

Estimated Impact of the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 in Romania

Daniela Antonescu¹

Abstract: The evaluation process is a basic element of modern public sector management practice. If this process is well conducted, it can contribute to improved public interventions, increased transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness. In the European Union, old Member States have a relatively long record of conducting evaluations and acting on their results, especially regarding Structural Funds. For Romania and other new Member States, this process is being introduced increasingly, in particular, after integration. The study analyses the estimated impact of Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 in Romania.

Keywords: regional policy; impact evaluation; public intervention; regions NUTS 2; Operational Regional Programme

JEL Classification: R11; R12; F02

1. Introduction

Evaluation of public programmes and policies is a long-standing activity within the European Union, but also at world level many countries resorting to this control form for public funds spending.

Within the EU, after 1996, evaluation turns into the key-element at the basis of improving management culture, being compulsory for all programmes financed by Structural Funds, irrespective of the reference field (regional, environment, transport, etc.) and their implementation moment (ex-ante, interim and ex-post).

According to the European Commission, evaluation is regarded as a process of “*judging the value of public intervention based on explicit criteria and standards* (for instance, relevance, efficiency, sustainability, equity, etc.)”². Evaluation contributes to the achievement of responsible governance through the feedback

¹ PhD, Institute of National Economy – Romanian Academy, Romania, Address: 6 Piața Romana Bucharest 010374, Romania, Tel.: +40213191900, Corresponding author: daniela.antonescu25@gmail.com.

² European Commission –DG Regio webpage:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/evaluation/evalsed/index_en.htm.

provided about efficiency, effectiveness, and performances of public policies, organizations, or programmes¹.

Taking into account the above mentioned, the paper intends to provide a synthetic, theoretical and practical image of the evaluation process of public intervention with reference to the Regional Operational Programme (ROP). Also, it shall contain estimates of the ROP impact on regional development in the current programming period.

2. Estimated Impact of the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013 in Romania

For Romania, EU integration represents a significant opportunity, especially for regional development, severely affected after the nineties' industrial restructuring, chaotic privatizations and wind-ups of large state-owned economic units that supported intensively populated areas. These phenomena led to the emergence of economic disparities in terms of performance (GDP/inhabitant) and of more marked development differences between urban and rural areas, and intra-regional as well.

2.1. Allocations and Context Indicators

Regional development should represent a priority for Romania both from the viewpoint of pursued objectives and from the one of involved resources (human, financial, etc.).

The basic elements of this process – regional policy and Regional Operational Programme – are the pillars of *balanced development of all regions, by capitalizing the regional and local development potential, focusing on urban growth poles, and improving the infrastructural, and the business environment conditions.*

The enforcement basis of the regional policy is formed out of the eight development regions (NUTS II), the institution managing and coordinating the implementation being the Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing (set-up in the year 2007) by the Management Authority for ROP (Gov. Res. no. 361/2007).

The effects of the regional policy and the impact of financial allocations from structural and national funds are found, especially, in creating jobs and developing infrastructure (transport, social, etc.), but are also visible in a wider context, on some fields such as: tourism (actions for promoting the country brand, tourism

¹ Public Management Service (PUMA) within OECD “Public Policy Brief no. 5 – Best Practice Guidelines for Evaluation” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/56/1902965.pdf>.

promotion centers, etc.), urban development (Integrated Development Plans), the business sector (supporting micro-enterprises).

In the following we intend to estimate the ROP impact on the previously presented fields.

2.1.1. Allocations

The sums allotted to regional development by ROP are amounting to about 4.38 billion Euros, from which 3.72 billion Euros (85%) represent the allocations from structural funds of the European Union (ERDF), the main supported fields being: urban development and regional infrastructure development (transport, social, education, health, business, tourism).

Financial allocations for the current programming period were realized differentiated on fields and development regions:

1. Allocation on regions was realized based on the general development level evaluated with the help of GDP/capita corrected with the population density; significant allocation differences between the regions North-East (16.32% from total) and Bucharest-Ilfov (8.86%), the remaining regions being financed relatively balanced (with allocation differences of maximum 3,5% between them);

2. Allocation on priority fields was also done differentiated (urban development-30%, transport infrastructure-20%, social infrastructure-15%, business environment-17- 15%), without any clearly defined criteria.

