



Report on the Ex-ante Evaluation

**Operational Programme
Transnational Cooperation
"CENTRAL EUROPE"
2007 - 2013**

**In the Framework of Objective 3
„European Territorial Cooperation“**

Draft

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(1) Process and Content of the Ex-ante evaluation

Content of the Ex-ante evaluation

ÖAR Regionalberatung was commissioned by the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Italy, as the Managing Authority of the current INTERREG IIIB programme "CADSES Neighbourhood Programme" to carry out the Ex-ante evaluation of the future Transnational Cooperation programme "Central Europe". This contract also includes the preparation of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). Therefore SEA and Ex-ante evaluation were carried out in close co-ordination both in terms of timing and content.

The components of the Ex-ante evaluation correspond with those contained in the relevant Working Paper of the EU-Commission:

1. Appraisal of the Socio-economic Analysis, Relevance of Strategy
2. Rationale and Consistency of the Strategy
3. External Coherence with other policies (national levels, EU)
4. Expected results and impacts
5. Implementation systems

These components were specified further during the meetings with the Programming Group, neither the Managing Authority nor the Task Force put forth additional evaluation questions or requirements to the Ex-ante evaluators.

In dealing with these components, the experience gained during the current programme period was taken into account, in particular the findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) 2003 and the MTE Up-date in 2005.

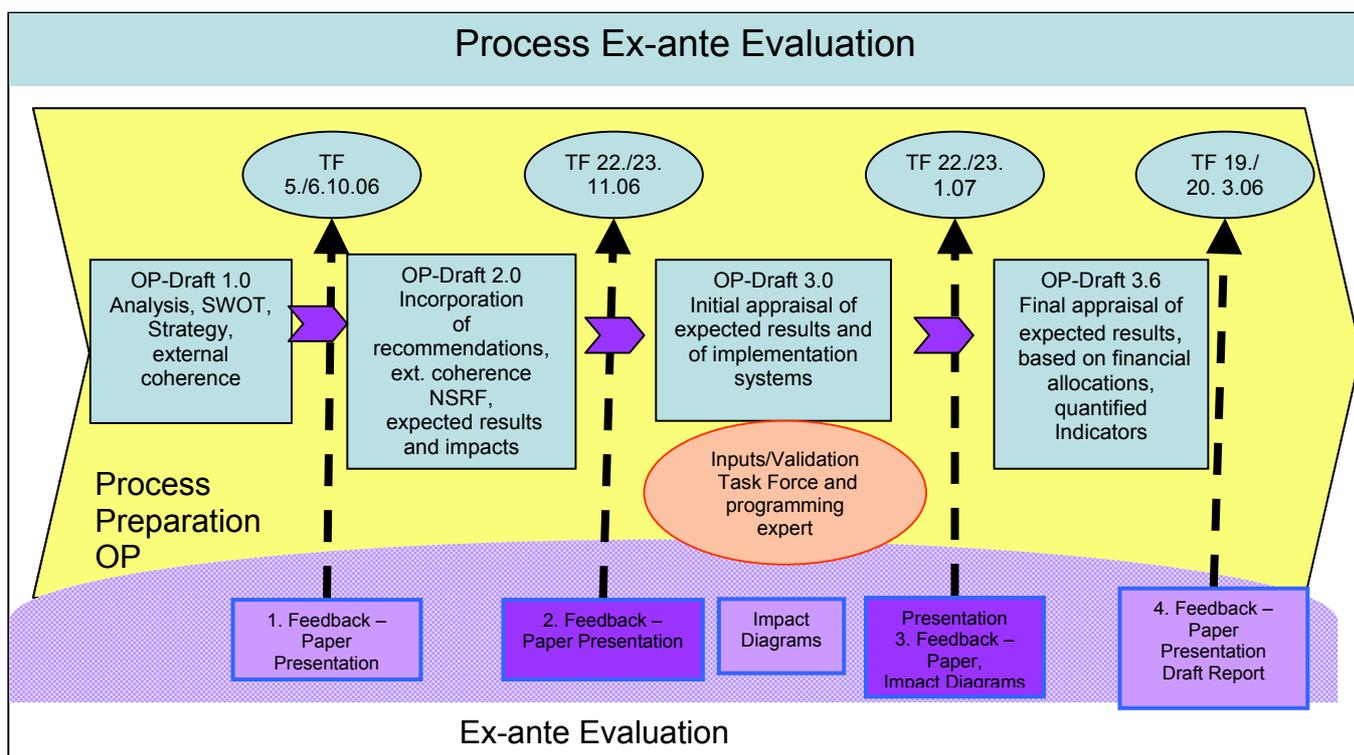
Process of the Ex-ante evaluation

The Ex-ante evaluation was carried out in parallel to the elaboration of the Operational Programme, i.e. the assessments were done in an iterative process, based on interim results of the programming process and in close co-ordination with the programming team.

This process can be subdivided into five phases respectively assessment stages (see also figure below):

1. In a meeting of the Drafting Team on 4./5.9.2006 in Torino the Ex-ante-evaluation team presented the content of the evaluation and a work plan.
2. The assessment of the first three components was done based on OP-Draft 1.0. (September 2006). The work was documented in a paper containing detailed comments, which were discussed with the programming experts. The main findings were also presented and discussed with the Task Force (October 5th/6th, 2006).

3. The next assessment was carried out based on the OP-Draft 2.0 (November 2006). On one hand the incorporation of recommendations expressed earlier was assessed, the (preliminary) results on the check of the coherence of the OP-Draft with National Strategic Reference Frameworks outlined and an initial appraisal of the likely achievement of expected results / impacts was made. On the other hand the evaluators prepared impact diagrams on the basis of the Draft OP. These diagrams were presented and discussed – along with other findings - with the Task Force (22./23.11. 2006). Detailed comments and recommendations were discussed with the programming experts.
4. Following this meeting impact diagrams were revised based on OP-Draft 3.0 (December 2006) and validated with the programming expert. Based on that, the initial appraisal of expected results and impacts as well as of the implementation system (based on the Draft 3.0) were both presented to and discussed with the Task Force (January 22nd/23rd, 2007).
5. For the Task Force on March 19th/20th 2007 a Draft Report has been prepared which was presented there. Input was also given on the proposed indicator system. Following this meeting, the assessment of the indicator system as well as of expected impacts was finalised with information on the financial allocations and quantification of indicators contained in OP Version 3.6. This assessment has also been presented at the Task Force meeting on May 10th / 11th 2007 in Budapest.



The present draft report summarizes the main interim findings of these assessment stages (Chapter 2) and contains the assessment of the Final Draft of the OP (same text which is included as Chapter 3.5 of the OP). In addition, the annex contains the presentations for the meetings of the Task Force and the material produced for the impact assessment (impact diagrams).

(2) Results and value added of the Ex-ante evaluation

The main methods which were used during the Ex-ante evaluation were document analysis, discussions with the Task force as well as meetings with programming experts. In addition the findings from the evaluations of the current "CADSES Neighbourhood Programme" were also taken into consideration. For the assessment of impacts the "Process Monitoring of Impacts" approach was used.

This chapter summarizes the main interim results of the feedback rounds mentioned above and the work carried out to assess results and impacts. The corresponding presentations and other material are contained in the annexes of the Report.

1. Feedback Paper based on 1st Draft OP (September 2006) (see also presentation in Annex 1)

Appraisal of socio-economic analysis, Relevance of Strategy, external coherence

The analysis presents a comprehensive overview of the main disparities, deficits and development potential of the cooperation area, but it could be improved by elaborating on the following aspects:

- Shift analytic contents to the analysis:
The content belonging to the analysis is spread over several chapters, especially in the chapter on objectives and Priorities.
- Develop content further:
 - In the analysis in general there is a strong focus on results of ESPON-studies and spatial issues as well as on EUROSTAT data without mentioning Ukraine very often.
 - As well there is neither reference to other Territorial Cooperation programmes nor other mainstream programmes.
 - Analysis Chapter 2.3 "Dynamic development in Europe" is unclear concerning the position in the programme, as some issues of it could be mentioned either in the analysis or in the strategy.
 - For the Chapter "Lessons and recommendations" (3.5.) it is recommended to:
 - Streamline the selection of thematic fields and projects examples with Priorities planned for CENTRAL EUROPE-Programme
 - Add information on the problems of the CADSES Neighbourhood Programme
 - Limit contents to lessons learned and shift recommendations to programme strategy and implementation chapters.
- Ensure coherence between programme parts:
Issues are treated differently in the analysis chapter and the description of strategy and Priorities.

- Improve the evidence base of the analysis and its connections with other parts of the OP. This refers to the fact that some needs targeted by programme strategy (incl. objectives and Priorities) are not sufficiently covered in the analysis.

Thus provision of additional data/information to argue specific aspects of the programme is recommended notably for following chapters:

- Settlement structure
- Transport and accessibility patterns
- Natural and cultural features

Rationale and Consistency of the Strategy

The programme strategy of Draft 1.0 consists of criteria for a strategic approach, overall strategic goals, programme objectives with corresponding statements and first information on the programme Priorities. As some points still remain unclear, the following feedback was given:

- For the strategy itself a clear justification is missing and it remains unclear, why objectives and Priorities are selected and how the programme logic was formed.
- The description of the strategy is not complete; as there is no indication on how the objectives shall be achieved.
- Further it is unclear how the strategy's criteria are relevant for a strategic approach of the programme.

The objectives in general are very comprehensive, however some parts are missing or not clearly outlined. For improvement of objectives recommendations are given on following points:

- Some parts of the objectives should be shifted to analysis or SWOT.
- It shall be assured that those new issues introduced in the objectives are dealt with in the analysis (such as innovation, telecommunication, safety and green industries).
- The expected results for the different Priorities are missing and shall be added.
- The hierarchy of the single objectives shall be outlined clearer at higher level as currently objectives 1 and 2 are rather general than specific objectives while at the same time their connection to Priorities is not clear in the diagram.
- The application and implementation of EU-principles is not outlined in the draft, thus a description shall be provided how the programme will address the issue of sustainable development and how the promotion and mainstreaming of gender equality and equal opportunities will be ensured.

The respective Priorities follow a clear structure. However some general project principles are outlined that could rather be summarized for all Priorities. Also within the Priorities information is given that is better suited for the analysis.

Within the Directions of support (DoS), developed for each Priority, some points remain unclear:

- It is not visible what activities and products shall be co-financed as DoS are only explained with thematic examples (e.g. urban technology).
- For some topics proposed it is unclear how they shall be dealt with and implemented on transnational level respectively the transnational added value is not visible.
- There are thematic overlaps with activities supported by other funds (EAFRD, ESF) or other programmes (Objective 1 and 2, other strands of Objective 3).
- It shall be ensured that content and title of some DoS are coherent.

Policy Risks

The implementation of the strategy bears some risks which should be taken into account in the further programming process:

- Draft 1.0 presents a broad thematic scope but in the frame of a limited budget.
 - Therefore clear selection criteria and mechanisms are important to maintain and ensure a strategic focus.
 - Furthermore complementarity with other programmes that could support follow-up projects is required.
- The transnational added value and approach shall be ensured as some issues are also suited for cross-border or interregional cooperation.
- There is a risk of a delayed start of the programme, due to
 - An unclear focus and new implementation procedures (e.g. 2-step-approach in project generation)
 - The implementation of new programme structures, which generally is a risk factor. However, in the case of the programme "CENTRAL EUROPE" the risk of changing programme structures is likely to outweigh problems that occurred in the implementation of CADSES Neighbourhood Programme.

External coherence with other policies

• Coherence with EU policies

The Draft OP is to a great extent coherent with the General Structural Fund Regulation and the ERDF Regulation, notably Art. 6 (2).

Recommendations to improve coherence are:

- ERDF-Regulation:

- Non-discrimination and gender equality as horizontal goals beside sustainability shall be inserted and outlined in the OP.
- The complementarity with Seventh Framework Programme and Competitiveness Innovation Framework Programme should be addressed.
- Art. 6 (2.):
 - To ensure eligibility support for rural activities as currently formulated in the P4/DoS (e.g. rural networks, handicraft, etc.) shall be skipped
 - Some thematic examples are better suited for other Priorities (e.g. P1/DoS to P2).
 - The transnational dimension/impact shall be outlined clearer in the in the proposed thematic fields for DoS.

OP-Draft in general is in line with basic aim of Cohesion Guidelines, especially with Priorities for transnational cooperation (economic and social integration).

To improve coherence the following recommendations were given:

- Some elements could be strengthened (e.g. river basin/water management).
- History of institutional structures and existing cooperations/conventions could be mentioned in the analysis (e.g. Carpathian convention, Danube cooperation, etc.).

2. Feedback Paper based on 2nd Draft OP (November 2006) (see also presentation in Annex 2)

Appraisal of socio-economic analysis

The recommended additional data and information have been incorporated in the area description, apart from the issue of safety in transport.

Thus the analysis now contains an accurate overview of main disparities, deficits and development potential, but it could be shortened for some parts.

The SWOT is structured very well, although some points should be added to ensure coherence (e.g. safety issues in transport, culture, housing, etc.)

In the subchapter on "Lessons and recommendation" parts of the recommended amendments have been incorporated. Three, which have not been integrated, are emphasised:

- Project examples should relate to Priorities in the current OP-daft (e.g. an additional example on innovation could be integrated)
- The CADSES-experience with project and programme implementation should be integrated in the chapter.
- Further points and recommendations contained in this chapter should rather be shifted to Chapter 3.3.1 (General principles) or 6.2.1 (General Project Quality requirements).

Relevance of the strategy

Recommendations of the Ex-ante evaluation have been taken into consideration. The programme strategy is more clear and concise now, the newly added "General Principles" support the strategic focus.

For further discussion of the strategy in the Task Force, questions are raised, whether

- to incorporate cohesion in the strategic goal?
- to add accessibility in terms of transport in „sub points“ to strategic goal?
- to outline territorial aspects in „innovation“ and „competitiveness“ more?

Rationale and consistency of strategy

Recommended amendments have largely been carried out. Priorities are now justified better and the descriptions of the strategies for reaching expected objectives have been improved.

In addition, the links between Priorities, objectives and Directions of Supports (DoS) are now clearer and the implementation of horizontal Priorities has been made more visible.

The revised programme strategy is rational and consistent. In particular, objectives are in line with strategic premises and principles and the Priorities which have been selected are well suited to address the expected objectives.

Thus the programme appears well focused and displays a high level of ambition.

The structure of Priorities and DoS is concise and rather clear, except that,

- Some DoS-activities are overlapping and could thus be merged
- For some parts the relation to aims and objectives is still not always clear
- Some DoS-activities are defined quite wide or - for some parts - formulated as aims
- The transnational dimension and impact has to be ensured
- The doubts concerning ERDF Art. (6) coherence for purely rural activities expressed before shall be taken into consideration

External coherence of the strategy

Beside the assessments for coherence with documents at EU-Level, the OP Draft was assessed for coherence with the National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) of all EU-Member States participating in the programme. In addition, interviews were carried out with persons responsible for NSRF. This work was carried out also with external experts in different countries. Due to limited resources and the lack of a comparable strategy document as well as of a contact person, such a check could not be carried out for Ukraine.

The following tables provide an overview of steps and final results of this assessment of external coherence (details are provided in Annex 5):

Country	NSRF-Version	Obj. 3 – chapter	Other relevant chapters	Interview with:	Coherence with NSRF	Coherence with NSRF on:	Specific comments and observations
Austria	Final Version (Oct. 06)	Yes	NSRF-Priorities	Mr. Seidl	Yes	Coherent with objectives and strategies f. transnational cooperation Coherent with other Priorities of strat. at	
Czech Republic	Draft May 2006	Short paragraph on transnational cooperation	Strategic goals	Mr. Danek	Yes	All the Priorities and Areas of Interventions are generally coherent with Areas of Intervention of NSRF.	Draft Dec. 06 did not contain more information on transnational cooperation
Germany	Draft Oct.06	Yes	Strategies	Mrs. Scheffel	Yes	Strong coherence with chapter on territorial cooperation, to a great extent with strategies (for Obj. 1 and 2)	No further changes to Obj. 3 in Draft Jan. 07
Hungary	Final Version (Oct. 06)	No	Briefly described in Priority 5	Mr. Kleinheincz	Yes	Generally coherent with NSRF-Priorities. No separate chapter on territorial cooperation – programmes on territorial cooperation will be collected in a separate document.	

Country	NSRF-Version	Obj. 3 – chapter	Other relevant chapters	Interview	Coherence with NSRF	Coherence with NSRF on:	Specific comments and observations
Italy	Draft April 2006 Draft Dec. 2006	No	10 NSRF-Priorities	Mrs. Rusca Mr. Gherardi	Yes	Coherence with 10 NSRF-Priorities (and with Priorities of working group, that fed into the 10 NSRF-Priorities)	First check based on draft of April 06, this check was revised with draft of Dec. 06 → no changes resulted
Poland	Draft (Aug. 06) Final version (Nov. 06)	No	Strategic goals	Mr. Zuber	Yes	No separate chapter - coherence with cohesion policy goals	First check based on draft of Aug. 06, this check was revised with draft of Nov. 06 → no changes resulted
Slovakia	Draft Nov. 2006	No	Territorial cooperation mentioned briefly in introduction part	Mrs. Tomkova Mrs. Hruskova	Yes	Generally coherent – without specific chapter. All Priorities are covered by one or more Priorities of the Slovak NSRF.	
Slovenia	NSRF-Draft Oct. 2006 NDP-Draft June 2006	NSRF: No NDP: Yes	NSRF – specific objectives on NSRF-level	Mr. Mihalic	NSRF: Yes NDP: Yes	NSRF: Generally in line with strategy and Priorities of NSRF NDP-Chapter 7.6: Priorities in line with OP-Draft	

This assessment has revealed that all Priorities of the Draft OP are in line with the NSRF objectives and Priorities. Therefore the contents of the programme are in line with national strategies. In those cases, where the NSRFs contain a specific chapter on territorial cooperation, it was also verified that the Draft OP corresponds with the Priorities and objectives stated therein. This coherence with NSRF implies that - in principle - within each Member State taking part in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme funding will be available through various OPs which can be used to co-finance follow-up actions to transnational projects.

3. Feedback based on 3rd Draft OP (December 2006) (see also presentation in Annex 3)

Implementation system

The Draft OP contains a concise overview of the structures and procedures for programme implementation, including descriptions of the administrative structures (MC, MA, JTS, CA, AA, CP), the project life cycle, publicity and communication. In addition, descriptions of evaluation, monitoring system and electronic data exchange are available. Information on characteristics for Strategic Projects will be further elaborated.

