 65.92%. This contribution enables significant financial funding, almost two thirds of the EU contribution. An important role is played by the contribution from the

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national budget which although stands at an average of 12.01%, it involves financial budgetary effort made by the Government during the analyzed period. Using pre-financing in projects in proportion of 41.45% allowed an easing of the financial burden in the sense that there are financial resources since the beginning of the projects without the need for beneficiaries to resort to bank loans or other costly financing sources.

Table 7. Situation of SOP E projects 2007-2014

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of submitted projects	133	285	457	634	656	703
Total value of submitted projects (lei)	13,508,646,650	29,646,404,462	34,687,597,901	39,549,274,012	38,439,490,419	38,110,844,332
Number of approved projects	64	165	302	363	466	522
Total value of approved projects (lei)	5,797,014,726	13,880,980,931	27,753,876,551	31,429,806,304	34,328,271,691	35,872,697,928
EU financing	3,803,766,017	8,363,522,279	16,026,676,221	18,564,135,366	20,365,373,775	22,111,087,056
National Budget financing	625,474,501	1,665,256,412	3,277,786,805	3,689,371,886	3,886,955,969	4,190,438,911
Beneficiary's financing	86,604,622	219,918,497	424,772,888	467,313,880	461,052,366	463,876,221
Ineligible expenses	1,254,336,306	3,243,737,848	6,585,926,778	7,495,597,628	8,218,508,623	8,790,338,527
Total value of the projects (lei)	5,770,181,446	13,492,435,036	26,315,162,692	30,216,418,761	32,931,890,733	35,555,740,715
Pre-financing	728,974,414	1,143,084,583	1,528,959,475	1,751,110,107	2,533,729,846	3,245,780,872
Payments from the EU	33,473,761	224,808,199	799,201,027	1,819,746,948	3,716,076,249	5,548,459,586
Payments from the National Budget	4,549,751	42,328,787	182,220,514	470,406,559	1,058,645,138	1,543,116,177
Total of the payments (lei)	766,997,926	1,410,221,569	2,510,381,016	4,041,263,614	7,308,451,233	10,337,356,635

Source: Ministerul Fondurilor Europene, 2007-2014

Table 8. Indicators' ratio

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Submitted projects / approved projects	48,12	57,89	66,08	57,26	71,04	74,25	65,62
Approved sum / requested sum	42,91	46,82	80,01	79,47	89,3	94,13	76,86
Ineligible expenses	21,74	24,04	25,03	24,81	24,96	24,72	24,67
Beneficiary's contribution	1,5	1,63	1,61	1,55	1,4	1,3	1,47
EU's contribution	65,92	61,99	60,9	61,44	61,84	62,19	61,85
National Budget contribution	10,84	12,34	12,46	12,21	11,8	11,79	12,01
Pre-financing	95,04	81,06	60,91	43,33	34,67	31,4	41,45
Payments from the EU	4,36	15,94	31,84	45,03	50,85	53,67	46,04
Payments from the National Budget	0,59	3	7,26	11,64	14,49	14,93	12,52

Source: Author

V. The overall objective of the SOP T program "*is to promote a sustainable transport system in Romania, which will facilitate safe transport, fast and efficient for people and goods with a level of service at European standards, nationally, European, between and in the regions of Romania*". (Ministerul Transporturilor, 2013)

The situation of the SOP T projects for 2007-2014 is presented in the table 9.

Table 9. Situation of SOP T projects 2007-2014

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of submitted projects	41	68	119	154	175	252
Total value of submitted projects (lei)	15,739,705,408	25,639,734,049	38,137,825,955	47,354,339,663	65,618,872,683	74,450,109,813
Number of approved projects	17	39	64	93	104	131
Total value of approved projects (lei)	3,083,146,959	7,965,176,049	15,568,540,328	22,554,656,979	28,358,538,936	34,132,517,316
EU financing	707,489,236	2,714,003,031	7,645,820,210	12,429,585,724	15,719,616,697	14,290,479,458
National Budget financing	173,304,480	870,316,934	2,022,547,262	2,790,440,606	2,976,414,748	2,709,131,580
Beneficiary's financing	0	0	2,558,607	2,558,607	2,558,607	5,701,754
Ineligible expenses	2,202,167,818	3,976,507,866	5,488,333,095	7,060,319,787	8,853,154,933	9,899,358,824
Total value of the projects (lei)	3,082,961,534	7,560,827,831	15,159,259,174	22,282,904,724	27,551,744,985	26,904,671,616
Pre-financing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payments from the EU	134,460,434	202,838,078	608,504,641	1,884,652,695	4,757,093,096	9,011,274,364
Payments from the National Budget	0	0	106,617	106,617	138,866	7,687,692
Total of the payments (lei)	134,460,434	202,838,078	608,611,258	1,884,759,312	4,757,231,963	9,018,962,056