2.1.2. Context Indicators

ROP contains the presentation of the current situation and the profile of the regions, the analysis of the disparities between regions and within regions, the implementation strategy, the financial plan, the SWOT analysis, the environmental analysis and the partnership process.

At the time of realizing the ROP (year 2007), the analysis of the economic and social situation was made difficult, in particular, by the lack of information and data at the level of the eight created development regions, many of them being estimates. Thus, the data on which was built and substantiated the current ROP are at the level of the year 2005 (for GDP/capita, the reference year was 2004), and many basic information could not be found within the official statistics (for instance, temporary migration). It should be noticed that for some indicators, the values were recomputed by the European Commission (Eurostat), especially for GDP/capita, which was corrected by PPC¹ (or PPS), a conversion factor used for

¹ PPC measures the purchasing power of a coin, in an international measuring unit (as a rule, dollars), because goods and services have different prices in some countries as compared to others. Whenever comparisons are made between different countries, indicators such as GDP/capita are adjusted so that these differences are eliminated, and the comparison basis is unitary.

calculating an alternative exchange rate between the coins of two countries or in a common artificial coin.

Even though there are differences about the economic and social situation, infrastructure, business environment, etc and the needs of each region, structural (and national) funds allocation by the Regional Operational Programme was realized only based on the GDP/capita value (adjusted with the number of inhabitants), the sums allotted to all fields complying with the shares presented in the table hereunder (Figure 1).

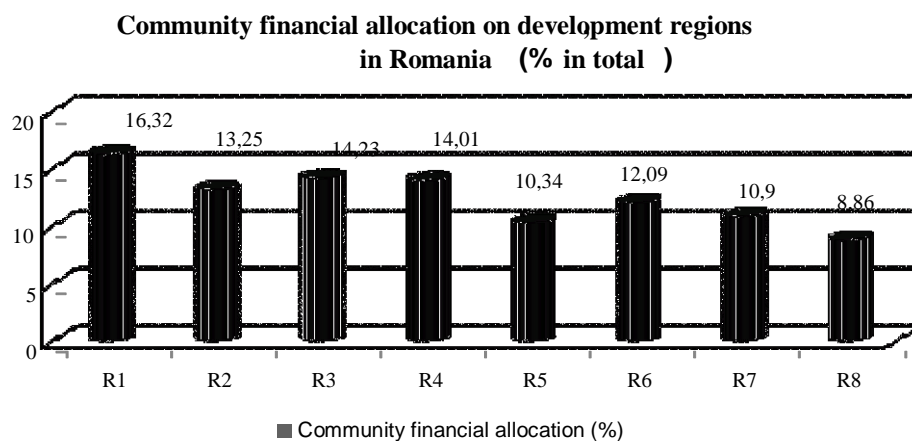


Figure 1. Community financial allocation, on development regions by ROP 2007-2013

Source: http://www.mdpl.ro/_documente/POR/anexa_comunicat_alocare_regiuni.pdf

Most funds were allotted to the less developed region – the North-East region, based on GDP/hab. value in 2005 year, the main indicator for evaluation of regional economic disparities in state member of European Union.

2.2. Estimating Impact at Regional Level

In Romania, regional imbalances are, actually, major differences regarding the development level: urban, infrastructure (transport, social, and health), entrepreneurship and tourism infrastructure.

2.2.1. Urban Development

Considered as regional growth drivers, urban areas are supported by ROP with the help of structural funds, the allocations reaching up to 30% from their total (from the viewpoint of ROP importance given by the value of the financial allocation, this field takes the first place).

The foreseen impact of implementing the measures established initially by ROP is to increase the economic and social role and importance of urban centres having in view a poly-centric approach, the final stated purpose being to stimulate the balanced development of the territorial profile.