Programme management structures are in line with ERDF requirements and take into consideration the experiences with management of the CADSES Neighbourhood Programme. Thus the Managing Authority and Joint Technical Secretariat are situated at the same location, the "new" authorities (beside MA and JTS also Audit and Certifying Authority) have a strong background in managing Structural Funds and INTERREG-programmes as well as experience in working together. The roles and tasks of the various structures are clearly described.

Recommendations concerning programme management structures are:

- The envisaged sharing of tasks between JTS and Contact Points could be made clearer for the topic "Capitalization".
- For Contact Points and their tasks in partner states it shall be ensured that all Contact Points have the same level of commitment and that financial support is ensured.
- A quick start of programme implementation shall be assured by a swift establishment of programme administration and procedures.

At project level the application of the Lead Partner principle is foreseen, for which experience was already gained during the current programme period.

The description of the quality of projects desired to be submitted is clear and provides useful information on programme and project level. The envisaged focus on outputs and results is also in line with EU requirements.

New, broader and more targeted mechanisms for generating projects (e.g. 1 and 2-step procedures, Strategic Projects) will strongly support the achievement of results and impacts as well as of programme objectives.

The monitoring and evaluation system shows a clear orientation towards results and the achievement of objectives. The proposal on how to deal with transnational activities contributes to clear and quick programme and project implementation.

In general - and with reference to the experience gained with the implementation of the CADSES Neighbourhood Programme - rapid establishment of technical monitoring system and of control systems in the Member States is strongly recommended.

Assessment of Impacts / Impact diagrams (see also Annex 4)

For the assessment of impacts the approach „Process Monitoring of Impacts“ was used. This is an instrument for managing and steering interventions, with the aim of identifying processes that are relevant for the achievement of intended effects and to collect data or information which are required to observe these processes.

The main assumption is that outputs (= projects), which are produced with financial support from the programme, are then used in a certain manner by specific actors so they will contribute to the achievement of results and objectives at programme level. In this way the likely connections between outputs, results and impacts are defined and the task during implementation is to check whether these links remain valid and actually take place.

The assessment was carried out in the following sequence:

- Definition of the level of analysis: It was agreed to undertake the assessment at the level of each Priority, based on the Priority descriptions of the Draft 2.0.
- Elaboration of impact diagrams: A first draft of Impact diagrams was prepared by the evaluators. This draft was presented to the Task Force at the meeting in November 06. On the example of Priority 4 it was shown that in some parts there is no clear interrelation between possible activities, expected results and impacts. As well impact mechanisms are lacking to a great extent and still have to be elaborated.
- Based on these findings impact diagrams were adapted to Draft OP 3.0 and validated with the programming expert.
- The indicators of the 3rd Draft were partly incorporated in the impact diagrams and illustrate which aspects can be captured through this data.

The observation of the core processes for the achievement of results and impacts can support the effective steering of programme implementation. This is in line with the recommendation contained in the EC Working Paper „Indicators for monitoring and evaluation“ to take into account the process dimension in programmes for the objective „European Territorial Cooperation“. And this also constitutes a good information base for an on-going evaluation of the programme.

These impact diagrams show a clear “theory of action”, as most expected effects are linked in a direct and plausible manner to the types of projects envisaged for

support. The objectives at Priority level will likely be achieved with the foreseen Areas of Intervention, but many of the impact mechanisms are yet to be specified or completed.

In the course of the TF-meeting in Berlin on 22./23. January 2007 the proposal for the indicators was reflected by the Ex-ante-evaluators:

- The indicators in the current draft are well suited to observe outputs. They correspond with core indicators required by EC and are suited to capture the output dimension of impact diagrams.
- Suitable result indicators still need to be identified to complete the current indicator system
- Additional information will be required to monitor achievements of or progress towards results and impacts (e.g. more quantifiable indicators in the Implementation Manual, information extracted from project reports).

Based on these recommendations the programming experts prepared a new indicator system. The main change is that the indicators is that the new result indicators contained in the OP are now considered as proxy indicators which measure the contribution of the projects to programme objectives, but not the achievement of objectives per se. Output indicators remained as before (number on projects at Priority level), but they will only be collected at the rather aggregate level of Priorities.

The Implementation Manual will contain an additional set of indicators which should provide more detailed and qualitative information on the projects supported by the programme, including a more detailed breakdown of indicators per Area of Intervention. Therefore it will be possible to report all of on the core indicators requested by the EC, although some of them are not included any more in the indicator set at OP level (e.g. water management, risk prevention).

The basis for quantifying result indicators during programme implementation is qualitative information which is to be collected via project reports. This information on project contributions is closely related to the process assumptions ("use of outputs") contained in the impact diagrams, thus it will be possible to track the likely achievement of expected effects in this manner.

Provided that this information is collected, processed and assessed (e.g. in the framework of an on-going evaluation), the programme authorities would dispose of continuous qualitative and quantitative information, which allows to assess the effectiveness of supported projects, progress toward results and impacts and to identify appropriate steering actions (e.g. in the case of problems or deviations).

(3) Assessment of Final Draft of the OP (3.7)

Appraisal of socio-economic analysis, Relevance of Strategy

The analysis presents an accurate overview of the current situation in the co-operation area. Generally the analysis contains recent and relevant information on the economic and social situation of the programme area. The main disparities, deficits and development potentials, relevant to the programme's strategy are presented in a concise manner, and extensive stakeholder consultation has taken place to identify needs or collect development ideas. The recommendations of the Ex-ante evaluators have largely been integrated, eliminating initial inconsistencies between SWOT analysis and area description.

Rationale and Consistency of the Strategy

The programme objectives and the selected Priorities appropriately address the needs identified in the socio-economic analysis. The OP displays a high degree of strategic rationale: the strategic approach is in line with the premises and principles of the programme strategy and goal, and the selected Priorities address the defined objectives. The programme is well focused and strives for a stronger implementation focus, compared to the current INTERREG IIIB-CADSES Neighbourhood Programme. The experience gained with the implementation of this programme, the findings of the mid-term evaluation and its up-date have been taken into account.

Most of the amendments recommended in the course of the Ex-ante evaluation have been incorporated, which lead to improved justifications of Priorities as well as to a clearer description of the links between Priority, objectives and Areas of Intervention. In addition, the intended application and implementation of horizontal principles was made more visible.

However, the implementation of the strategy - in particular the intended focus and level of ambition - is still associated with some risks that should be taken into account during the programme's implementation:

- Translating programme strategy into action: This will notably require proactive development of transnational projects in line with defined objectives, which can only be achieved if there is a joint understanding of all programme partners. If this transformation process cannot be carried out swiftly, there is a risk of slow programme start, delays in implementation and even de-commitments.
- Mix of financial contributions: The inclusion of different funding sources (e.g. ENPI, due to the participation of Ukraine) as well as the 10%/20%-rule (in third countries and EU-member states) can complicate financial management or control and even delay the implementation of the programme.
- Need to identify / address new actors: The realisation of Strategic Projects requires involvement of key actors for the respective themes, some of them might not be familiar with transnational projects.

- Information on follow-up finance: To strengthen the pre-investment type of projects respectively support project follow-up with other funds, guidance on relevant programmes at EU and national levels is required.

External coherence with other policies

The Draft OP is coherent with the General Structural Fund Regulation and the ERDF Regulation, notably Article 6 (2). It is equally in line with the basic aim of Cohesion Guidelines, especially 2.5. on transnational cooperation (economic and social integration).

The OP Draft was assessed for coherence with the National Strategic Reference Frameworks (NSRF) of all EU-Member States participating in the programme. In addition, interviews were carried out with persons responsible for NSRF.

This assessment has revealed that all Priorities of the Draft OP are in line with the NSRF objectives and Priorities. Therefore the contents of the programme are in line with national strategies. In those cases, where the NSRFs contain a specific chapter on territorial cooperation, it was also verified that the Draft OP correspond with the Priorities and objectives stated therein. This coherence with NSRF implies that - in principle - within each Member State taking part in the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme funding will be available through various OPs, which can be used to co-finance follow-up actions to transnational projects.

When drafting the programme, it was also taken into consideration that programmes under EAFRD and ESF shall fulfil a complementary function, that overlapping is avoided and possible synergies can be created.

Implementation system

The Draft OP contains a concise overview of the structures and procedures for programme implementation, including descriptions of the administrative structures (MC, MA, JTS, CA, AA, CP), the project life cycle, publicity and communication. In addition, descriptions of evaluation, monitoring system and electronic data exchange are available.

Programme management structures are in line with ERDF requirements and take into consideration the experiences with management of the CADSES Neighbourhood Programme. It was thus decided to concentrate administrative structures on one location and to choose experienced institutions.

The roles and tasks of the various structures are clearly described and there is a clear division of tasks between Management, Certifying and Audit Authority.

At project level, the application of the Lead Partner principle is foreseen, whereby the authorities can build on experiences from the current programming period. The proposal on how to deal with transnational activities contributes to clear and quick project implementation.

There is a good and useful description of desired quality of projects and the mechanisms for the generation of projects (targeted calls, 1 and 2 step procedures). In addition, an outline is provided on the desired characteristics for Strategic Projects. All of this can make an important contribution to achieve the intended focus on outputs and results.

The monitoring and evaluation system also displays an orientation towards observing the achievement of expected results and objectives. However, the descriptions at present are only rudimentary, and it remains to be seen whether the required focus on expected results and project contributions is actually integrated in the templates for applications and reports and if the foreseen on-going evaluation will be implemented in an adequate manner to support the Monitoring Committee in its envisaged steering tasks.

Concerning complementarity with other programmes, no provisions are made for overlaps with the South East Europe and Alpine Space Programmes, beyond the application of the 20% rule. In particular, mechanisms for co-ordinating decision-making at project level should be introduced as well as provisions for the continuation of successful partnerships, which have been established within the (much larger) CADSES cooperation space.

To allow for a swift programme start as well as a smooth implementation of the programme, following recommendations of the Ex-ante evaluation are underlined:

- A swift establishment of programme administration and procedures shall be ensured
- It shall be envisaged that all Contact Points have the same level of commitment and that financial support is ensured.
- A rapid establishment of technical monitoring system and of control systems in the member states shall be strived for.

Main results with regard to expected impacts

In order to assess the likeliness of results and impacts, impact diagrams were prepared by the evaluators at the level of Priorities. These initial diagrams were presented to the Task Force, adapted to new OP Draft (3.0) and discussed with the programming expert team as well as once more with the Task Force.

These impact diagrams show that most of the expected effects are linked in a direct and plausible manner to the types of activities envisaged for support. Therefore the programme displays a rather consistent set of impact mechanisms and „theory of action“. All of the expected results and impacts can be achieved with the foreseen Areas of Intervention.

However, there is a clear need for continuous steering at programme level to ensure focus and progress towards results. Elements in this direction are the targeted calls, the development of Strategic Projects and continuous monitoring of project contributions (via applications / reports).

The indicator systems consists of two types – output and result indicators.

- In the proposed system outputs are captured at a rather aggregated level (number of projects on Priority level), but with the additional set of indicators contained in the Implementation Manual it will be possible to provide figures on indicators at the level of Areas of Intervention and thus meet the likely reporting requirements of the EC (which are not clear at present)
- Result indicators are considered as proxy indicators, which measure the contribution of the projects to programme objectives, but not the achievement of objectives per se.

The Implementation Manual will contain an additional set of indicators, which should provide more detailed and qualitative information on the projects supported by the programme, including a more detailed breakdown of indicators per Area of Intervention.

The financial allocations at Priority level were agreed in a collaborative manner between the programme partners, taking into consideration their thematic preferences, their estimation on the potential for project generation and the experience gained during the current programme period. Based on these premises, the resulting distribution - preference for Priorities 2 (accessibility) and 3 (environment) – seems plausible, but the lower allocations for Priorities 1 and 4 should still permit the achievement of their intended objectives.

A more refined picture of the financial allocations per thematic areas (based on an aggregation of the quantifications for the categories of expenditure) reveals that transport, research and technological development, innovation and entrepreneurship and environmental protection incl. risk management will receive the highest allocations. These five thematic areas will receive almost 45 % of the total funding, which is considered appropriate given that these are thematic areas of EU - wide importance, which also have a good potential to demonstrate a transnational value-added.

The smallest allocations are foreseen for reforms in employment and inclusion as well as access to employment, which are not considered to be a main focus of the programme by the Task Force.

Other thematic areas with comparably smaller allocations as urban regeneration and information society should be generally closely observed in project generation and reallocation of funds considered if the financial volumes prove to be too small for reaching the operational objectives of the corresponding Areas of Intervention.

The quantification of indicators is based on two plausible assumptions (average project size and expected contributions per project). The assumed average project size in terms of ERDF contribution (1,5 Mio) is considerably higher than in the current CADSES Programme (1 Mio), but due to the higher ERDF-co-financing rate average total project size will stay more or less the same.

As a result of the larger project size in terms of ERDF-share the expected total number of projects is only slightly above the figure for the current period (155 vs. 134 at present) - although the ERDF contribution to the programme and the total

funding available will be considerably higher than in the current CADSES Programme. The targets for the result indicators (expected contributions to the objectives of the Areas of Intervention) are based on the assumption of on average three contributions per project, which seems ambitious yet achievable – but will require adequate reporting of these contributions, so all of them can be duly captured.

Altogether, it can be stated that the allocation of financial resources – in terms of both volume and their distribution to the Priorities and Areas of Intervention – is in line with the programme’s theory of action. And it can therefore be expected that this allocation will provide adequate support for the achievement of the objectives as stated in the OP.

Integration of core recommendations in the OP

The following table contains a synthesis of the main recommendations made during the Ex-ante evaluation and how they have been incorporated during the programming process:

Ex-Ante Recommendations	Integration in the Final-OP Draft
<i>Feedback to first Draft OP (September 06):</i>	
Coherence of analysis and SWOT with other programme parts to be improved – especially with Strategy and Priorities	The analysis has been newly structured and further elaborated. The consistency of the analysis, SWOT, strategy and Priorities has been cross-checked throughout the whole document. The SWOT analysis has been structured according to the Priorities and has been completed with further information arising from the analysis.
Some chapters of the analysis could be elaborated further or merged, strong spatial focus should be extended	The spatial focus of the analysis has been balanced by incorporating socio-cultural aspects, demographic trends, migration, innovation and innovation system. New maps based on Eurostat-data have substituted the former ESPON maps. These maps have the advantage to show only between 1-2 indicators per map and therefore do not make the need to explain the ESPON methodology.
Strategy needs to be developed further, choice of Priorities better justified as well as descriptions of strategy completed	The strategy has been revised and shortened. The newly decided overall strategic goal has been incorporated into the 2 nd Draft. The strategy has been linked to the Priorities chosen, by outlining the programme objectives. The justification of the Priorities chosen has been integrated into Draft 3.5 through the summary description of the main findings of the Ex-ante evaluation and the description of how the SEA results have been taken into account in the OP strategy.
Hierarchy of objectives should be	The hierarchy of the former overall

elaborated further and expected results inserted in Priorities	strategic goal and the two programme objectives has been restructured: Once programme goal was formulated, which is pursued by two strategic approaches (former programme objectives). The Priorities 1 to 4 relate to one or both of the strategic approaches. Expected results are integrated into the descriptions per Priority as well as in the Chapter "Quality of Projects" under the implementing provisions.
Descriptions of Directions of Support need to be improved and value added of transnational activities illustrated	<p>In the 2nd Draft, the Directions of Support (DoS) have been reformulated and the former block-descriptions have been divided into (1) aims; (2) "directions of support" (bullet points in the text boxes); (3) target groups and (4) possible project examples. Directions of Support have been re-arranged between the Priority axes in order to make them more coherent. In a later stage (Draft 3.0), the possible project examples were shifted into the Implementation Manual, while the aims were described in more detail. Finally, the Directions of Support were renamed in Areas of Intervention.</p> <p>For each Priority axis a paragraph on the transnational approach has been introduced.</p>
Risk of broad thematic approach with limited budget: requires clear criteria for project selection and complementarity with other programmes	In Chapter 6 (Implementation) a coherent set of eligibility and project selection criteria has been integrated, which will help to focus the programme during the implementation phase. Furthermore in various occasions reference to the Implementation Manual has been integrated, which specifically tackles this issue. The compliance with other policies and programmes is described in Chapter 3.6.
Risk of delayed start due to unclear focus, and new implementation procedures	The description of the implementing provisions has been concretised in order to ensure a speedy start-up of the programme. Preparatory steps are outlined in the Operational Programme and further reference to the Implementation Manual is given.
Implementation of horizontal objectives (sustainability and equal opportunities) should be made clearer	General principles, understood as horizontal objectives have been incorporated into the draft: (1) sustainability (2) Innovation and (3) Equal opportunities and non-discrimination
Transnational value of programme needs to be demonstrated clearer (vs. cross-border or interregional cooperation)	Transnationality has been defined throughout the programme document in terms of general quality characteristics of project, the transnational approach for each

	Priority axis and in terms of relevant outputs and results. Under the Chapter "Compliance with other policies and programmes" the demarcation from other programmes has been described.
<i>Feedback to 2nd Draft OP (November 06)</i>	
Cohesion should be incorporated in the strategic goal	For the 3 rd Draft a revised overall goal has been formulated "Strengthening territorial cohesion, promoting internal integration and enhancing the competitiveness of Central Europe". The new goal has been described and integrated into the objective tree. A better consistency of goal, objectives and Areas of Intervention was achieved.
Relation of DoS activities to Aims and Objectives should be made clearer (esp. within Priority 4)	The relation of the activities with the aims of the Areas of Intervention has been cross-checked on basis of the Impact-Monitoring-Diagrams. Priority 4 has been re-structured, dissolving one DoS (= Area of Intervention). The Priority aims have been adapted.
<i>Feedback to 3rd Draft OP (December 06)</i>	
Indicator system shall be completed and suitable result indicators identified	A subset of Ex-Ante-quantified result-indicators for the Priority axes and Areas of Intervention has been incorporated into Draft 3.6
<i>Feedback to 4th Draft OP (March 07)</i>	
Average project size shall be lowered, quantification of outputs and contributions to results need to be revised accordingly	In Draft 3.6 the average project-size has been lowered to EUR 1.5 million ERDF funds.
International organisations, consortia and NGOs should be taken into consideration as eligible partners	International organisations, consortia and NGOs are taken into consideration as eligible partners in Draft 3.6.
Quantifications are still required for categories of expenditure and indicator targets.	The categories of expenditure and the indicator targets have been quantified in Draft 3.6.