Source: Ministerul Fondurilor Europene, 2007-2014

Table 10. Indicators' ratio

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Submitted projects / approved projects	41,46	57,35	53,78	60,39	59,43	51,98	55,38
Approved sum / requested sum	19,59	31,07	40,82	47,63	43,22	45,85	41,83
Ineligible expenses	71,43	52,59	36,2	31,68	32,13	36,79	36,55
Beneficiary's contribution	0	0	0,02	0,01	0,01	0,02	0,01
EU's contribution	22,95	35,9	50,44	55,78	57,05	53,12	52,18
National Budget contribution	5,62	11,51	13,34	12,52	10,8	10,07	11,26
Pre-financing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Payments from the EU	100	100	99,98	99,99	100	99,91	99,95
Payments from the National Budget	0	0	0,02	0,01	0	0,09	0,05

Source: Author

We can notice that the values of our first indicator exceeds half of the total which reveals the beneficiaries concern for achieving viable and sustainable projects that imply endorsement. However, the amount approved from the requested amount is less than 50% leading us to believe that projects with high values were not approved. We found that for carrying out these types of projects are necessary relative amounts of ineligible expenditure, 36.55% respectively. Although there is no pre-financing regarding these types of projects, their financing is almost of 100%, provided from European funds.

VI. OP ACD targeted the improvement of the public administration in Romania. This topic is sensitive for our country because the common man is disappointed with how state institutions function.

The situation of the OP ACD projects for 2007-2014 is presented in the table 11.

Table 11. Situation of OP ACD projects 2007-2014

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of submitted projects	654	1,044	1,37	1,371	1,371	1,371
Total value of submitted projects (lei)	647,718,127	2,072,187,332	3,669,620,967	3,673,792,959	3,691,338,159	3,691,338,159
Number of approved projects	109	293	368	420	452	456
Total value of approved projects (lei)	202,173,844	459,065,707	896,105,150	1,310,702,056	1,363,628,714	1,391,664,383
EU financing	145,055,327	290,368,111	468,590,803	1,085,226,525	1,097,224,101	1,127,963,635
National Budget financing	5,316,505	14,727,048	16,949,442	19,879,406	22,318,133	22,525,455
Beneficiary's financing	21,801,826	40,328,992	71,305,531	179,378,174	179,222,480	185,928,689
Ineligible expenses	4,500,390	6,088,496	6,375,462	10,630,226	10,568,613	2,663,954
Total value of the projects (lei)	176,674,048	351,512,647	563,221,238	1,295,114,331	1,309,333,327	1,339,081,734
Pre-financing	4,272,072	17,580,272	23,754,280	24,312,639	25,034,057	26,066,941
Payments from the EU	493,227	26,161,279	83,014,466	196,721,555	440,005,163	643,230,088
Payments from the National Budget	39,553	2,582,788	6,460,524	11,411,250	14,244,818	16,516,268
Total of the payments (lei)	4,804,852	46,324,339	113,229,270	232,445,444	479,284,038	685,813,297

Source: Ministerul Fondurilor Europene, 2007-2014

Table 12. Indicators' ratio

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Submitted projects / approved projects	16,67	28,07	26,86	30,63	32,97	33,26	29,22
Approved sum / requested sum	31,21	22,15	24,42	35,68	36,94	37,7	32,23
Ineligible expenses	2,55	1,73	1,13	0,82	0,81	0,2	0,81
Beneficiary's contribution	12,34	11,47	12,66	13,85	13,69	13,88	13,47
EU's contribution	82,1	82,61	83,2	83,79	83,8	84,23	83,7
National Budget contribution	3,01	4,19	3,01	1,53	1,7	1,68	2,02
Pre-financing	88,91	37,95	20,98	10,46	5,22	3,8	7,75
Payments from the EU	10,27	56,47	73,32	84,63	91,8	93,79	88,97
Payments from the National Budget	0,82	5,58	5,71	4,91	2,97	2,41	3,28

Source: Author

These types of projects have enabled the development of administrative capacity of the ATU (administrative territorial units) respectively providing fixed assets and therefore enabling efficient entity performance. The absorption ratio is one third and we notice that the number of rejected cases is high. The high percentage of the EU contribution 80% allowed the beneficiaries to complete these projects. It is significant that in the period analyzed the pre-financing greatly decreased from 88.91% to 3.80%, with an average of 7.75% over the period. The multi annual ratio

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is not significant and does not reflect the large differences from one year to another. This decrease in the degree of pre-financing has put the beneficiaries of projects in difficulty in the recent years.