The financial allocation from structural funds was differentiated realized, the potential beneficiaries having the possibility of realizing and submitting projects that aim to solving some local development needs. Thus, there are three large categories of beneficiaries (direct beneficiaries of Community funds), that can submit Integrated Development Plans (IDP):

- *Growth poles* - Iasi, Constanta, Ploiesti, Craiova, Timisoara, Cluj-Napoca and Brasov and their areas of influence;
- *Urban development poles* - Arad, Baia Mare, Bacau, Braila, Galati, Deva, Oradea, Pitesti, Ramnicu-Valcea, Satu Mare, Sibiu, Suceava, Targu Mures;
- *Urban centres* - towns and municipalities with over 10.000 inhabitants, category in which was included also the Bucharest Municipality.

The sums attributed to urban development amount to the value of 117.8 million Euros (30% from total) as they are allotted for realizing 30 *Integrated Development Plans* in the eight development regions. *The unitary average value of realizing a IDP is of 37.26 million Euros.* Still, the average number of IDP realized in one region differs, as most should be realized in the North-East.

An Integrated Development Plan should contain three categories of projects:

- (1) for improving the urban infrastructure and urban services, including urban transport (18 projects),
- (2) sustainable development of the business environment (five projects) and
- (3) for social infrastructure (seven projects).

Individual projects, included in IDP aim to the following eligible categories of operations and activities:

- a) rehabilitation of the urban infrastructure and improving urban services, including urban transport: (public urban infrastructure, and population mobility), world cultural patrimony (national and local from the urban environment UNESCO)
- b) sustainable development of the business environment;
- c) rehabilitation of social infrastructure.

An Integrated Development Plan comprises minimum two projects from the operation categories mentioned above, from which one compulsory must consider

the rehabilitation of the urban infrastructure and improving urban services, including urban transport.

From the Integrated Plans and the corresponding projects can benefit a population of about 400.000 inhabitants, the average amount allotted per inhabitant being of 2794 Euro/inhabitant.

2.2.2. Transport Infrastructure Development

As result of implementing ROP there will be modernized about 2137 km. of county and town roads. Relating the total value of the allotment corresponding to the transport infrastructure field, it results that one km. of road built/rehabilitated/modernized amounts to about 0.3548 million Euros/km.

On categories of roads, the highest value of one km. is found for county roads and is of 1.156 mill. Euros/km. Compared with the cost norms approved by the Ministry of Transports of 0.332 mill. Euros/km. and it is much over-evaluated¹.

With respect to the impact at regional level, each region shall benefit of structural funds, but to different shares, fact that will affect also the length of the town and county roads built or modernized. Thus, in the North-East region shall be built/rehabilitated about 348.76 km. of roads (first place), and at the opposite end is placed the region Bucharest-Ilfov, with a lengths of roads of only 189.35 km.

If we relate the physical impact obtained with structural funds to the already existing situation, it can be found that the share of the length of built roads in total regional roads is relatively low at general level (2.6% in total and 8.5% in total modernized roads), the situation on regions being as follows:

1. With respect to the share of roads financed from European funds in total existing roads, the lowest values are held by the West region (the smallest region from the viewpoint of the number of counties and of the used surface) and the North-West region with only 2.1% from total, followed by the region Centre (2.2%) and South (2.4%); the highest share – 21.3% - is registered in the region Bucharest-Ilfov;
2. Roads modernized with structural funds in total existing roads represent 8.5% from total, the highest share being held by the region Bucharest-Ilfov (26.1%), followed at a great distance by the South-East region (11.2%), North-East (9.3%), North-West (8.5%).

Allocations from structural funds intended for modernizing the road infrastructure cover to a very small extent the actual needs existing at regional level.

¹ RESOLUTION No. 717 from 14 July 2010 for changing and amending the Governmental Resolution no. 363/2010 on approving cost standards for the investment objectives financed from public funds. DEED ISSUED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF ROMANIA, published in the Official Bulletin No. 537/2 August 2010.