(4) Annexes

4. 1. Presentation Task Force Ljubljana, 5./6. Oct. 2007

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



- *Appraisal of socio-economic analysis and the needs resulting of it*
Analysis chapter 2
 - ⇒ Comprehensive analysis but dealt with in several chapters
 - ⇒ Some needs targeted by programme strategy (incl. objectives, priorities) are not sufficiently covered in the analysis.
 - ⇒ Strong focus on ESPON-results/spatial issues and EUROSTAT-data.
 - ⇒ Ukraine is often not dealt with in the analysis – relevant information should be added.
 - ⇒ Uneven treatment of issues in the analysis/SWOT and the descriptions of strategy/objectives/priorities.
 - ⇒ No reference to other programmes, such as convergence, regional competitiveness and employment or other territorial cooperation areas, etc.

Version 1.0, 5./6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



- *Appraisal of socio-economic analysis and the needs resulting of it*
Analysis chapter 2
 - ⇒ The "context part" of Priorities should be included in the analysis or SWOT.
 - ⇒ Needs should be identified in the analysis or SWOT
2.3. Dynamic Development in the Central Europe
 - ⇒ Positioning of the three sub-chapters (competitiveness, cohesion, integration) in relation to analysis, SWOT and strategy?
 - ⇒ Contains many elements which could be part of the analysis (e.g. Competitiveness -> Socio-economic situation).
 - ⇒ Other elements could be included in the strategy

Version 1.0, 5./6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



Appraisal of socio-economic analysis and the needs resulting of it

2.5. Lessons and recommendations

- ⇒ The selection of thematic fields/project examples should be more in line with priorities planned for this programme (e.g. also accessibility).
- ⇒ Is this chapter based on the update of the MTE or reflect the experience of programme partners?
- ⇒ Chapter should be limited to lessons learned, recommendations are more suited for programme strategy and implementation chapters.
- ⇒ Implementation problems of the current programme are still missing in this chapter:
 - Difficulties in the implementation of the programme (e.g. delayed start of the programme, n+2 decommitment, payment stop, etc.)
 - Difficulties of current structures

Version 1.0, 5/6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



▪ *Assessment of the relevance of the strategy to the needs identified/Evaluation of the consistency of the strategy*

Strategy

- ⇒ Justification of strategy is missing
 - why these objectives/criteria?
 - why these priorities?
 - How was the programme logic formed?
- ⇒ Description of strategies incomplete.
 - what is the "roadmap" for reaching the objectives?
- ⇒ Relevance of criteria for strategic approach
 - Objectives or criteria for selection of strategic projects

Version 1.0, 5/6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



■ *Evaluation of the rationale of the strategy and its consistency*

Objectives

- ⇒ Rather comprehensive descriptions, some elements are better suited for analysis and SWOT
- ⇒ Some new issues are raised which are not covered by the analysis
- ⇒ Expected results for respective priorities are missing
- ⇒ Hierarchy of objectives not clear at higher level
 - Objectives 1 and 2 are rather general than specific objectives
 - Connection of Objective 1 and 2 to priorities not clear in diagramme
- ⇒ Sustainability and equality as horizontal objective not mentioned /should be outlined more explicitly

Version 1.0, 5/6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



■ *Evaluation of the rationale of the strategy and its consistency*

Priorities:

- ⇒ Some statements of project principles seem applicable for all priorities
 - summarise in introduction?
- ⇒ Move context description to analysis

Directions of Support:

- ⇒ DoS only explained with thematic examples, therefore it is not clear what activities/products shall be cofinanced (e.g. at urban technology).
- ⇒ Often unclear how topics shall be dealt with at transnational level – what shall be the transnational added value?
- ⇒ Thematic overlaps with activities supported by other funds (EAFRD, ESF) or other programmes (Objective 1, 2, 3)
- ⇒ Coherence between content and title of DoS sometimes doubtful

Version 1.0, 5/6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



■ *Policy risks*

- ⇒ Broad thematic scope but limited budget
 - requires clear selection criteria and mechanisms in order to maintain strategic focus
 - requires complementarity with other programmes that could support follow-up-projects (e.g. investments)
- ⇒ Secure transnational added value of programme
 - some issues contained in DoS are also suited for CBC and interregional cooperation
- ⇒ Delay of start due to:
 - unclear focus and new implementation procedures (project generation, etc.)
 - new programme structures

Version 1.0, 5/6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



■ *External coherence check*

ERDF-Regulation

- ⇒ Non-discrimination/gender mainstreaming as horizontal goals beside sustainability not mentioned in the draft OP.
 - ⇒ Complementarity with Seventh Framework Programme and Competitiveness Innovation Framework Programme partly/not yet addressed
- Art. 6./2.
- ⇒ In general activities proposed in the Draft OP are eligible, but
 - doubts regarding support for rural activities as currently formulated in the P4/DoS (e.g. rural networks, handicraft, etc.)
 - P1/DoS C): shift some proposals rather to P2 (accessibility) – as well other thematic examples in DoS might fit better in other priorities
 - ⇒ Clear transnational dimension/impact not always reflected in the proposed thematic fields for DoS.

Version 1.0, 5/6.10.2006

Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP



External coherence check

Cohesion Guidelines

- ⇒ Draft in general in line with basic aim with priorities for transnational cooperation (economic and social integration)
- ⇒ Some elements could be strengthened to improve coherence (e.g. more river basin/water management)
- ⇒ History of institutional structures and existing cooperations / conventions not mentioned in the draft OP/analysis (e.g. Carpathian convention, danube cooperation, etc.)

Version 1.0, 5./6.10.2006

Ex-ante Evaluation - Further Steps



- *Ex-ante-Evaluation of First Draft OP*
 - Discuss detail comments with external expert for the SWOT
- *Appraisal of the external coherence of the strategy*
 - Other supra-national policies? Equality between men and women?
 - National policies / strategies (NSRF etc.) in collaboration with contact persons
- *Ex-ante Evaluation of Draft OP*
 - Assessment of incorporation of earlier recommendations
 - Evaluation of expected results and impacts
 - Appraisal of the proposed implementation system

Version 1.0, 5./6.10.2006

4.2. Presentation Task Force Bratislava 22./23. Nov, 2006

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Activities and presentation



Activities since last Programming Group

- ⇒ *Assessment of external coherence (national level)*
- ⇒ *Incorporation of recommendations*
- ⇒ *Initial assessment of expected results / impacts*

Focus of today's presentation

- ⇒ *Overview on the results of the check of the coherence of the CENTRAL draft with national strategies (NSRF, NDP)*
- ⇒ *Comments on incorporation of recommendation*

Focus of tomorrow's presentation

- ⇒ *Initial assessment of expected results / impacts*

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Assessment of external coherence



Country	NSRF-Version	Objective 3 – chapter	Other relevant chapters	Interview	Comments	Coherence
Germany	Draft October 2006	Yes	-	Ms. Karin Scheffel	No further changes to Obj. 3 – chapter expected	Coherent
Hungary	Draft	No	-	Mr. Kovács, Mr. Kleinheincz	No further changes to Obj. 3 – chapter expected	Coherence by Obj. 3 - Programmes
Poland	Draft Aug. 2006	No	Strategic goals	Mr. Zuber	Currently Ex-ante check of NSRF – next draft in December 06	General coherent – work still in progress
Austria	Final version	Yes	-	Mr. Seidl		Coherent with objectives and strategies f. transn. cooperation

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Assessment of external coherence 						
Country	NSRF-Version	Objective 3 – chapter	Other relevant chapters	Interview	Comments	Coherence
Slovenia	NSRF-Draft Oct. 2006	NSRF – No	NSRF – specific objectives on NSRF-level	Mr. Mihalic	NSRF-Discussion wether to include more on Obj. 3	NSRF: Generally Coherent NDP: Coherent
	NDP-Draft June 2006	NDP – Yes	NDP – chapter 7.6			
Italy	Draft	Yes	Strategic issues	Interviews to be held	Overview to be completed	Coherent on strategic level – work in progress
Slovakia	Draft Nov. 2006	No	Territorial cooperation mentioned briefly in introduction part	Mrs. Tomkova Mrs. Hruskova		Generally coherent – without specific chapter
Czech Republic	Draft	Short paragraph on transnational and interregional cooperation	Strategic goals	Miroslav Danek	Next version of NSRF will contain more specific information on transnational cooperation	In general coherent - Work in progress

No reply from Ukraine

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Incorporation of recommendations 	
<p>Appraisal of socio-economic analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ <i>Recommended additional data / information to argue specific aspects of the programme has been incorporated , except</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Safety issue in transport ⇒ <i>Analysis now contains an accurate overview of main disparities, deficits and development potential</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Could be shortened for some parts ⇒ <i>SWOT structured very well</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some points should be added to ensure coherence ⇒ <i>Lessons and recommendations: Ex-Ante-Evaluation incorporated, except</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project examples should relate to priorities (additional example on innovation?) - Outline of experience with project and programme implementation (further points/recommendations in 3.3.1 und 6.2.1) 	

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Incorporation of recommendations



Relevance of Strategy

- ⇒ *More clear and concise – recommendation taken into consideration*
 - New General principles support strategic focus
- ⇒ *Additional recommendations are:*
 - Incorporate cohesion in the strategic goal?
 - Add accessibility in terms of transport in „subpoints“ to strategic goal?
 - Territorial aspect in „innovation“ and „competitiveness“?
 - > will be revised after Priority/DoS-discussion

Rationale and consistency of strategy

- ⇒ *Recommended amendments have been carried out*
 - Better justification of priorities, description of strategy to reach objectives
 - Better description of links between Priority, Objectives and DoS
 - Implementation of horizontal priorities has been made more visible

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Incorporation of recommendations



Rationale and consistency of strategy (cont.)

- ⇒ *Strategy is more rational and consistent*
 - Objectives are in line with strategic premises and principles
 - Selected priorities suited to address objectives
 - Programme is focused, displays high level of ambition
 - ⇒ *Priorities - DoS: Structure concise and clear, but*
 - Some DoS-activities could be merged
 - Relation to Aims and Objectives not always clear
 - Some DoS-activities defined quite wide or (for some parts) as Aims
 - Ensure transnational dimension/impact
 - Consider doubts concerning ERDF-coherence for purely rural activities
- > Will be dealt with in the priority discussion and Impact analysis

4.3. Presentation Task Force Berlin 22./23.1, 2007

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Activities and presentation



Activities since last Programming Group

- ⇒ *Adaptation of impact diagrams to new OP draft*
 - Validated with Drafting expert (H. Wimmer)
- ⇒ *Completion / up-date of external coherence*

Focus of today's presentation

- ⇒ *Initial assessment of expected results and impacts*
- ⇒ *Appraisal of Implementation System*

Tasks still remaining

- ⇒ *Final assessment of expected results and impacts (based on financial allocations, quantification of indicators)*
- ⇒ *EaE Report and synthesis text for OP*

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Appraisal of Implementation System



Programme Management

- ⇒ *Clear and concise overview of structures and procedures*
- ⇒ *Implementation system is in line with ERDF requirements and previous experience with management of CADSES*
 - MA and JTS at same location
 - New authorities (MA, JTS, Audit and Certifying Authority) have extensive background with management of (INTERREG) programmes and experience in working together
- ⇒ *Clear and organised cooperation JTS – NCPs envisaged*
 - Same level of commitment in all MS? Financial support?
 - Division of tasks for capitalisation?
- ⇒ *Swift establishment of programme administration and procedures necessary → assure quick start of programme implementation!*

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Appraisal of Implementation System



Project generation

- ⇒ *Description of desired quality of projects very clear and useful*
- ⇒ *Focus on outputs / results corresponds with EU requirements*
- ⇒ *Broader and more targeted mechanisms for project generation (1 and 2 step procedures, Strategic projects) will facilitate achievement of objectives*

Monitoring and Evaluation System:

- ⇒ *Clear orientation towards results / achievement of goals envisaged*
- ⇒ *Rapid establishment of technical monitoring system is important*
- ⇒ *Adequate proposal for dealing with trans-national activities / costs*
- ⇒ *Quick set-up and swift functioning of MS control systems is crucial*

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Next steps



Tasks to be completed

- ⇒ *Final assessment of expected results and impacts (based on financial allocations, quantification of indicators)*
- ⇒ *Preparation of synthesis text for OP*
- ⇒ *Preparation of EaE Report (to be circulated with TF?)*
- ⇒ *Revision of Reports after submission / negotiation*

Support for new MA / JTS

- ⇒ *Training / demonstration of Process Monitoring of Impacts*
- ⇒ *Identification of suitable result indicators*
- ⇒ *Additional support for implementation (e.g. preparation of applications, reports) ?*

4.4. Process Monitoring and Impact Diagrams

Towards impact-led Monitoring

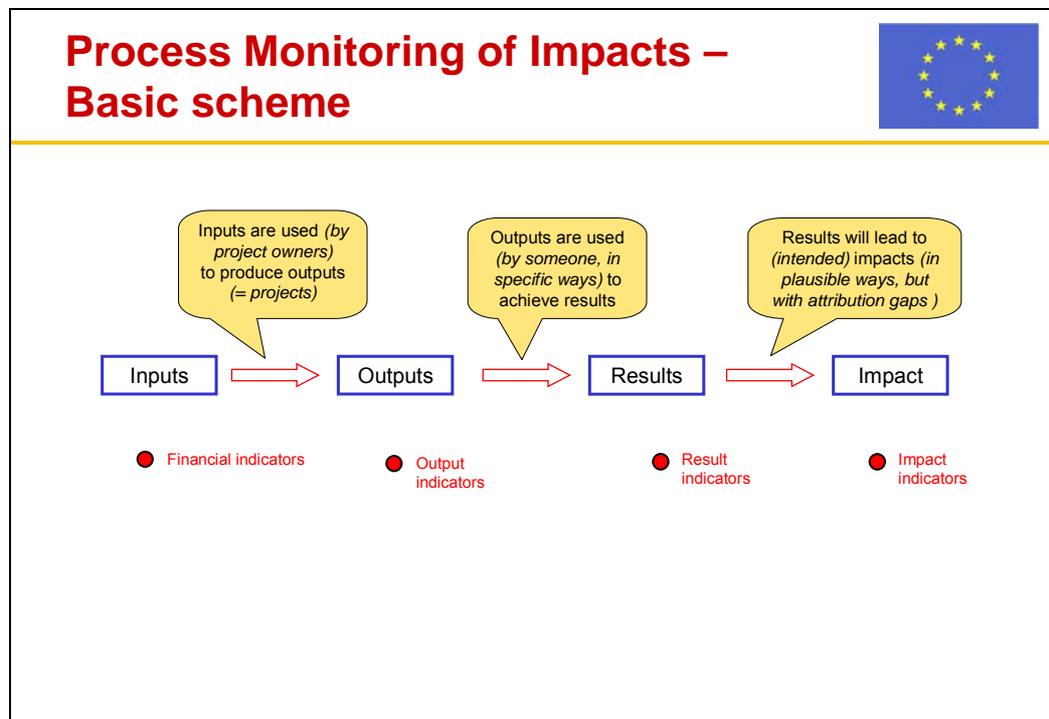


- Encouraged by EU Commission (Regulations, WP Indicators)
- Impacts are core weakness in present monitoring / evaluations
- More quantifiable result / impact indicators ?
 - ✓ Quantitative indicators capture only narrow part of reality
 - ✓ Information on them arrives too late for management
 - ✓ Impact achievement is doubtful measure for effectiveness

Instead: Monitor processes leading to results / impacts

- ✓ Provide early information for implementing agents
- ✓ Focus on domains to be influenced by management
- ✓ Use indicators where quantified information is appropriate / obtainable

- Instrument for steering programme implementation
 - ✓ Core assumption: inputs and outputs are used by someone (e.g. project owners, partners) in specific ways to achieve effects



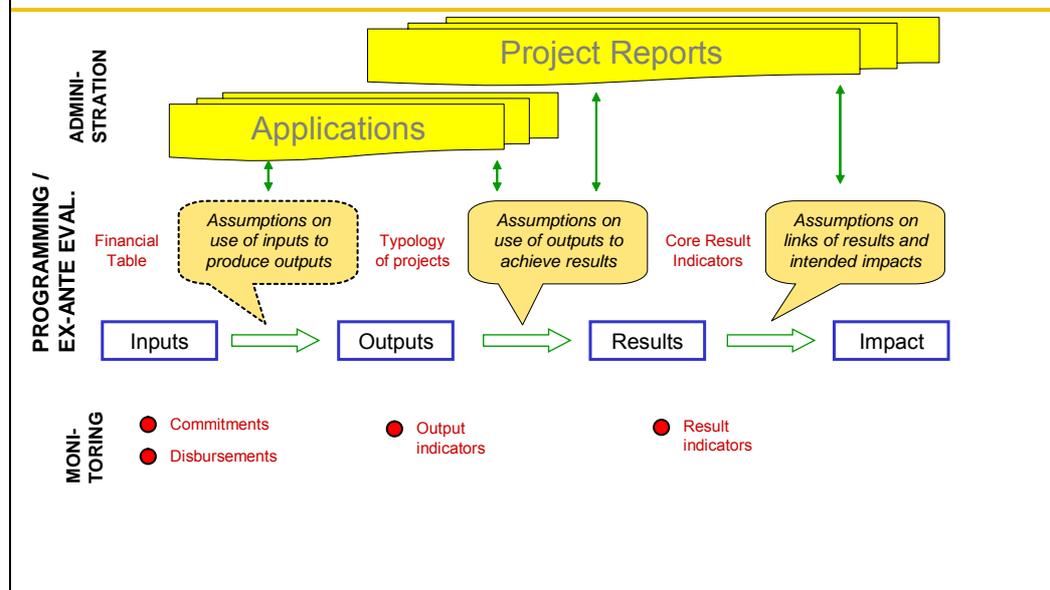
Two types of Monitoring



To meet different information needs of involved actors

- **Electronic Monitoring System**
 - ✓ Data to meet formal requirements of higher levels (Managing Authority, EU Commission) and for reporting
 - ✓ Information on controllable and quantifiable data (predominantly output, few selected result indicators)
- **Process Monitoring of Impacts**
 - ✓ Qualitative and quantitative information for programme actors and evaluators
 - ✓ Collection of information should be integrated with other activities (to limit workload of programme administration)
 - ✓ Information sources: Applications, Reports, contacts/meetings of programme actors with project owners

Process Monitoring of Impacts – Main elements



Main advantages



For programme actors

- Clarifying / focusing programme logic, improved descriptions for strategy / Priorities / Activity Fields
- Joint orientation for future project assessment and selection
- Early information on likely achievement of results

For project owners

- Simplified / standardised reporting, streamlined applications
- More flexibility during implementation (accountable for results)

For evaluators

- Evaluation questions for on-going / ex-post (assumptions / linkages)
- Standardised reports facilitate analysing / processing of information

For all

- Joint focus on achieving intended results – not outputs or indicators!