VII. The overall objective of OP TA *“is to provide support for the coordination and contribute to the implementation and effective absorption, efficiency and transparency of structural instruments in Romania”*. (Ministerul Economiei si Finantelor, 2007)

The situation of the OP TA projects for 2007-2014 is presented in the table 13.

Table 13. Situation of OP TA projects 2007-2014

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Number of submitted projects	28	74	93	130	171	191
Total value of submitted projects (lei)	201,841,322	348,688,879	421,111,589	846,369,024	1,236,510,312	1,363,376,436
Number of approved projects	15	59	79	114	151	167
Total value of approved projects (lei)	130,104,476	273,150,868	358,439,799	724,768,575	1,090,166,593	1,195,380,802
EU financing	82,106,399	215,770,241	260,507,549	494,296,289	643,481,252	765,626,364
National Budget financing	0	3,397,874	3,426,928	4,529,786	4,670,332	9,571,559
Beneficiary's financing	20,526,601	24,800,217	35,942,782	78,146,400	109,187,893	137,767,907
Ineligible expenses	25,646,071	28,549,634	47,273,880	70,609,453	53,011,646	60,509,136
Total value of the projects (lei)	128,279,071	272,517,966	347,151,139	647,581,928	810,351,123	973,474,965
Pre-financing	0	5,065,022	5,096,075	5,296,744	5,390,228	6,344,769
Payments from the EU	271,035	33,489,148	84,271,903	138,223,477	207,745,012	367,975,822
Payments from the National Budget	0	439,783	925,089	1,436,552	2,554,903	3,205,522
Total of the payments (lei)	271,035	38,993,953	90,293,066	144,956,772	215,690,144	377,526,114

Source: Ministerul Fondurilor Europene, 2007-2014

Table 14. Indicators' ratio

Year	2007-2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Submitted projects / approved projects	53,57	79,73	84,95	87,69	88,3	87,43	85,15
Approved sum / requested sum	64,46	78,34	85,12	85,63	88,16	87,68	85,38
Ineligible expenses	19,99	10,48	13,62	10,9	6,54	6,22	8,98
Beneficiary's contribution	16	9,1	10,35	12,07	13,47	14,15	12,78
EU's contribution	64,01	79,18	75,04	76,33	79,41	78,65	77,43
National Budget contribution	0	1,25	0,99	0,7	0,58	0,98	0,81
Pre-financing	0	12,99	5,64	3,65	2,5	1,68	3,13
Payments from the EU	100	85,88	93,33	95,35	96,32	97,47	95,88
Payments from the National Budget	0	1,13	1,02	0,99	1,18	0,85	0,99

Source: Author

Technical assistance projects experienced the greatest degree of absorption. This confirms the great interest of the beneficiaries of this type of projects.

The important contribution of the EU resulted in the success of these projects use. This success was largely influenced by the high percentage of payments, respectively 95.88%. Although pre-financing was not substantial, the reduced contribution of the beneficiary led to the successful completion of such projects. They were probably the most accessible European projects in our country.

Results and Discussion

After analyzing the data above we have reached the following results:

- There is a low rate of absorption for most of the programs;
- The ratios resulted show that the state is interested in certain projects and it does not support equally each program;
- The ratio regarding the approval of projects reveals two negative aspects: the selection process is not clear and effective, thus the low number of approved projects, and the applicants do not have the necessary expertise to elaborate projects;
- There is no functional system to teach the applicants how to elaborate projects;
- The pre-financing ratio reveals the fact that the sums allocated at the beginning of a project are very small and this results in fewer applications because beneficiaries do not have the necessary funding to start a project.

Conclusions and further directions of research

To sum up, the study showed that Romania had a slow start in accessing the structural funds and even if the situation improved over the analyzed period we can surely say that this first funding stage was not a successful one. Comparing our country with other from the EU which share similar background, Romania has one of the lowest results in benefiting from EU funding. This situation is due to the fact that we have a suffocating bureaucratic system which makes the beneficiary's effort to access funds extremely difficult. Moreover, the lack of real-time information slows down the process of actually using the structural funds. Future studies should aim to analyze the process of project approval and we believe that a comparison between EU countries would be welcomed.

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