2.2.3. Social Infrastructure Development

The social field consisting of the corresponding infrastructure and specific services represents an important component both of the national/regional system and of the Community one, the support of which contributes to increasing the quality of life and to promoting social inclusion.

The structural funds allocated by ROP have as final destination the rehabilitation, modernization and endowment of the health services' infrastructure, of social services and ensuring the endowment of the operational bases for emergency situations, and of the education infrastructure.

In the following we present the impact for each of the above-mentioned infrastructures, impact which consists, mainly, from modernizing works, rehabilitation, endowment, as these are the main issues (difficulties) faced by these fields.

A. Health Services' Infrastructure

The impact of ROP on the regional development process from this perspective is rendered concrete in the construction of a number of 15 hospitals in the counties: Botosani and Vaslui (North-East), Buzau, Tulcea and Vrancea (South-East), Dambovita, Ialomita and Teleorman (South Muntenia), Gorj and Valcea (South-West), Maramures (North-West), Satu Mare, Salaj (North-West), Covasna (Centre) and Ilfov (Bucharest Ilfov).

The effective impact consists in a number of 50 rehabilitated, modernized and endowed medical units, the allotted funds amounting to 173.58 million Euros (ERDF allocation), which presupposes an average expenditure of 3.471 million Euros/medical unit.

On regions, the impact is as follows: eight medical centers in the North-East region, seven centers in South-East, South and South-West, five centers in West and Centre, six in North-West and four in Bucharest-Ilfov. The minimum value of an infrastructure project is of 0.2 million Euros, while the maximum value is of 25 million.

The hospitals modernized by ROP represent 10% from total number of hospitals existing at national level (year 2010). Also, the investments realized in these hospitals contribute to increasing by 10% the access of the inhabitants to rehabilitated/modernized/endowed medical units.

B. Social Infrastructure

Another field supported by ROP is improving the *quality of the infrastructure for social services*, by the support granted in a balanced manner for the entire territory of the country for ensuring equal access of the citizens to such services. Thus, by ROP is considered co-financing some projects in the following category:

- *social centers* with multi-functional destination (with services for admittance to the centre and up to solving some specific and temporary issues, including by organizing some workshops for developing independent living habits and professional competences);
- *investments in residential centers* ensuring long-term accommodation for persons in vulnerable situations (difficulty).

Total allocations for supporting social infrastructure amount to the value of 99.52 million Euros, from which ERDF 84.58 million Euros.

The estimated impact of structural funds consists in rehabilitating/modernizing 270 social centers, the average value for one social centre being of 0.3685 million Euros.

The allotted funds allow for rehabilitating/modernizing a limited number of centers at the level of each region, most being localized in the North-East region (44 centers), followed by the region South and South-West (38 centers).

C. Infrastructure for Interventions in Emergency Situations

The final outcome of these allocations by ROP consists in improvement works for the endowment with equipment of the operational bases for interventions in emergency situations. The specific objective is the diminishment of the intervention time for granting qualified first aid and for interventions in emergency situations.

The total value of allotments is of 99.506 million Euros, intended for purchasing specific vehicles and equipment for 510 mobile units, for regional and county operational bases, for interventions in emergency situations. These mobile units shall contribute, finally, to diminishing the average time of intervention, from 30' – 45' in rural areas and up to 20' in urban areas (the year 2005) to 12' in rural areas and 8' in urban areas (in the year 2015).

The distribution on regions and the effective impact of structural funds' allocation was realised taking into account the value of GDP/capita and not the actual needs of each region. Thus, most mobile units shall be equipped/modernized in the North-East region (83 units), followed by the South region (73 emergency units), and South-West (71 units). The average value allotted from structural funds per emergency mobile unit is of 195.137 Euros/unit.

D. Educational Infrastructure (Pre-University, University and Continuing Vocational Training)

The funds allotted are intended for improving the quality of the education infrastructure, of schools' endowment, of the accommodation structures for students and of the vocational training centres for ensuring an educational process at European standards and increasing the participation of school population and adults

to the educational process. The value of allocations reaches 284.91 million Euros, distributed on regions depending on the evaluated development level with the help of GDP/capita.