Assessment of results / impacts



- Impact diagrams based on descriptions of Priorities and Directions of Support, drafted with support of OIR
 - ✓ Output: types of projects mentioned in DoS
 - ✓ Use of Outputs: derived from description of strategy of Priority and AF
 - ✓ Results: Aims of DoS
 - ✓ Impacts: Objectives at Priority (nd Programme) level
- Allows to identify core processes expected to lead results and impacts
- Allows to assess the likeliness of their achievement
- Feed-back invited from TF / DT /OIR (adapt draft diagrams)

Ex-ante- Evaluation: Assessment of results / impacts



Clear theory of action and plausible impact mechanisms

- ⇒ *Impact diagrams have been elaborated for all Priorities and Areas of Intervention*
- ⇒ *Most expected effects are linked in a direct and plausible manner to the types of projects envisaged for support*
- ⇒ *Objectives at Priority level will likely be achieved with the foreseen Areas of Intervention, but many impact mechanisms are yet to be specified or completed*

Indicators are well suited to observe outputs

- ⇒ *Indicator system corresponds with core indicators required by EC and suited to capture output dimension of impact diagrams*
- ⇒ *Additional information will be required to monitor achievement of or progress towards results / impacts (quantified indicators, reports)*

Process Monitoring of Impacts Further steps in implementation



Complete indicator system

- ⇒ *Identify suitable result indicators (Implementation Manual)*

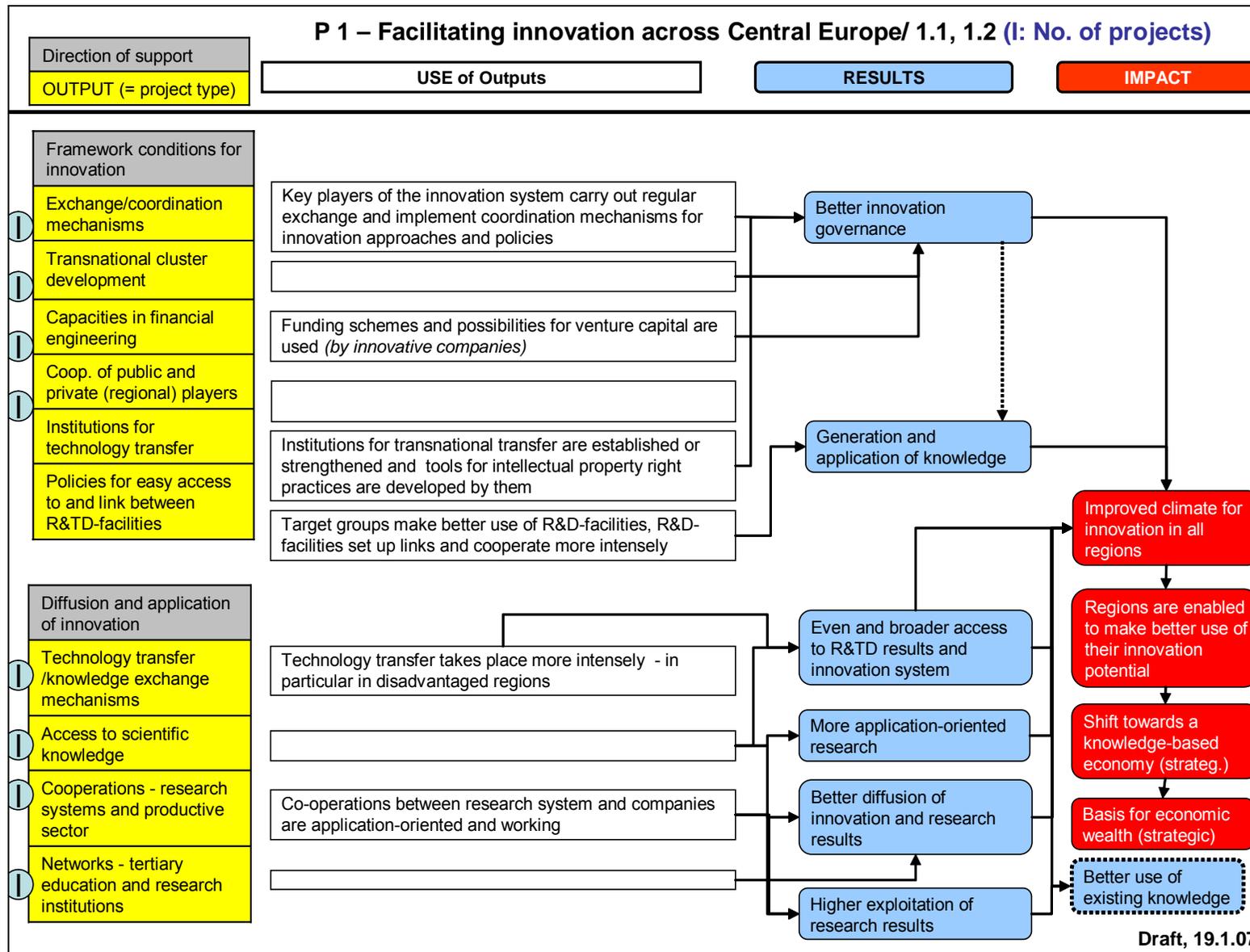
Prepare programme management documents

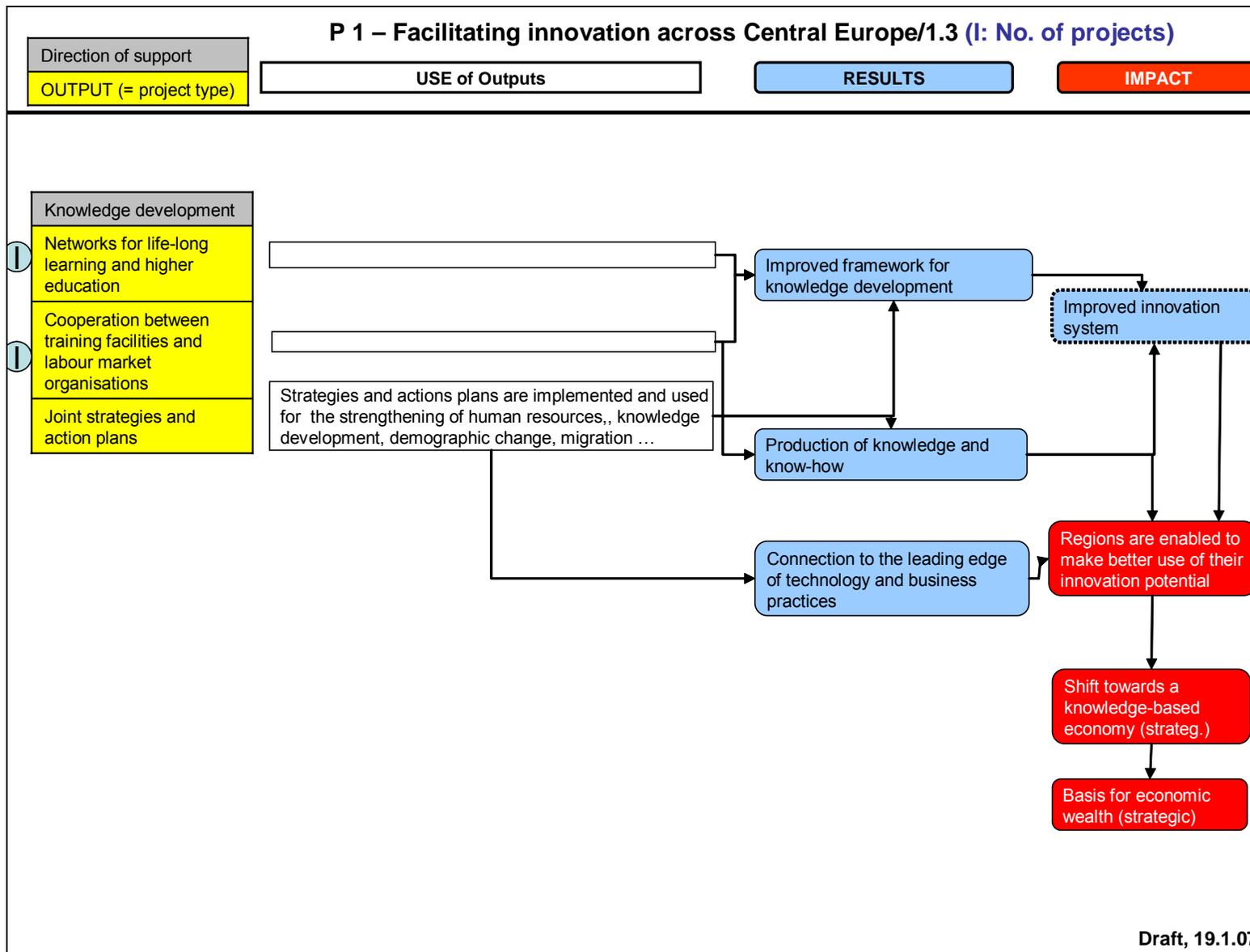
- ⇒ *Use process assumptions / linkages in impact diagrams to*
 - Select appropriate information for Application forms
 - Focus Project Reports on tracking achievement of objectives (streamline, standardise)

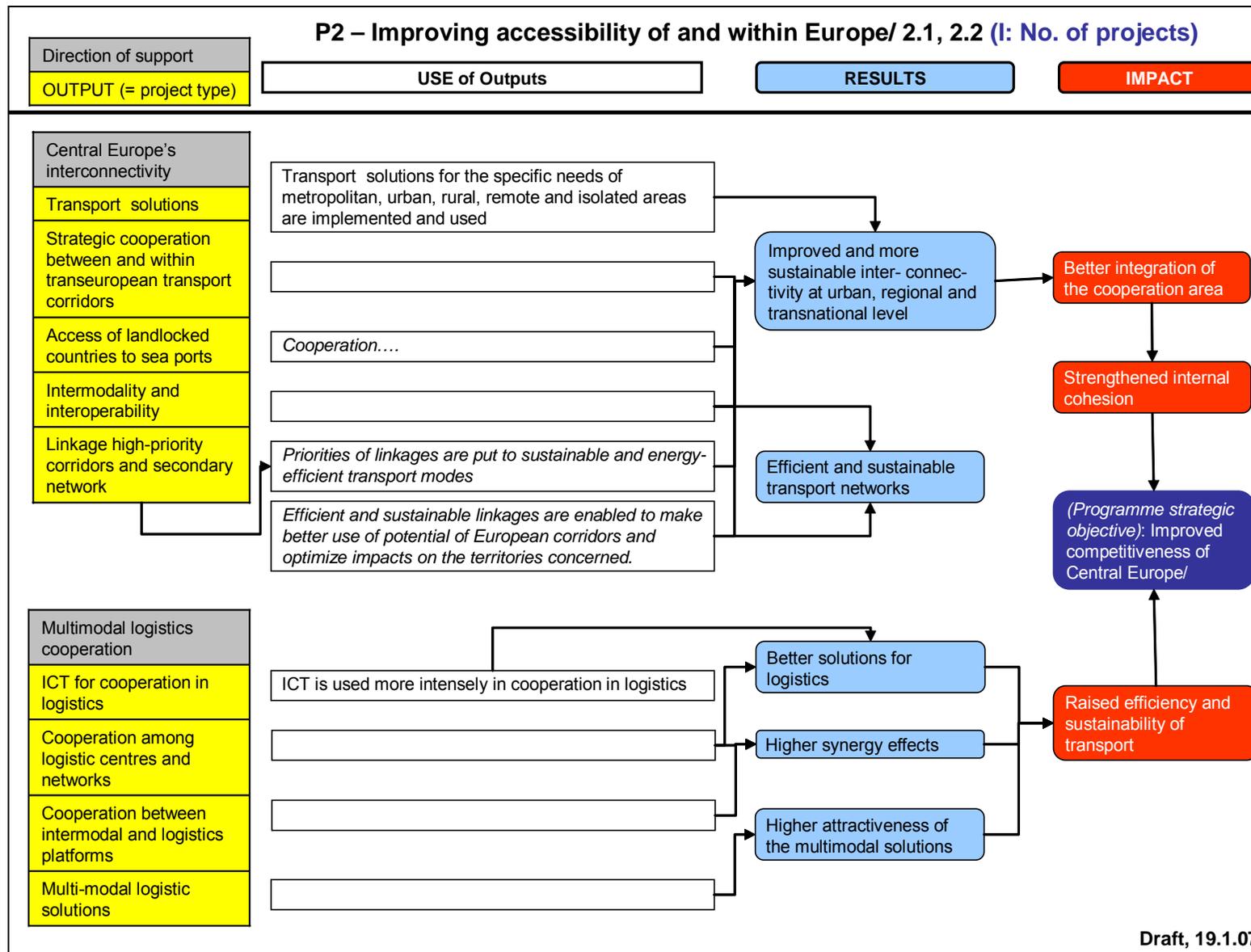
Prepare calls and select projects

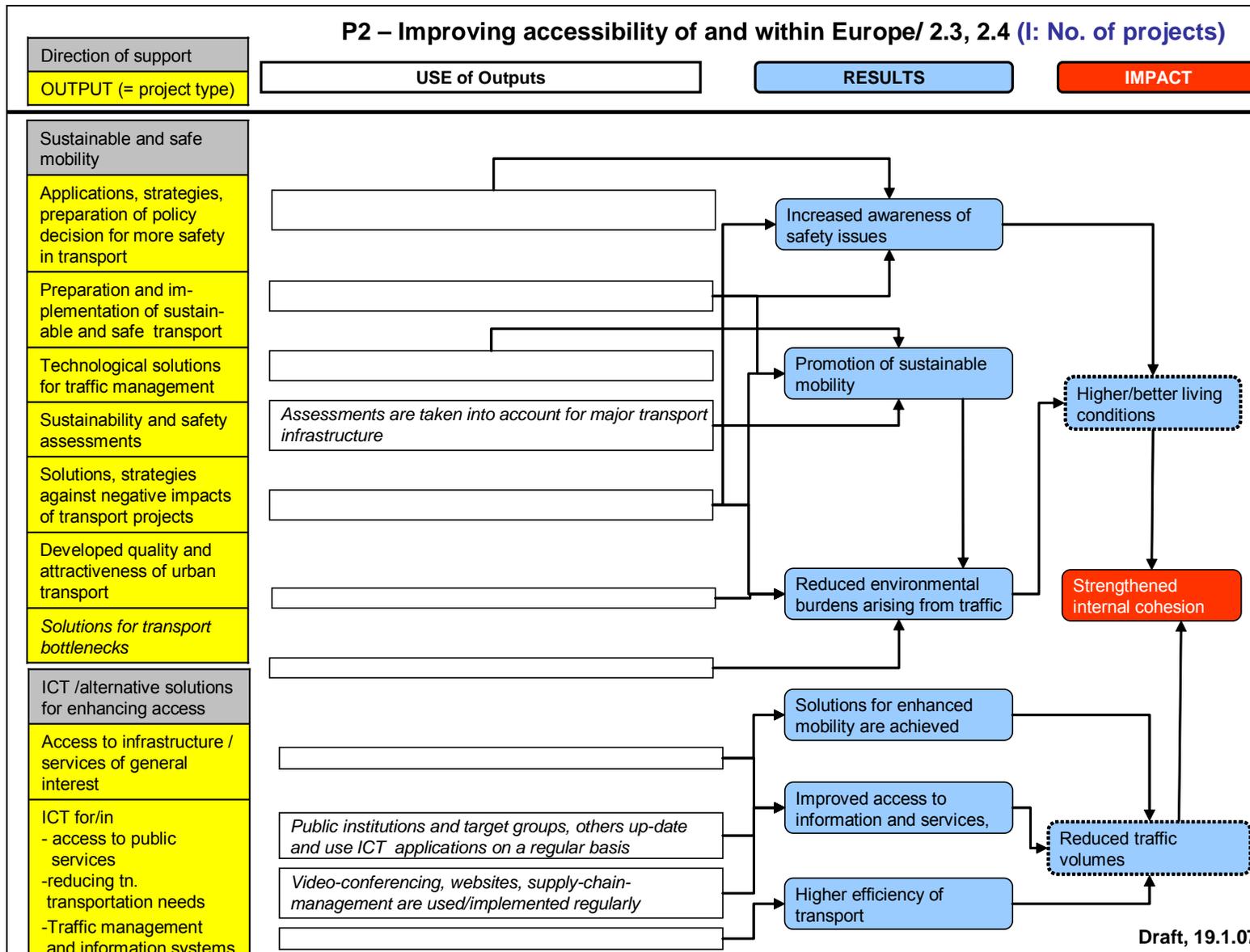
- ⇒ *Complete / specify process assumptions before (thematic) calls*
- ⇒ *Use impact diagrams for*
 - Appraisal of applications
 - Development of Strategic projects