The average value of an educational centre is of 1.3567 million Euros, the distribution on regions being as follows: most rehabilitated educational centres shall be in the North-East region (34 units), followed by the region South (30 units), South-West (29 units), South-East (28 units).

2.2.4. Business Environment

One of the ROP objectives is to support the business environment by establishing support structures for business, by sustaining micro-enterprises, rehabilitation of polluted and unused industrial sites and preparing for new activities. For supporting the business environment by Axis 4 are allotted 795.65 million Euros, from which 633.42 mill. Euros co-financing by ERDF (16% from total ROP allocation).

Structural funds' impact can be evaluated according to the following directions:

1. Setting-up support infrastructure for businesses;
2. Polluted sites;
3. Support for micro-enterprises.

Setting-up Support Infrastructure for Businesses

The first evaluation direction of the impact at regional level consists in creating of two business structures in each region (in the region Bucharest-Ilfov only a single structure), the average value on business structure being of 18.29 mill. Euros. In these business structures about 3000 jobs shall be created, while the employment rate shall increase by 50% (after two years from the time of finalizing the project).

Polluted Sites Rehabilitation

With respect to the funds intended for rehabilitating polluted and unused industrial sites and their preparation for new activities, these were redistributed to other fields financed by ROP, their impact being equal to zero. The decision of reallocating the funds was triggered by a relatively low demand of financing for rehabilitation and reconversion of polluted industrial sites. Thus, from the 200.09 million Euros initially allotted by ERDF for rehabilitation and reconversion of polluted industrial sites, about 172.85 million Euros were redistributed to other major fields of intervention.

These amounts shall be used for:

1. rehabilitation, modernization, endowment of the infrastructure for health services (26.65 million Euros),

2. sustainable development of business support structures of regional and local importance (13.31 million Euros),
3. supporting the development of micro-enterprises (28.47 million Euros), restoration and sustainable capitalization of the cultural patrimony, as well as creation/modernization of related infrastructures (39.84 million Euros).
4. drawing up some projects for the creation, development, and modernization of the tourism infrastructure, for capitalizing natural resources and increasing the quality of tourism services (64.58 million Euros).

Support for Micro-Enterprises

Another important investment objective within ROP is the support of productive and service delivery micro-enterprises¹ development that uses the endogenous potential of the regions (natural resources, raw materials, human resources, etc.). These are supported in using new technologies, IT equipment, contributing thus to increasing competitiveness and productivity. The financing of micro-enterprises has as purpose supporting the continuation of the restructuring and economic turnaround process for areas in decline, in particular for small- and medium-sized towns, because these create jobs and have the necessary flexibility to adjust to the requirements of a dynamic market economy.

The impact of structural funds consists in supporting 1500 micro-enterprises and creating 3000 new permanent jobs. The total value of projects financed for supporting micro-enterprises (sum of eligible and non-eligible expenditures) must be comprised between 100.000 Lei and 3.000.000 Lei. Financial allocation for the period 2007-2013 for supporting the development of micro-enterprises is of 200.09 million Euros (ERDF).

The impact of allocations differs from one region to another, the basic stated criterion being GDP/capita. Thus, most companies shall be created in the North-East region (245 companies), followed by the region South (213 companies), and South-West (210 companies). Two jobs shall be created per micro-enterprise. The impact triggers the increase of the productive capacity of microenterprises benefitting of structural funds.

A micro-enterprise shall benefit of about 133.393 Euros from European funds, while the sums intended for creating one job are of 66.608 Euros. The main issue of these micro-enterprises is the one related to supporting the financing of the project up to the time of effectively obtaining the funds. As a rule, the banks do not

¹ Micro-enterprises are enterprises that have up to 9 employees and have a net yearly turnover or have total assets that amount to up to 2 million Euros, Lei equivalent, in accordance with Law 346/2004 regarding the stimulation of setting-up and developing SMEs, with subsequent changes and amendments.

grant credits to small companies which, therefore, find themselves in the impossibility of implementing the project.