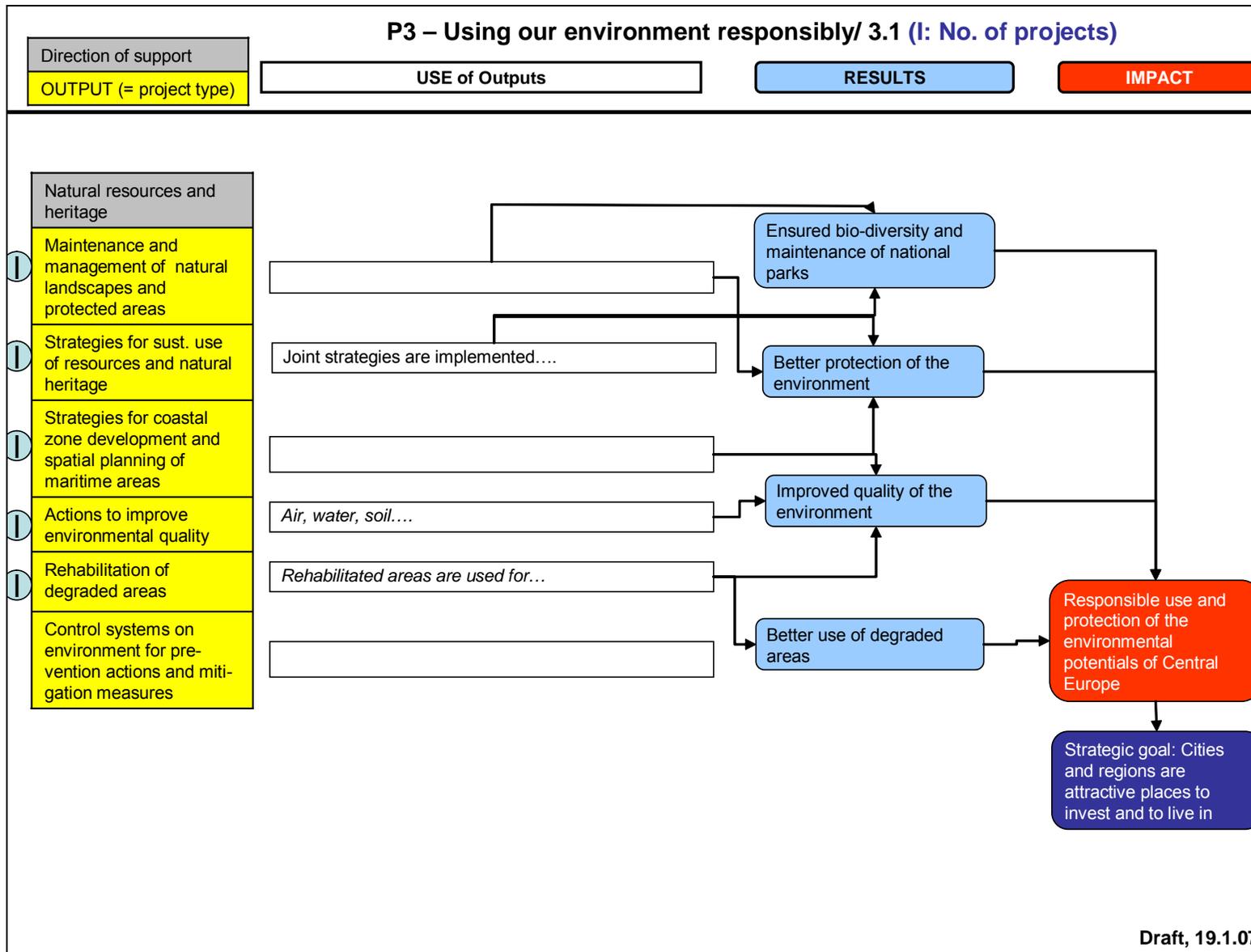
The following pages contain the final versions of the impact diagrams for Priorities 1 -4, including the indicator set of the 3rd Draft OP.

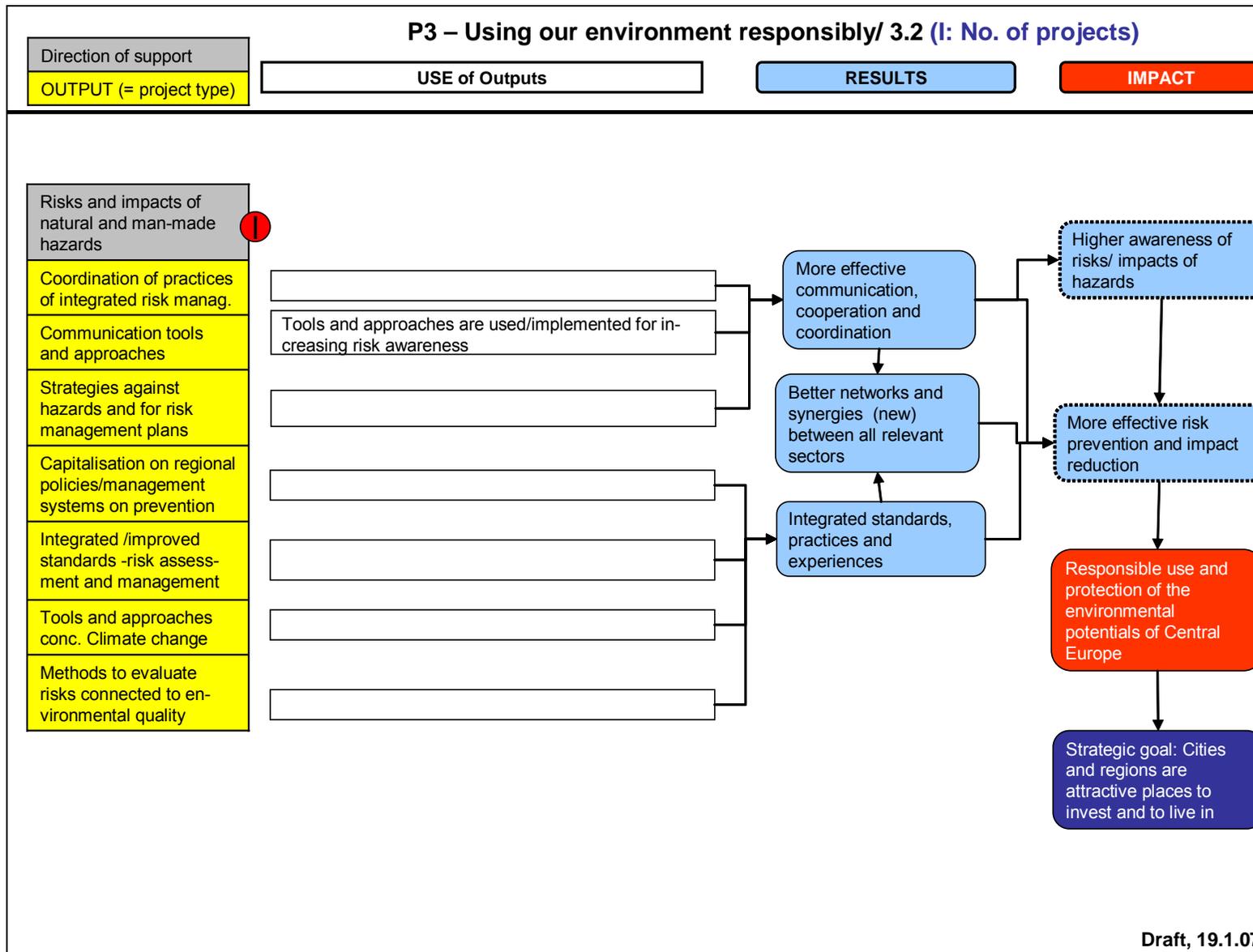


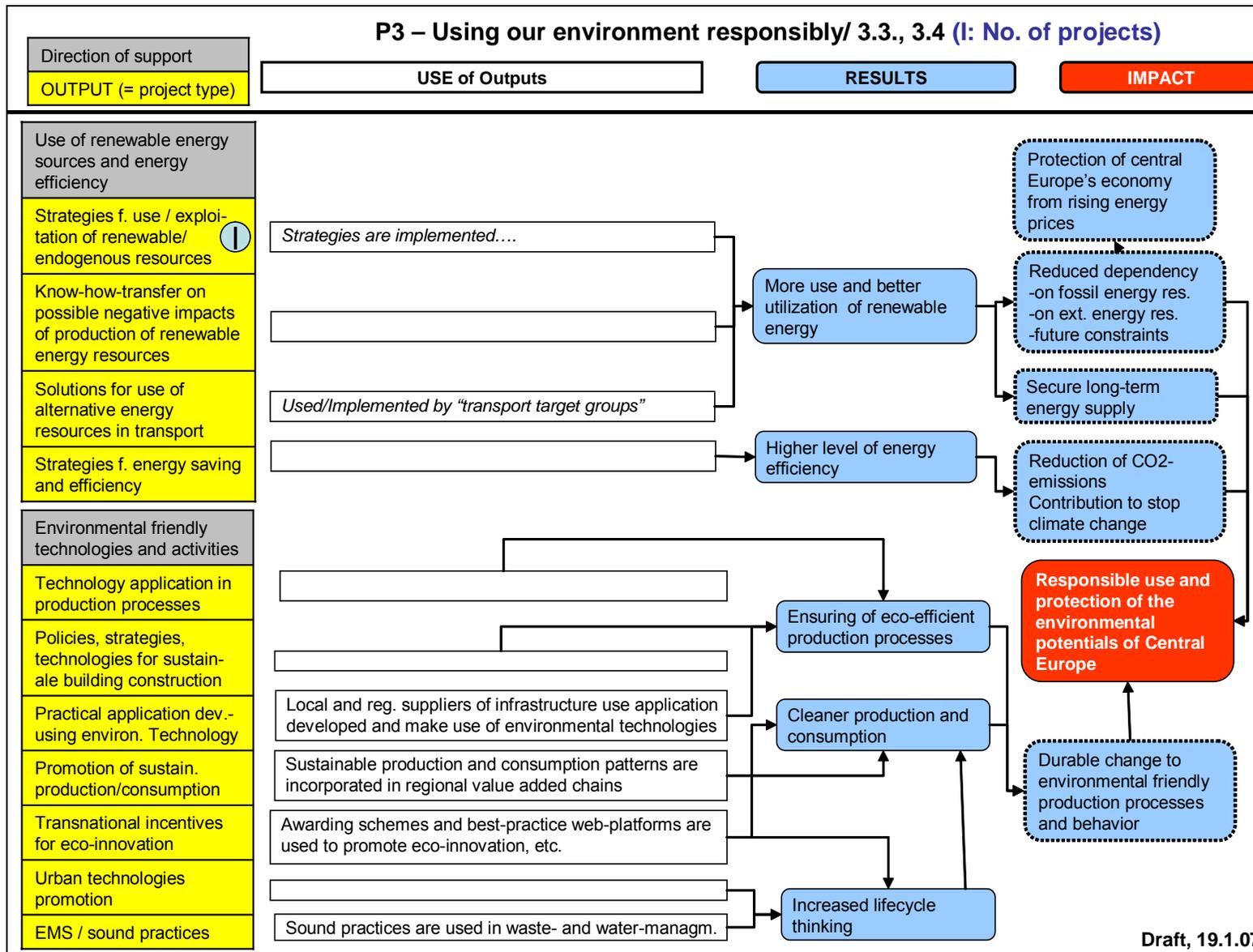


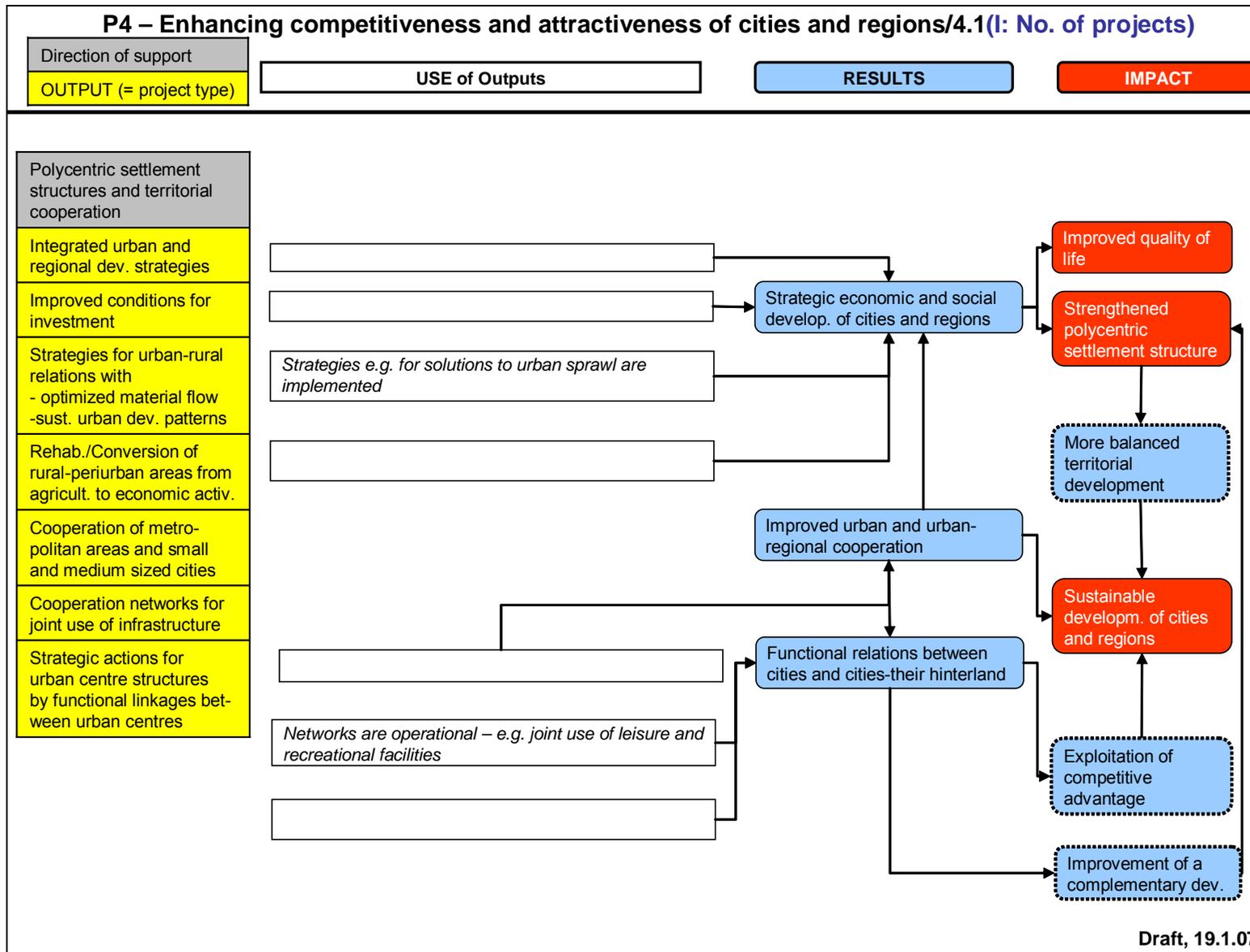


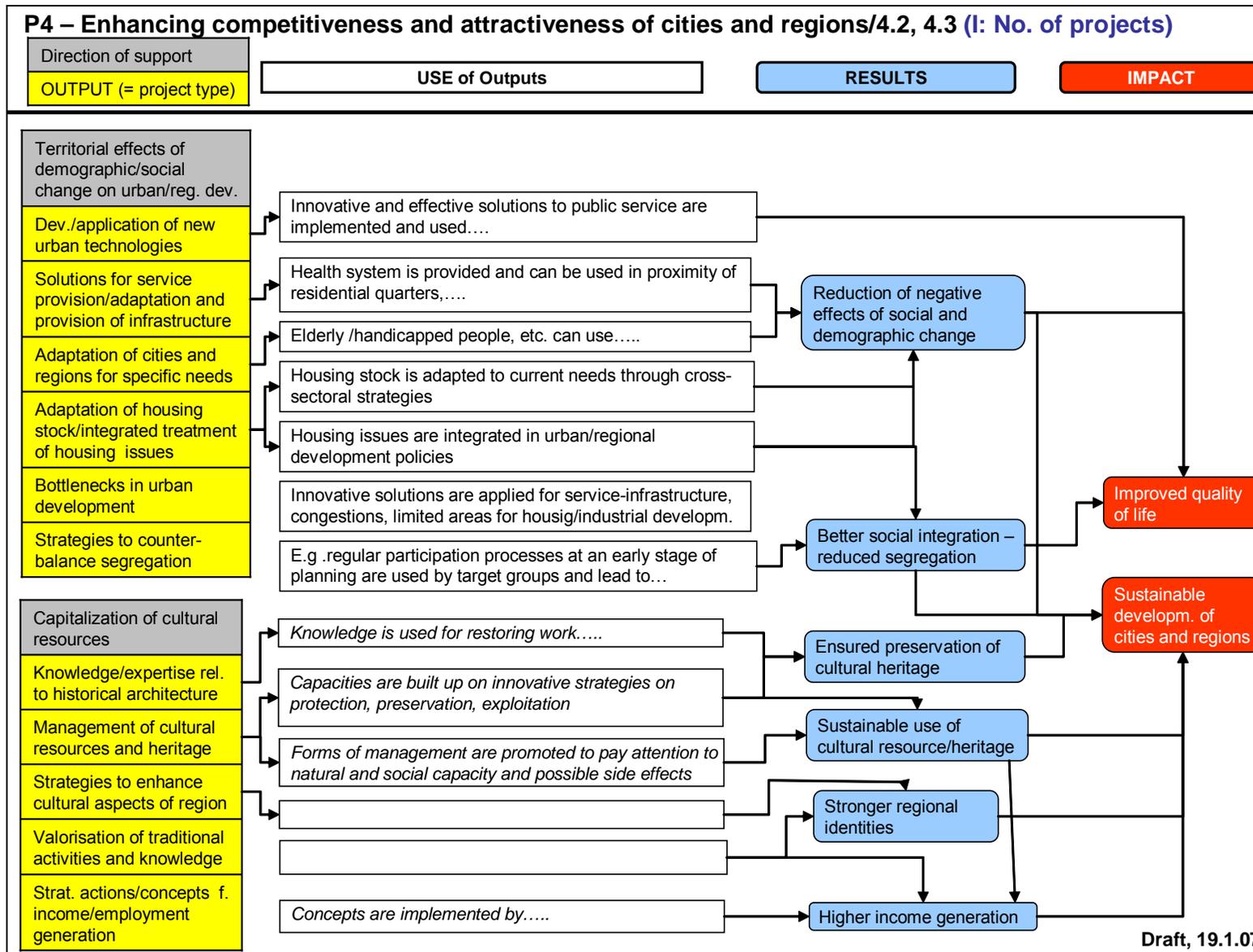












4.5. Assessment of external coherence of the strategy with NSRFs

Process of the external coherence assessment of the programme strategy with NSRFs:

- Letter sent out via MA Vienna (18. September 2006):
Task Force members were asked to indicate the national authority of their country that should be contacted concerning national policies (NSRF, NDP or equivalent) for the assessment of external coherence. Ukraine as third country was asked to indicate whether there exists (or is in preparation) a national strategic/development plan.
- Information of contact persons (17.10.06):
NSRF - Contact persons – information provided by TF-members - were informed that they will be contacted for the external coherence check.
- Start of assessment (from 18th of October 2006):
External experts started assessment on external coherence, based on OP-Draft 1.0. (September 2006)
- Presentation of findings at the TF-meeting on 22./23 November 2006 in Bratislava.
- Review of initial assessments based on new or up-date information and finalisation (December – February 2006).

Reports on the assessment of the external coherence:

The ÖAR core team for the Ex-ante evaluation was supported in this task by four external experts who carried out assessments in different countries, according to the table below.

As outlined above, for some countries further findings were gathered that contributed to the overall result (see matrix in Chapter 2. "Feedback Paper").

The result is: Although some Areas of Intervention have changed/adapted in the course of the programming process, the OP-Draft for the CENTRAL EUROPE Programme is coherent with the NSRFs of the respective countries. No major contradictions or inconsistencies were found.

All reports on the assessments of the external coherence of the programme strategy with NSRFs of all EU-member countries participating in CENTRAL EUROPE Programme are listed below:

Country	Assessment carried out by:	Report on page:
Slovak Republic	Marie Kaufmann, Czech Republic	46
Czech Republic	Marie Kaufmann, Czech Republic	50
Germany	ÖAR-Ex-ante-evaluation Core Team	55
Slovenia	Tatjana Božinac-Mohorčič, Slovenia	59
Austria	ÖAR-Ex-ante-evaluation Core Team	62
Poland	ÖAR-Ex-ante-evaluation Core Team	71
Italy	Paolo Rosso, Italy	75
Hungary	ÖAR-Ex-ante-evaluation Core Team	83

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country	Slovak Republic
Name of documents consulted	National Strategic Reference Framework (two versions, further on considered the newest version dated 3 rd November 2006)
Name of person interviewed	Katarina Kukuckova Tomkova, director of Department for Central Coordination Authority

Overall goal of OP for the Central European Space (CES OP) is "Strengthening the territorial cohesion, promoting internal integration and enhancing common identity of Central Europe".

CE OP has two main objectives:

Objective 1: Improving competitiveness of Central Europe by creating new, and strengthening existing innovation and accessibility structures

Objective 2: Improving the sustainable spatial structure by enhancing a high quality of the environment and developing attractive cities in Central Europe

Overall strategic goal of the Slovak NSRF is to "Significantly increase competitiveness and performance (efficiency) of the Slovak regions and Slovak economy with regard to sustainable development until the year 2013". The strategic goal of the Slovak NSRF reflects in itself both CES OP **main objectives** as it speaks about increasing of competitiveness and respecting principles of sustainable development. However, the document does not relate to the third objective of the EU cohesion policy. The questions of European Territorial Cooperation are elaborated out of the NSRF in particular OPs. The Slovak NSRF covers only two objectives, the Convergence objective and Regional competitiveness and employment objective.

In spite of previous versions of the Slovak NSRF where no mention of territorial or transnational cooperation could be observed at all, the latest version of the NSRF dated 3rd November 2006 formulates the relation to the territorial objective (in the Strategy Chapter) at least. However, **the Slovak NSRF has no separate chapter for territorial or transnational cooperation** and that was the reason why **comparisons were made between general Priorities only**.

Two tables comparing Priorities of the documents can be found in the text below. First table presents more general look, the second goes into details.

Although names of Priorities differ, a lot of similarities were found between compared documents. No contradictions or inconsistencies arise from the comparison. All the Priorities of CES OP are covered by one or more Priorities of the Slovak NSRF.

Table number 1: General comparison of the Slovak NSRF Priorities and CE OP Priorities

		Central European Operational Programme			
		1. Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe	2. Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe	3. Using our environment responsibly	4. Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions
NSRF Slovakia	1. Infrastructure and regional accessibility		direct coherence	indirect coherence	
	2. Innovations, Information technology and Knowledge Economy	direct coherence		indirect coherence	direct coherence
	3. Human resources and education	direct coherence			indirect coherence

Table number 2: Detail comparison of the Slovak NSRF Priorities and CE OP Priorities

		Central European Operational Programme				
		1. Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe	2. Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe	3. Using our environment responsibly	4. Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions	
		A) Strengthening framework conditions and supporting cluster development	A) Improve Interconnectivity on various levels of the Central Europe	A) Development of a high quality environment by management of natural resources and heritage and reduction of man made impacts	A) Promotion of polycentric urban networks	
		B) Building up capabilities for the diffusion of innovation	B) Develop logistics cooperation	B) Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made risks	B) Developing urban infrastructure	
		C) Strengthening human resources for better knowledge development	C) Promote sustainable transportation	C) Supporting the use of renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency	C) Addressing demographic change in cities and rural areas	
			D) Alternative modes of enhancing access	D) Supporting "Green Industries"	D) Capitalise on cultural and industrial heritage	
NSRF Slovakia	1. Infrastructure and regional accessibility	1.1 Transport infrastructure		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (A) <input type="checkbox"/> (C)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B)	
		1.2 Environmental infrastructure and Environmental protection		<input type="checkbox"/> (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (A), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (C), <input type="checkbox"/> (D)	
		1.3 Regional infrastructure		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (A), <input type="checkbox"/> (B), <input type="checkbox"/> (C), <input type="checkbox"/> (D)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B)	
	2. Innovations, Information technology and Knowledge Economy	2.1 Companies and services competitiveness support through innovations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B)		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (D)	<input type="checkbox"/> (A), <input type="checkbox"/> (B)
		2.2 Promotion of IT awareness (knowledge) in the society	<input type="checkbox"/> (B), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (C)			
		2.3 Research and Development	<input type="checkbox"/> (A), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (C)	<input type="checkbox"/> (C), <input type="checkbox"/> (D)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (B), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (C), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (D)	
		2.4. Modernization of health service				<input type="checkbox"/> (C)
	3. Human resources and education	3.1 Modern education for knowledge society	<input type="checkbox"/> (B), <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (C)			<input type="checkbox"/> (C)
		3.2 Infrastructure of Education	<input type="checkbox"/> (B)			
		3.3 Support of employment increase and of social inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> (C)			

Priorities are (almost) identical,
 direct / close coherence between Priorities,
 indirect / wider coherence between Priorities

Comments to tables:

Priority 1 of the CE OP “Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe” is coherent whether directly or indirectly with Priority 3 of the Slovak NSRF “Human resources and Education”. Both of them have three directions of support (DoS) and the coherence was found for all of them except DoS A “Strengthening framework conditions and supporting cluster development”. It is logic that development of human resources and education is linked with innovation and new technology.

This Priority found its coherence with two DoS of Priority 2 of the Slovak NSRF “Innovations, Information technology and Knowledge Economy” where even the names of the Priorities indicate their similarity.

Priority 2 of the CE OP “Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe” matches with the Priority 1 of the Slovak NSRF “Infrastructure and Regional Accessibility”. Indirect coherence is supposed for DoS “C – Promote sustainable transportation” and “D – Alternatives modes of enhancing access” and the DoS 2.3 “Research and Development” of the second Slovak Priority. It is clear as Research and Development is very important component for searching new development alternatives in general.

Priority 3 of the CE OP “Using our environment responsibly” – all four DoS of this Priority are directly or indirectly coherent with the DoS 1.2 “Environmental infrastructure and Environmental protection” of Priority 1 “Infrastructure and Regional Accessibility” of the Slovak NSRF.

Direct coherence was found as well with Priority 2 of the Slovak NSRF and its DoS 2.1 “Companies and services competitiveness support through innovations” and 2.3 “Research and Development”.

Priority 4 of the CE OP “Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions” found mostly indirect coherence with all three Priorities of the Slovak NSRF. Only two DoS of Priority 1 of the Slovak NSRF have direct coherence with the fourth Priority.

It needs to be mentioned that DoS D “Capitalise on cultural and industrial Heritage” of the CE OP has no coherence at all.

Directions of Support can be seen as almost identical in one case only: DoS 1.3 “Regional infrastructure” of Priority 1 of the Slovak NSRF and DoS 2 A “Improve interconnectivity on various levels of the Central Europe” of Priority 2 of CE OP.

Interview result:

Important information was communicated to the evaluator on

- The actual stage of a new version of the NSRF in Slovak Republic finalized the 3rd of November 2006
- The progress in relation of territorial cooperation that is partially mentioned in the new NSRF version at least
- The fact that Slovak Republic declares the Ministry of Environment as Managing authority for territorial cooperation programmes. It should guarantee the respective financial allocation for territorial cooperation

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country	Czech Republic
Name of documents consulted	National Strategic Reference Framework
Name of person interviewed	Mgr. Miroslav Danek

Overall goal of OP for the Central European Space (CE OP) is "Strengthening the territorial cohesion, promoting internal integration and enhancing common identity of Central Europe".

Overall goal of the Czech NSRF for the programming period 2007-2013 is to transform social and economic environment of the Czech Republic in compliance with sustainable development principles in order to secure that the Czech Republic will be an attractive place for investments, employment and life of its inhabitants.

The factors of competitiveness of the Czech Republic mentioned in NSRF are the strategic goals of the NSRF in the meantime. Each of four strategic goals has its Priorities as shown in the tables below.

There is only a **short section in the NSRF mentioning Operational Programmes of transnational and interregional cooperation** (page 58 of the NSRF last version):

- The first paragraph concerning transnational cooperation says that the Czech Republic will participate on the next generation of the transnational cooperation OPs for the goal European Territorial Cooperation financed from ERDF. The national coordinator for the CR of the transnational cooperation will be the Ministry of regional development.
- The second paragraph concerning interregional cooperation says that the Czech Republic will participate on the next generations of programmes of interregional cooperation including programs ESPON II and INTERACT II. The national coordinator for the CR will be the Ministry of regional development.

The strategic goal "Well-balanced regional development" of NSRF is connected to cooperational support on cross-border, interregional and transnational level according to the Goal "European spatial cooperation". Common solutions of common problems among neighboring countries and regions will be supported in the scope of this goal.

In the area of interregional cooperation interventions will be focused on employment growth, creation of new employment possibilities with help of innovations, small and medium size enterprises and entrepreneurship,

environmental protection, precaution and risks solutions and management. Exchange of experience on urban development, delivering of public services, implementation of cooperation programmes, studies and data collections will be supported likewise.

In the matters of strategic importance the Czech Republic will cooperate with other EU member states **in the area of transnational cooperation. Support will be focused on** strategic activities enabling demarcation strip (interconnection of territories) – transportation accessibility, environmental protection, precaution and risk management, and integrated water management systems as well as on intangible linkages (networks, experience exchange, innovation networks in the area of research and development, and development of IT knowledge in the society.)

In general it can be stated that the **objectives of the CES OP and the strategic goals of the Czech NSRF are coherent.** All the Priorities and Areas of Intervention of CES OP are covered by Areas of Intervention of NSRF. **No inconsistencies or contradictions were found.**

Problematic of transnational cooperation is described only briefly in the NSRF. No Priorities are stated explicitly only **prospective Areas of Intervention are mentioned** in the document. Comparison of these Areas and Priorities of CES OP can be found in the Table number 1.

From the description of transnational cooperation in the NSRF it can be supposed that the Priorities and operations proposed for the Central European Space Operational Programme are in consistence with NSRF of the Czech Republic. It is important to stress one more time that Areas of Intervention mentioned in the NSRF are only prospective ones and preparation of NSRF is still in the ongoing process.

The brief description of the transnational cooperation and the fact that explicit definition of Areas of Intervention is missing was the reason why in the Table number 2 is elaborated comparison between general goals and Priorities of NSRF and CES OP.

The allocation for territorial cooperation is approximately 1.3% of the total allocation for the Czech Republic. From this amount

- 351.6 millions EUR will be for cross-boarder cooperation,
- 37.4 millions EUR for transnational cooperation
- and 0 for interregional cooperation, as allocations for Member States are not given.

Interview result:

Mr. Miroslav Danek confirmed our findings. Member states do not have a duty to have a separate chapter designated to the transnational cooperation. Despite this fact in the next version of the NSRF there will be more information contained about the interregional and transnational cooperation. The new version of NSRF will contain specific goals and Priorities of interregional and transnational cooperation. According to Mr. Danek's words Czech Republic dedicates importance to transnational cooperation equal to its allocation amount.

Table number 1: Comparison of „Directions of Support“ from the Czech NSR and CES OP Priorities

Central European Operational Programme				
	1. Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe	2. Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe	3. Using our environment responsibly	4. Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions
	A) Strengthening framework conditions and supporting cluster development	A) Improve interconnectivity on various levels of the Central Europe	A) Development of a high quality environment by management of natural resources and heritage and reduction of man made impacts	A) Promotion of polycentric urban networks
	B) Building up capabilities for the diffusion of innovation	B) Develop logistics cooperation	B) Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made risks	B) Developing urban infrastructure
	C) Strengthening human resources for better knowledge development	C) Promote sustainable transportation	C) Supporting the use of renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency	C) Addressing demographic change in cities and rural areas
		D) Alternative modes of enhancing access	D) Supporting "Green Industries"	D) Capitalise on cultural and industrial heritage
NSRF	Transportation accessibility	■ (A,B,C,D)		■ (B), □ (D)
	Environmental protection	□ (C)	■ (A,B,C,D)	
	Precaution and risk management		■ (A,B,C) □ (D)	
	Integrated water management systems		■ (A,B)	□ (B)
	Innovation networks	■ (A,B)		
	Experience exchange	□ (A,B,C)		
	Support of IT in the society	□ (B,C)		

- Priorities are (almost) identical,
- close coherence between Priorities,
- wider coherence between Priorities

Table number 2: Detail comparison of the Czech NSRF goals and Priorities and CES OP Priorities

		Central European Operational Programme				
		1. Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe	2. Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe	3. Using our environment responsibly	4. Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions	
		A) Strengthening framework conditions and supporting cluster development	A) Improve Interconnectivity on various levels of the Central Europe	A) Development of a high quality environment by management of natural resources and heritage and reduction of man made impacts	A) Promotion of polycentric urban networks	
		B) Building up capabilities for the diffusion of innovation	B) Develop logistics cooperation	B) Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made risks	B) Developing urban infrastructure	
		C) Strengthening human resources for better knowledge development	C) Promote sustainable transportation	C) Supporting the use of renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency	C) Addressing demographic change in cities and rural areas	
			D) Alternative modes of enhancing access	D) Supporting "Green Industries"	D) Capitalise on cultural and industrial heritage	
NSRF CR	1. Competitive Czech economy	1.1 Competitive business sector	■ (A), ■ (B), ■ (C)	□ (A), □ (B), □ (C)	□ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	□ (A), □ (B), □ (D)
		1.2 Capacity support for research and development	■ (B), ■ (C)	□ (C), □ (D)	□ (A), □ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	
		1.3 Development of sustainable tourism		□ (B)	□ (C)	□ (D)
	2. Open, flexible and coherent society	2.1 Education	□ (B), ■ (C)		□ (A), □ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	□ (C), □ (D)
		2.2 Increase in employment and employment abilities	■ (C)	□ (A)	□ (D)	□ (B), □ (C), □ (D)
		2.3 Social coherence support				
		2.4 Development of IT society	□ (B), □ (C)	□ (A)		
		2.5 Smart public administration				
	3. Attractive environment	3.1 Environmental protection and environment quality improvement		■ (C)	■ (A), ■ (B), ■ (C), ■ (D)	
		3.2 Transportation accessibility improvement		■ (A), ■ (B), ■ (C), ■ (D)		■ (B)

- Priorities are (almost) identical,
- close coherence between Priorities,
- wider coherence between Priorities

Continuation of Table 2

Central European Operational Programme					
		1. Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe	2. Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe	3. Using our environment responsibly	4. Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions
		A) Strengthening framework conditions and supporting cluster development	A) Improve Interconnectivity on various levels of the Central Europe	A) Development of a high quality environment by management of natural resources and heritage and reduction of man made impacts	A) Promotion of polycentric urban networks
		B) Building up capabilities for the diffusion of innovation	B) Develop logistics cooperation	B) Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made risks	B) Developing urban infrastructure
		C) Strengthening human resources for better knowledge development	C) Promote sustainable transportation	C) Supporting the use of renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency	C) Addressing demographic change in cities and rural areas
			D) Alternative modes of enhancing access	D) Supporting "Green Industries"	D) Capitalise on cultural and industrial heritage
■ Priorities are (almost) identical, ■ direct / close coherence between Priorities, □ indirect / wider coherence between Priorities	4.1 Well-balanced regional development	□ (B), □ (C)	□ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	□ (A), □ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	□ (A), □ (B), □ (C), □ (D)
	4.2 Urban areas development	□ (B), □ (C)	□ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	□ (A), □ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	■ (A), ■ (B), ■ (C), ■ (D)
	4.3 Rural areas development	□ (B), □ (C)	□ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	□ (A), □ (B), □ (C), □ (D)	□ (C), □ (D)

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country	Germany
Name of documents consulted	– National Strategic Referential Framework – Draft dated 12 th of October, 2006. – CENTRAL EUROPE Draft OP 2.0.
Name of person interviewed	Karin Scheffel

Objective of the German NSRF-Draft

for the programming period 2007-2013 is "Speeding up the process of convergence – strengthening regional competitiveness and employment"

Strategic objectives are:

1. Support of innovation, enhancing knowledge society and strengthening of competitiveness of the economy.
2. Enhancing attractiveness of the regions for investors and inhabitants by sustainable regional development.
3. Adapting employment market to new challenges – more and better jobs.
4. Development of regions with a view on possibilities and balance.

Objectives 1-4 address „Convergence“ and „Regional competitiveness and employment“. Objective 4 takes into account the territorial aspects of cohesion policy.

Horizontal objectives to all strategic objectives are "Environment", "Non-discrimination/equality" and "Sustainable urban development".

Separate chapter on territorial cooperation (Objective 3) in the NSRF:

A separate chapter is committed to Objective 3/European Territorial Cooperation. There territorial cooperation is described to be of special importance for Germany, it can create synergies which can contribute to a better economic development.

In a subchapter, transnational cooperation is considered as positive, offering possibilities to enhance sustainable development in a Europe without borders. Cities as well as regions are meant to have a meaningful role in transnational cooperation.

There is no restriction to transnational cooperation in terms of topics – but it is underlined that integrated concepts for territorial cohesion - that address the economic, social and ecological dimension to the same extent and that are target-oriented - are important basics.

In the context of sustainable economic growth and employment it is mentioned that the ESDP is being concretized by the Territorial Agenda of the EU. Cooperation with regions lagging-behind in the framework of territorial cooperation and thus a better use of regional and territorial potentials is considered as an important development factor. Thereby a special focus is laid on a further integration of new member states with intensive participation of cities and regions in Eastern Germany.