2.2.5. Tourism Sector

Tourism is one of the important fields with actual economic potential that contributes to regional development. The impact of this field on the development level of a region consists, mainly, in creating new jobs by capitalizing the cultural and natural patrimony, specific to each area.

Tourism is supported by the Regional Operational Programme, the allotted funds amounting to about 616.77 mill. Euros (15% from total allocation) from which 558.90 mill. Euros ERDF contribution, and 57.87 mill. Euros national contribution.

Financing by ROP for tourism is rendered concrete, mainly, in restoration and sustainable capitalization projects of the cultural patrimony, creating-modernizing related infrastructures, and of the tourism infrastructure with the purpose of capitalizing natural resources, and increasing the quality of tourism services provided, and promoting the tourism potential for increasing Romania's attractiveness as tourism destination.

Restoration of the Cultural Patrimony

The financing of this sub-field is realized within ROP from structural funds to which is added the national financing and the private one. The objectives with tourism potential are included in the UNESCO¹ patrimony, and can be localized both in the urban and rural area and can constitute the national and local (urban and rural) cultural patrimony.

The impact of structural funds consists in the 100 restoration projects of the patrimony infrastructure with tourism potential and creating 200 jobs, concomitantly with increasing by 5% the number of tourists. The total value of a project is comprised between a minimum value of 1.700.000 Lei (0.04 mill. Euros/project) and a maximum one of 85.000.000 Lei (2.02 mill. Euro/project) depending on the size and complexity of the projects.

The average value of a restoration project for the cultural patrimony is of about 2.354 million Euros, the average number of created jobs per project is two.

On regions, the distribution of structural funds allocation intended for this sub-field was realized taking into account the value of GDP/capita, most restoration projects being located in the North-East region (16 projects), followed by the regions South and South-West (14 projects), South-East (13 projects).

¹ The list of the UNESCO world patrimony in Romania, according to the Resolution no. 493/2004 on approving the Methodology regarding monitoring of historical monuments registered with the List of world patrimony, annex A with subsequent changes and amendments.

Modernization of the Tourism Infrastructure

The projects financed by ROP and intended to support tourism cover a wide range of activities that can be circumscribed to the following categories:

- projects regarding the capitalization of natural resources for tourism purposes;
- projects regarding the diversification of tourism services;
- projects having as main objective the creation/expansion of tourism leisure structures in view of increasing the number of tourists and duration of the sojourn.

The projects presented above are realized in areas with tourism potential from the urban area, in rural localities where projects are implemented with a value higher than 6.400.000 Lei and in spas, and balneal-climatic spas (irrespective if these are localized in the rural or urban area).

Financial allocations intended for this sub-field are of 330.019 mill. Euros from which 231.013 mill. Euros from ERDF and 99 mill. Euros national co-financing (from private sources).

The impact of the funds allotted is given by the creation of a number of 300 companies, 350 projects and about 800 jobs (about 2 jobs/project).

The amplitude of the impact differs from one region to another, and most projects are proposed for the region North East (57 projects), followed by the region South (50 projects) and South West (49 projects). The average value of a project is of 0.66 million Euros.

Promoting the Tourism Potential and Creating the Required Infrastructure with the Purpose of Increasing Romania's Attractiveness as Tourism Destination

Promoting Romania as tourism destination presupposes a series of activities that would attract an as large as possible number of tourists (from country and abroad) and contribute to the sustainable development of tourism products. Thus, a set of objectives is established, from among which we mention:

1. Creating a positive image of Romania as tourism destination, by defining and promoting the national tourism brand;
2. Developing and strengthening domestic tourism by supporting the promotion of tourism products and specific marketing activities;
3. Creating National Centers of Tourism Information and Promotion (NCTIP) and endowment thereof.

The approximate financial allocation for this field ("Promoting the tourism potential and creating the required infrastructure with the purpose of increasing Romania's attractiveness as tourism destination") is of 150.356 million Euros, from

which 127.803 million Euros from ERDF and 22.553 mill. Euros from the state budget.