Coherence with National strategies

From the descriptions of Chapter 6 "European Territorial Cooperation" in the NSRF it can be stated that the Priorities and operations outlined in the CENTRAL EUROPE OP Draft are coherent.

Coherence with strategic goals of the NSRF is given to a great extent – while some activities of the OP Draft CENTRAL are not described in detail in the often wider formulated NSRF-goals. In the table below a comparison between strategic objectives of NSRF and Priorities and Areas of Intervention of the CENTRAL EUROPE Draft is elaborated.

Interview result:

Mrs. Scheffel confirmed that the chapter on "European Territorial Cooperation" is the basis for transnational cooperation programmes. They are not likely to be changed any more as it is not wanted to narrow down possibilities for territorial cooperation

(Recheck with NSRF-Draft from 23rd of January 2007 confirmed that there was no change to Chapter 6 on "European Territorial Cooperation").

Table number 1: Comparison of „directions of support“ from the GERMAN NSRF and CENTRAL EUROPE OP Priorities

		Central European Operational Programme			
		1. Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe	2. Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe	3. Using our environment responsibly	4. Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions
		A) Enhancing framework conditions for innovation	A) Improve Central Europe's Connectivity	A) Development of a high quality environment by managing of natural and cultural resources and values	A) Promotion of polycentric urban cooperation
		B) Building up capabilities for the diffusion and application of innovation	B) Develop logistics cooperation	B) Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made hazards	B) Improving the physical environment to strengthen urban functions.
		C) Strengthening human resources for better knowledge development	C) Promote sustainable and safe transportation	C) Supporting the use of renewable energy and increasing energy efficiency	C) Addressing the territorial effects of demographic and social change
			D) ICT and alternative solutions of enhancing access	D) Supporting environmental friendly technologies and activities	D) Capitalise on cultural resources for more attractive cities and regions
NSRF-Draft Germany	Support of innovation, enhancing knowledge society and strengthening of competitiveness of the economy.	■ (A), ■ (B), ■ (C)		■ (C) ■ (D)	
	Enhancing attractiveness of the regions for investors and inhabitants by sustainable regional development		■ (A), ■ (B), ■ (C) (safety not mentioned explicitly) ■ (D) (public sector as ICT-user not mentioned explicitly)	■ (A) rehabilitation of degraded areas not mentioned explicitly. ■ (B) ■ (C) ■ (D)	■ (B) ■ (D)
	Adapting employment market to new challenges – more and better jobs (ESF)				

- Priorities are (almost) identical,
- close coherence between Priorities,
- wider coherence between Priorities

Development of regions with a view on possibilities and balance	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P 3	■ P 4
horizontal objectives				
- Environment	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P 3	■ P 4
- Non-discrimination/equality	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P 3	■ P 4
- Sustainable urban development	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P 3	■ <u>P 4</u> (A-D)

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country	Slovenia
Name of documents consulted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – National Strategic Reference Framework, version dated 23 October 2006 – National Development Plan, version dated 31 May 2006
Name of person interviewed	Mr. Josip Mihalic, Advisor, Government Office of the RS for Local-self-government and Regional Policy

Coherence with National strategies

The second chapter of the NSRF - Analysis of reached development stage - analyses territorial cooperation in a separate section. However within the strategy of the NSRF there is no separate chapter for territorial and/or transnational cooperation. The strategy of the Slovenian NSRF identifies five specific objectives which will be supported by the means of the Cohesion Policy:

- To support entrepreneurship, innovation, and technology development
- To improve and increase the quality of educational system and research & development activities
- To improve and increase flexibility of employment market while securing the employment especially with creation of new working places and enhancement of social integration
- To ensure conditions for growth by ensuring sustainable mobility improvement of quality of environment and development of appropriate infrastructure
- To support balanced regional development of regions

The NSRF **specifies that those objectives will be, among others, achieved also with the support of transnational programmes.** The NSRF states that in order to achieve higher added value from the implementation of different policies at the level of EU, special attention must be given to territorial cohesion which aims at more balanced development, at establishing sustainable communities in urban and rural areas and at ensuring better harmonisation with other sectoral policies having environmental impacts. Special attention is given to the growth and new working places in urban areas as well as to the economic diversification of rural areas. Cross-border, transnational and interregional cooperation should therefore contribute to the following three Priorities: (1) To make the Europe and its regions more attractive for investments and work, (2) To improve the knowledge and innovation for growth and (3) Increased number of working places and better working conditions. Apart from the latter the other two Priorities are reflected in the OP for CEES.

The Slovenian NSRF points out the Priorities of the Development strategy of Slovenia, the National development programme 2007-2013 and the three key OPs: OP for ERDF, OP for ESF and OP for Cohesion Fund. The evaluator has therefore evaluated if the Priorities of the OP for CEES are reflected in the Priorities of the corresponding OP.

Generally, the Priorities and activities of the OP for CEES are reflected in the NSRF, although sometimes not explicitly mentioned with the same wording. From the context it can be identified that the strategy of the OP for CEES is in line with the respective strategy of the Slovenian NSRF.

Slovenia in its Priorities identifies the need to strengthen the entrepreneurship sector and increase the development of SMEs through different types of entrepreneurship (promotion of the entrepreneurship, education, establishment of relevant finance mechanisms) and construction or renovation of suitable infrastructure (such as digital infrastructure, establishment of business zones and other supportive environment for business). Support to **cluster development is not explicitly addressed**. Other activities of the first Priority of the OP for CEES are reflected in the NSRF. The NSRF identifies activities related to improvement of the transport infrastructure and logistic connections, although **it does not explicitly specify alternative modes of enhancing access (indirectly it can be seen within actions such as intelligent transport system or development of urban areas)**. Other actions of the second Priority of the OP for CEES are accordingly reflected in the NSRF. As regards the third Priority of the OP for CEES its aims and actions are in line with those of the NSRF although natural and man-made hazards and green industries are not explicitly exposed. Balanced regional development in all terms (development of business support and educational infrastructure, development of transport infrastructure, establishing connection between entrepreneurship and R&D sector, actions related to the development of environmental infrastructure, the promotion of development projects in areas under special protection regimes and in tourist destinations, the development of urban areas and the development of social infrastructure such as investments into cultural, health, and other institutions whose development will enable more rapid growth of the area and increase the employment) is an important objective of the NSRF, however promotion of polycentric urban networks is not explicitly targeted nor are demographic changes in cities and rural areas specifically addressed.

Coherence with the Slovenian National Development Plan, working version dated 31 May 2006

The NDP in its Chapter 7.6 presents Priorities and activities of territorial co-operation that are in Slovenia's interest and are in line with Development strategy of Slovenia. Transnational cooperation will be based on the support to:

- (5) Innovation and development of scientific and technology networks;
- (6) Environment (water management, energy, risk prevention and nature protection);
- (7) Accessibility (activities that will improve the access and quality of transport and telecommunication services);
- (8) Sustainable development of cities and functional urban areas;
- (9) Establishment of information system for the support to the spatial development decision making and monitoring;

(10) Stimulation and interconnection of urban areas in order to achieve better competitiveness in the international space.
Those activities are entirely reflected in the OP for CEES.

National consultation process

During the programming process of NSRF the content of available OPs has been discussed from a general/strategic point of view but not in detail. For INTERREG III C National committee was established and for each individual programme sub-committees were also established, consisting of representatives from all sectors, municipalities, relevant regional actors, NGOs, Chamber of Commerce). Those committees discussed the content of OPs. At the moment there is no objection to the Draft OP for CEES from the side of the relevant sub-committee. When OP for CEES is more developed, the relevant sub-committee intends to present it to the public (to initiate a consultation process).

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country:	AUSTRIA
Name of documents consulted:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013) – strat.at. Approved on national level, Submitted version to EU-COM, 27.10.2006 - CENTRAL OP Draft 3.0. (21.12.07)
Name of person interviewed:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mag. Markus Seidl, ÖROK (Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning), Vienna, Austria

General information: Austrian National Strategic Reference Framework (2007 – 2013) – strat.at

Strat.at was jointly elaborated by the main actors on the basis of the common comprehension of a regional policy in partnership and Austria's federal structure. The elaboration took place under the guidance of the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK).

Strat.at version checked is from 27.10.2006, approved by the executive body at the national political level within the ÖROK on 27th of October 2006 and the version submitted to EU-COM.

Structural Fund-relevant Priorities are:

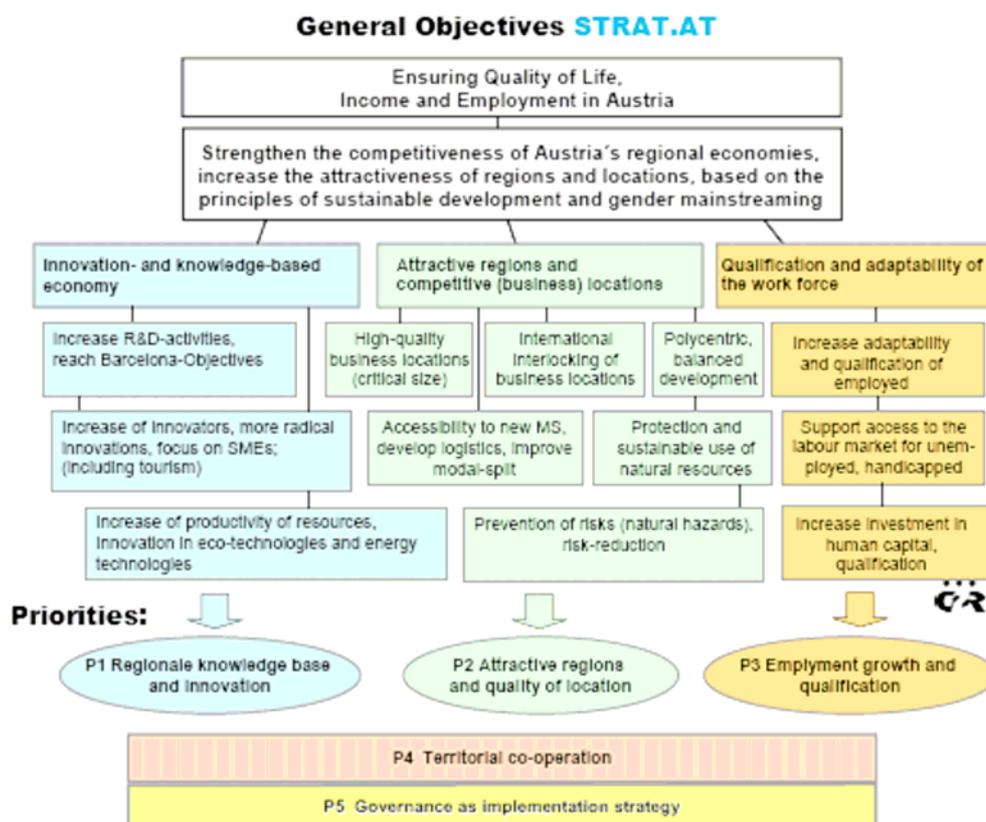
- P1 Regional competitiveness and innovation
- P2 Attractive regions and quality of location
- P3 Adaptability and qualification of the labour force

"P 4 Territorial Cooperation" can be characterised as a horizontal Priority and thus intended to include most of the strategic approaches of P1-P3. It comprises three strands:

- cross-border cooperation
- transnational cooperation
- interregional cooperation

"P5 Governance" is designed to support this overall strategic trajectory through a set of management strategies, which are tailored to individual regional contexts and shall strengthen the learning and innovative capacities of regions and their population.

Figure below describes the general objectives of strat.at, derived Priorities in more detail and how "Territorial Cooperation" is embedded in the structure.

Figure 1: **General Objectives for regional development in the STRAT.AT**

Source: STRAT.AT-process

Coherence with National strategies

All Areas of Intervention of CENTRAL-Draft OP can be found in the strategies P1-P3, P5 and Chapter 3.5. of strat.at.

The safety issue in mobility as outlined in the CENTRAL Draft OP is generally covered in the NSRF but not completely.

Two tables below outline the assessment of coherence of the Draft OP CENTRAL with strat.at:

- One concerning the coherence of Draft OP CENTRAL with Priorities outlined in strat.at
- One on the coherence of Draft OP CENTRAL with Priority 4 "Territorial Cooperation".

Table number 1: General comparison of the Austrian NSRF/strat.at-Priorities and CENTRAL-OP-Priorities

		Operational Programme-Draft „South-East-Europe“			
		Priority 1 “ Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe ”	Priority 2 “ Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe ”	Priority 3 “ Using our Environment Responsibly ”	Priority 4 “ Enhancing Competitiveness and Attractiveness of Cities and Regions“
NSRF Austria	P1 Regional competitiveness (or knowledge base) and innovation	■ (1.1.), □ (1.2.), □ (1.3.)			
	P2 Attractive regions and quality of location		■ (2.1.), □ (2.2.), □ (2.3.), □ (2.4.)	■ (3.1.), ■ (3.2), □ (3.3.), ■ (3.4)	■ (4.1.), ■ (4.2.)
	P3 Adaptability and qualification of the labour force	□ (1.2.), □ (1.3.)			
	P4 Territorial cooperation				
	P5 Governance	■ P1	■ P2	■ P3	■ P4
	Chapter 3.5. Territorial Particularities (only additional)				■ (4.2.), ■ (4.3)

Table number 2: Detail comparison – CENTRAL-OP Priorities/Areas of Intervention and strat.at-Priority 4: Territorial Cooperation

Operational Programme-Draft „South-East-Europe“				
	Priority 1 “ Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe ”	Priority 2 “ Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe ”	Priority 3 “ Using our Environment Responsibly ”	Priority 4 “ Enhancing Competitiveness and Attractiveness of Cities and Regions“
	P1.1 Enhancing framework conditions for innovation	P2.1 Improve Central Europe’s Interconnectivity	P3.1 Development of a high quality environment by managing natural resources and heritage	P4.1 Developing polycentric settlement structures and territorial cooperation
	P1.2 Building up capabilities for the diffusion and application of innovation	P2.2 Develop multimodal logistics cooperation	P3.2 Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made hazards	P4.2 Addressing the territorial effects of demographic and social change on urban and regional development
	P1.3 Fostering knowledge development	P2.3 Promote sustainable and safe mobility	P3.3 Supporting the use of renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency	P4.3 Capitalize on cultural resources for more attractive cities and regions
		P2.4 Information and Communication Technologies and alternative solutions of enhancing access	P3.4 Supporting environmental friendly technologies and activities	
NSRF Austria	P4 Territorial Cooperation	International strand of innovation- and knowledge-based economy		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthening of knowledge base and innovative capacity of enterprises, research and educational institutions 	■ (1.1.), ■ (1.2), ■ (1.3.)	
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooperation in areas connected with knowledge and innovation 	■ (1.1.), ■ (1.2.), ■ (1.3.)	■ (4.3),

- OP Priority/activity coherent with strat.at
- ▣ OP Priority/activity partly coherent with strat.at
- OP Priority/activity not coherent with strat.at

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and facilitation of international economic activities, increase international scope of SME 	■ (1.1.), ■ (1.2),				
Development of attractive regions and competitive locations in the new European Space					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attractive locations, compensation/adjusting of economic disparities, polycentric development, integration of cities and regions → only partly because of „across border“ 	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P3	■ P4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Policy: Spatial planning and innovation and process oriented instruments of regional development 	(■ P 1)	■ P 2	■ P3	■ P4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation of modern governance strategies 	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P3	■ P4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organisation/harmonisation of planning of transport infrastructure and logistics 		■ (2.1), ■ (2.2), ■ (2.3) ■ (2.4)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing efficiency of resources and energy 			■ (3.3), ■ (3.4),		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and harmonization of protection/utilization of natural resources and of cultural landscape values 			■ (3.1)	■ (4.3)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Protection from natural hazards 			■ (3.2)		
Cross-border integration of labour markets → CBC					
Spatial and thematic flexibility	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P3	■ P4	
Whole range of activities of strat.at	■ P 1 (questions above)	■ P 2 (questions above)	■ P3	■ P4	
Thematic adjustment of programme during programming period	Strategic Projects, programme evaluations				
Strategic thematic fields, active project development	Strategic Projects, 2-step application procedure, external experts → possible	Strategic Projects, 2-step application procedure, external experts → possible	Strategic Projects, 2-step application procedure, external experts → possible	Strategic Projects, 2-step application procedure, external experts → possible	

		Project decision: Quality and engagement/commitment of project holders, adaption to thematic fields provided	OP-Draft 3.4., 6.2	OP-Draft 3.4., 6.2	OP-Draft 3.4., 6.2	OP-Draft 3.4., 6.2
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There is a separate chapter for territorial and/or transnational cooperation in the national strategy document: Priority 4 of strat.at "Territorial Cooperation"

Priority 4 aims at overcoming national borders for joint utilization, strengthening the economic dynamics in border regions and promoting territorial cohesion in the transnational and interregional context.

Territorial cooperation is intended to include most of the strategic approaches of P1-P3 and is considered as a horizontal Priority.

In terms of strat.at, the following superordinate objectives for territorial cooperation are of particular importance for Austria:

- International focus of an innovation and knowledge-based economy:
- The development of attractive regions and competitive locations in the new European region:
- The creation of preconditions for the cross-border integration of labour markets and the enhancement of the adaptability and the qualification of employees(focussed on CBC-strand):

A specific chapter on transnational and interregional cooperation outlines objectives and strategy for these two strands:

The experiences gained during the last programme period have lead to an assumption that the phase of project definition, partner and project selection has to be given special attention in the development of high-quality projects. The quality of projects and of project holders seems to be more important than the realization of a predetermined programme structure relating to content and region. This especially applies to the requirement that projects should be defined based on thematic and spatial-functional conceptual formulations (e.g. the development of innovative cluster concepts, Danube corridor, city networks in a certain axis region, etc.) and should thereby be able to go beyond pre-set limits of cooperation areas (e.g. CADSES, Alpine space). This also includes neighbouring states, especially those in the Balkan regions, as it is essential to also introduce preparatory integrative measures for those states whose entry perspectives are still unclear, but which must be seen in a close geographic and economic connection with the neighbouring EU territory (e.g. Croatia, Serbia-Montenegro). The sharing of experience of public sector bodies, cooperation in matters of mutual interest such as water management, risk prevention, development of trunk road networks, as well as the creation and enlargement of economic cooperation, will be vital objectives during the new period. Special emphasis is placed on the conception of sector spanning projects, such as tourism and environment, traffic and environment, in connection with the implementation of the Alpine Convention, as well as on continued cooperation networks (e.g. UTA-net, etc.). These cooperations should be regarded as being complementary to the concrete project planning and funding of (infrastructural) investments. From the Austrian point of view, cooperation should be carried out in a spatially flexible manner and in thematically defined contexts, as, according to experience, pre-set cooperation areas will not yield the desired results.