For creating the country brand are allotted about 75 mill. Euros, and for creating the *National Centers of Tourism Information/Promotion, including endowment* the financial allocation is of about 20 million Euros (from which 700.000 Euros for creating an integrated and computerized system of the Romanian tourism offer).

The estimated impact consists in realizing a number of ten campaigns of promoting the tourism brand at national and international level, as well as ten National Centres for Information. The effect of these actions should lead to increasing the number of tourists that visit Romania, to approximately one million tourists. The average value of a Promotion Centre is of about 1.93 million Euros, while for the country brand promotion campaign about 7.5 million Euros are allotted. For all presented indicators a reference value is not given, one that could contribute to a comparative analysis during the implementation of the regional programme.

3. Conclusions

Undergoing an increasing importance in time, regional development constitutes a basic element of the economic and social integration and cohesion process. The regional policy through the Regional Operational Programme can contribute to diminishing discrepancies between regions and within them, provided that there is a better substantiation of the decisions regarding the allotment of structural funds where they are indeed necessary. The current programming exercise of the regional policy and of the financial resources showed that because of the low level of general development, the majority of funds allotted were oriented towards the North-East region, without taking into account the fact that this region does not have the financial capacity to support such an investment process. The main difficulties occurred in the implementation of the current ROP are determined, especially, by the fact that specific regional needs were not identified in an actual manner and due to the weak capacity of the regions to absorb effectively received funds (the capacity that was not taken account of at the time of realizing ROP). For the following programming period it is necessary that for all future economic-social analyses to take into consideration all elements contributing to the development of a region. This fact implies a complex analysis of all needs and, possibly, the realization of a list of priority projects before launching the programme. Also, a positive aspect can be had by improving the relationships between local and central authorities and adjusting the instruments with the purpose of maximum use of the regional potential. Last, but not least, it can be acted by concentrating resources in regions less developed, but only by ensuring some important co-financing sources.

4. Acknowledgements

This paper has been developed within the project „Economic scientific research, support of the welfare and human development in the European context”, funded by the European Union and the Government of Romania from the European Social Fund through the Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013, the grant agreement no. POSDRU/89/1.5/S/62988.

5. References

***(2003). *Manualul pentru evaluarea dezvoltării socio-economice/ Handbook for the assessment of socio-economic development*. Tavistock Institute in collaboration with GHK & IRS, http://www.evaluare-structurale.ro/images/stories/Documente/resurse/evalsed_ro.pdf.

Antonescu, D. (2012). Identificarea disparităților și convergenței economice regionale în Uniunea Europeană și în România/ Identifying disparities and regional economic convergence in the European Union and Romania. *Working Papers of National Institute of Economic Research*. www.ince.ro.

Antonescu, D. (2012). Identifying regional disparities in Romania: a convergence process perspective in relation to European Union's territorial structures. *Procedia Economics and Finance* (2012), pp. 1148-1155.

Antonescu, Daniela (2011). *Dezvoltarea regională – tendințe, mecanisme, instituții/Regional development - trends, mechanisms, institutions*. Bucharest: Top Form.

Bachtler, J. & Michie, R. (1993). The Restructuring of Regional Policy in the European Community. *Regional Studies*, 27 (8), pp. 719-725.

Bachtler, J. & Michie, R. (1995). A New Era in EU Regional Policy Evaluation? The Appraisal of the Structural Funds. *Regional Studies*, 29 (8), pp. 745-751.

Bachtler, J. & Taylor, S. (1999). Objective 2: Experience, Lessons and Policy Implications. *Report to the Commission of the European Communities* (DG XVI), EPRC, University of Strathclyde.

Eskelinen, H., Kokkonen, M. & Virkkala, S. (1997). Appraisal of the Finnish Objective 2 Programme: Reflections on the EU Approach to Regional Policy. *Regional Studies*, 31 (2), pp. 167-172.

Regional Operational Program 2007-2013. www.fonduri-structurale.ro.