As far as the content is concerned, it is essential to continue and to deepen the spectrum of subjects previously built up during the new programme period, taking into account the amendments and new elements resulting from the integration of the Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas. Thus, a broad content orientation is considered essential. Furthermore, other instruments already exist for some Priorities (e.g. in connection with the TEN and research cooperations, which are much better able to fulfil these conceptual formulations). As in the case of transnational cooperations, the decisive added value of the programme line of international cooperation lies in a comprehensive cooperation, which reaches beyond sectoral and hierarchic levels, and in the creation of institutional networks.

Strategy

- High programme flexibility in spatial and thematic matters (as regards transnational issues which go beyond the borders of the defined cooperation areas, projects can also be assigned to more than one programme)
- Programme contents oriented towards the overall activity spectrum of strat.at
- Adaptation of programme contents during the term (based on a corresponding thematic implementation monitoring); continuation and adaptation of programme Priorities.
- Strategic Thematic Fields for the orientation of the different stages of project development, pro-active project development in the thematic fields.
- The decisive factor for approval is primarily the quality of the projects and the commitment of the project holders, as well as the integrability of the projects in the planned thematic fields.

CONCLUSION on the check of Coherence of CENTRAL Draft OP with strat.at:

Nearly all Areas of Intervention proposed in CENTRAL-draft OP are coherent with P4 "Territorial Cooperation" (subordinate objectives) in strat.at.

Planned measures in terms of programme implementation as outlined in CENTRAL-Draft OP are also in line with "Strategies for transnational and interregional cooperation" in Priority 4 of strat.at.

It thus can be stated that the CENTRAL-Draft OP 3.0 is to a great extent in line with strategies and activities outlined in strat.at, in particular P 4 "Territorial Cooperation" or otherwise covered in other strat.at-Priorities which are as well applicable for transnational cooperation.

There is a national consultation process concerning the participation in transnational programmes

The StUA (Ständiger Unterausschuss/Permanent committee – composed by ministries, regions, economic- and social partners as well as the association of cities as well of communities) was regularly informed on proceedings of the programming process. As well it was consulted in the course of the programming process on content of the respective OP-Drafts. In addition workshops were held to discuss input on contents of the 3 transnational programmes Austria participates in.

Interview with Markus Seidl:

Mr. Seidl explained Priorities of strat.at, answered to questions of the evaluator, confirmed findings of the external coherence check and underlined the importance of territorial cooperation for Austria, which is also stated in strat.at.

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country:	Poland
Name of documents consulted:	– NSRF-Draft Aug. 2006 and – NSRF (2007-2013) – adopted by the Council of Ministers on 29 November 2006
Name of people consulted:	Mr. Piotr Zuber

General information on the Polish National Strategic Reference Framework (2007 – 2013)

The strategic goal of the National Strategic Reference Framework for Poland is the “Creation of the conditions for the growth of competitiveness of knowledge based economy and entrepreneurship assuring an increase in the employment and in the level of social, economic and territorial cohesion”.

This strategic objective will be achieved through delivery of horizontal specific objectives, which are:

1. Improved functioning standard of public institutions and development of partnership mechanisms,
2. Improved quality of human capital and enhancement of social cohesion,
3. Development and modernisation of technical and social infrastructure of fundamental importance for growth of the competitiveness in Poland,
4. Improvement of competitiveness and innovativeness of enterprises, including especially of the production sector with high added value and service sector development,
5. Increase of competitiveness of Polish regions and counteracting their social, economic and spatial marginalisation,
6. Balancing development opportunities and supporting structural changes on rural areas.

The horizontal objectives of NSRF are in addition covered by three horizontal Priorities and the CSG Priority related to space, which are:

- 1) Making Europe and its regions more attractive as regards investments and employment,
- 2) Improving the standard of knowledge and innovativeness in support of growth,
- 3) Increasing the number and improving the standard of work places,
- 4) Territorial dimension of the cohesion policy.

Coherence with National strategies

Objectives of the NSRF of Poland comprise both "Convergence" and "European Territorial Cooperation" activities.

There is no separate chapter on Objective 3 itself only within Priority 5 (Increase of competitiveness of Polish regions and counteracting their social, economic and spatial marginalisation) a short subchapter on "assisting the development of territorial cooperation" is given, which addresses cooperation on different levels (cross-border, supranational and interregional). There it is stated, that in the context of cooperation "significance is gained also by the development of transnational and interregional cooperation. Programmes delivered within supranational cooperation would strive to support cooperation between Poland and the member states as regards issues of strategic importance. They would concern first of all supporting measures, which are aimed at improving mutual physical dependencies of particular territories (e.g. investments in balanced transport), as well as intangible relations (systems, exchange between regions and between involved parties)".

This chapter addresses according to Mr. Zuber both possible Objective 1 and 3 cooperations. For Priority 5 it is also stated, that "the implementation of the objectives within this Priority would depend on effective delivery of other specific objectives".

As there is no separate chapter on territorial cooperation in the table below a comparison between horizontal objectives of NSRF and Priorities and Areas of Intervention of the CENTRAL EUROPE Draft is elaborated.

In general it can be stated that the objectives of the CENTRAL EUROPE Draft OP and the horizontal goals of the Polish NSRF are coherent. All Priorities and Areas of Intervention are covered by the Polish NSRF, though sometimes in a different wording.

Interview with Mr. Zuber:

Mr. Zuber confirmed especially the fact, that both Objective 1 and 3 are addressed in the Polish NSRF- and that the subchapter within Priority 5 addresses different cooperation possibilities.

He informed, that maybe there will be an up-date of Polish NSRF due to the fact, that many programme development processes (especially within Objective 3) were still ongoing, when the NSRF was finalised.

Concerning a strategic group on Objective 3-issues in Poland:

There are thoughts to set up a strategic group between two ministries – one working on INTERREG/territorial cooperation and another, working on spatial issues.

Table number 1: General comparison of the Polish NSRF/ -Priorities and CENTRAL-OP Priorities and Areas of Intervention

Operational Programme-Draft „ CENTRAL Europe“					
	Priority 1 “ Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe ”	Priority 2 “ Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe ”	Priority 3 “ Using our Environment Responsibly ”	Priority 4 “ Enhancing Competitiveness and Attractiveness of Cities and Regions“	
	P1.1 Enhancing framework conditions for innovation	P2.1 Improve Central Europe's interconnectivity	P3.1 Development of a high quality environment by managing natural resources and heritage	P4.1 Developing polycentric settlement structures and territorial cooperation	
	P1.2 Building up capabilities for the diffusion and application of innovation	P2.2 Develop multimodal logistics cooperation	P3.2 Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made hazards	P4.2 Addressing the territorial effects of demographic and social change on urban and regional development	
	P1.3 Fostering knowledge development	P2.3 Promote sustainable and safe mobility	P3.3 Supporting the use of renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency	P4.3 Capitalize on cultural resources for more attractive cities and regions	
		P2.4 Information and Communication Technologies and alternative solutions of enhancing access	P3.4 Supporting environmental friendly technologies and activities		
NSRF Poland	Objective 1: Improving the functioning standard of public institutions and development of partnership mechanisms	■ P 1	■ P 2	■ P 3	■ P 4
	Objective 2: Improving the quality of human capital and enhancing social cohesion	■ 1.3			

<p>Objective 3: Establishment and modernisation of technical and social infrastructure crucial for increase of Poland's competitiveness</p>		<p>■ 2.1, ■ 2.2. , ■ 2.3, ■ 2.4</p>	<p>■ 3.1, ■ 3.2, ■ 3.3, ■ 3.4</p>	<p>■ 4.2, ■ 4.3</p>
<p>Objective 4: Improving the competitiveness and innovativeness of enterprises, including in particular the manufacturing sector with high added value and development of the services sector</p>	<p>■ 1.1, ■ 1.2., ■ 1.3</p>	<p>■ 2.4</p>	<p>■ 3.1</p>	<p>■ 4.3</p>
<p>Objective 5: Increase of the competitiveness of Polish regions and preventing their social, economic and spatial marginalisation</p>	<p>■ P1</p>	<p>■ 2.1., ■ 2.3,</p>	<p>■ P3</p>	<p>■ 4.1, ■ 4.2, ■ 4.3</p>
<p>Objective 6: Balancing growth opportunities and supporting structural changes on rural areas</p>	<p>■ P1</p>	<p>■ P2</p>	<p>■ P3</p>	<p>■ P4</p>

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country	Italy
Name of documents consulted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Technical Working Group – Cooperation – Objective 3, Rome 10 April 2006 - National Strategic Framework for the Regional Development Policy 2007-2013 (Technical and administrative draft) Executive Summary, Rome April 2006 (document prepared by the Department for Development and Cohesion Policies) - Quadro Strategico Nazionale per la politica regionale di sviluppo 2007-2013, Bozza tecnico-amministrativa, aprile 2006 (<i>National Strategic Framework for the development of regional policy 2007 – 2013, Technical and Administrative Draft, April 2006</i>)
Name of persons interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ms Rossella Rusca - Mr Lodovico Gherardi

Coherence with National strategies

As preliminary remark some comments concerning the structure of the NSRF of Italy are here provided for clarifying the framework context. The current draft document is not conceived for defining specific lines and Priorities focusing on each of specific objectives of new Structural Funds programming. Instead the NSRF has been designed pursuing a new, comprehensive and integrated approach to the regional development policy for Italy.

Through the NSRF therefore, further to a common decision of the national government and regional administrations, it was undertaken to define a strategic framework unifying EC policy programming and national regional development one.

The document is thus aimed at defining objectives, Priorities, rules for Italian regional development policy considering all the different typologies and means of support available in period 2007 - 2013.

On the basis of such a comprehensive and general approach, 10 Priorities detailed in the NSRF are to be considered by Italian institutions in elaborating any Operational Programme for new Structural Funds period, including objective 3 - territorial cooperation.

These 10 Priorities are:

1. Improvement and development of human resources;
2. Research and innovation for competitiveness;
3. Sustainable and efficient use of environmental resources for development;

4. Development of natural and cultural resources to boost appeal and development;
5. Social inclusion and services for the quality of life and appeal of the territory;
6. Networks and links for mobility;
7. Competitiveness of production systems and employment;
8. Competitiveness and appeal of cities and urban systems;
9. International opening and attraction of investments, consumption and resources;
10. Institutional capacity and competitive and efficient services and financial markets.

Of course the Objective 3 in its transnational strand, as it is the case of the CEC OP, cannot be expected to contribute to the same extent to every Priority.

A first level of evaluation of external consistency between CEC OP and Italian National Strategy Framework is here undertaken by matching the specific development objectives as stated in the Draft OP with the 10 Priorities of the NSRF.

In fact such a level of assessment enables considering the consistency of the general structure and approach as set out in the two documents.

In the next page the scheme highlights the most relevant points where such a consistency can be detected. In it (++) stands for a high level of consistency, while (+) for an intermediate one and () no detectable correspondence.

In general terms the result of the analysis is positive in terms of consistency between the two strategies. As it could be recognised for every Priority a level of interlinkage is expected, even though with a variable intensity.

In some cases the correspondence is highly focused and expected impact from operations funded under CEC is directly targeting the Priorities of the NSRF. That means that those operations could directly and strongly contribute to the achievement of the national strategy Priorities, thus completing the provisions expected in each Italian region eligible to CEC, by Objective Competitiveness (as a matter of fact none of these Italian regions are eligible for Objective Convergence).

In other cases the interconnection, or, in other words, the level of consistency, is foreseeable in much lesser intensity, but anyhow existing. In these cases the role of CEC could be complementary and supportive for projecting the regional and national issues in a transnational dimension, thus ensuring a further benefit in terms of networking and exchange of practices.

CEC Specific Objectives	A. Improving competitiveness of Central Europe by strengthening innovation and accessibility structures.	B. Improving a balanced and sustainable territorial development by enhancing the quality of the environment and developing attractive cities and regions in Central Europe
Italy NSRF Priorities		
1. Improvement and development of human resources	++	+
2. Research and innovation for competitiveness	++	
3. Sustainable and efficient use of environmental resources for development		++
4. Development of natural and cultural resources to boost appeal and development		++
5. Social inclusion and services for the quality of life and appeal of the territory		+
6. Networks and links for mobility	++	+
7. Competitiveness of production systems and employment	++	
8. Competitiveness and appeal of cities and urban systems		++
9. International opening and attraction of investments, consumption and resources	+	
10. Institutional capacity and competitive and efficient services and financial markets	+	+

There is no separate chapter for territorial and/or transnational cooperation in the national strategy document.

According to the logic outlined under the previous heading, the NSRF doesn't include a specific chapter neither on territorial cooperation or on transnational cooperation as such, since the Objective 3 was considered as common strategic dimension for the whole programming exercise, jointly with the other SF objectives. Therefore the structure of the NSRF doesn't devote specific chapters for any of new SF objectives.

Instead an integrated and unifying approach was preferred, where territorial cooperation is fully considered as one of the strategic dimensions supporting the overall document's logic.

Moreover the process of drafting the NSRF, in order to assure an integrated and participatory approach, was based on the work of technical working groups set up with that purpose. These working groups, gathering representatives from central and regional administrations and relevant institutions, focused on specific key issues and provided substantial inputs in the overall drafting process.

One of these groups has been established with focus on "Cooperation – Objective 3".

Among the outcomes of that working group specific Priorities for the territorial cooperation were defined, as contributes to the NSRF drafting and aimed at supporting the formulation of the 10 Priorities therein defined.

For the external coherence analysis, at operational level, these specific Priorities have been analysed for assessing their consistency with the directions of support as defined under each Priority in the current Draft CEC OP.

Therefore the specific Priorities as defined in the working group document¹ are here summarised including, for each item, remarks concerning the level of consistency identified with the OP Priorities and respective Directions of Support.

In the field of *research and innovation*

- integrating its own human resources with others highly qualified;
- consolidating and improving its own scientific and technical expertise by opening new integration perspectives in the extra-domestic markets especially to young Italian researchers;
- experimenting and consolidating the development of clusters and international technological platforms;
- promoting private stakeholders participation in research domains, to strengthen cooperation networks between the research system and private companies and to attract foreign investments.

CEC → Priority 1 – Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe

High level of coherence, the strategic issues defined in the CEC under this Priority are in line with Italian orientations on research and innovation, including the framework conditions (i.e. the institutional capacity to set up an environment conducive to innovation) and the qualification of human resources.

Accessibility

- ensuring transport networks and nodes oriented to development and coherent with the environmental and tourist feature of the country and with the opportunity to link it to the main European and extra European corridors;
- re-launching logistic for a strategic repositioning of Italian harbours and airports and related services;
- developing new market segments for those productive clusters and districts in which the Italian competitive advantage is subjected to infrastructure/logistics deficiency (agro-food sector, tourism, etc.);

¹ See „Technical Working Group – Cooperation – Objective 3“, Rome 10 April 2006

- improving goods and carriers security, ensuring intermodality, integration and synergy among existing networks at different levels, optimising transport infrastructure use.

CEC → Priority 2 – Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe

In general very high level of consistency is detected. The inclusion of transport infrastructure and ICT ones, enable emphasising the various levels where infrastructure divide issues shall be tackled.

For *environment*

- consolidating and enhancing its own skills and expertise to promote administrative capacity and governance of sustainable development processes;
- gaining experiences and innovation in geographic areas and in domains where the local economic system doesn't have endogenous sufficient potential;
- improving the quality rating of tourism services supplying sustainable tourism;
- preventing technological and environmental risks and mitigation measures in development processes.

CEC → Priority 3 – Using our environment responsibly

High level of consistency and alignment of CEC Priority and respective Directions of Support with the lines defined in the NSRF. Two points of discrepancy are to be highlighted: the first relates to the need of enhancing skills and common administrative capacity that, present in the Italian strategy is not considered, besides some suggestions, in the OP; the second to sustainable tourism and actions aimed at supporting its promotion.

Considering *cultural resources*

- enhancing and rationalizing its own specific competencies, skills and knowledge by integrating the human resources available in a wider market;
- exploiting the potential of relevant methodological knowledge that Italy gathered (information and communication technologies, control and definition of vulnerability and degradation risks, detection and control of mobility of cultural heritage);
- enhancing Italian technical and administrative capacities accumulated in the development of tools for territorial management and enhancement of cultural resources, to be given to the managers of sites and heritage of international relevance;
- setting up or strengthening entrepreneurship presence at local and national level for the development of international productive chains (filières) linked to cultural heritage enhancement.

CEC → Priority 3 – Using our environment responsibly
 Priority 4 – Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions

Full coherence. The cultural resources are considered both as theme joint to natural resources (see CEC Priority 3) and as resources for pursuing more attractive cities and regions (Priority 4).

Sustainable urban development

- encouraging attractiveness, recovery and repositioning of Italian cities on specific and targeted markets;
- encouraging a balanced economic growth of those cities situated in border areas, through networks.

CEC → Priority 4 – Enhancing competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and regions

Full coherence. Priority 4 considers the theme under a very comprehensive set of Directions of Support, which includes polycentrism, physical environment, demography and social changes, culture and economy. The National strategy considers for transnational cooperation a more generic definition of the Priorities of interest, which are largely included in the CEC Priority.

There is a national consultation process concerning the participation in transnational programmes.

The national consultation process is ensured by the on-going operations of the specific technical working group on Objective 3.

The remarks provided in previous paragraph are just referred to the results of the work therein performed.

Further consultancy is going on and would likely provide further inputs in the next stages of CEC OP drafting process, in order to provide inputs concerning the alignment between the OP and the national Italian strategic perspective.

Additionally at regional and local level in Italy further contacts and consultations either are going on or are planned. The results of these consultations are discussed coordinated and pulled together at national level and then brought to the transnational drafting sessions as Italian position to be negotiated.

Additional comments on the basis of the new NSRF Draft December 2006

Name of document(s) consulted:

- Quadro Strategico Nazionale per la politica regionale di sviluppo 2007-2013, Bozza dicembre 2006 (*National Strategic Framework for development regional policy 2007 – 2013, Draft, December 2006*)

Name of persons interviewed:

- -

Coherence with National strategies

The structure of the NSRF, in its new release does not include new and substantial changes in the approach adopted in the territorial cooperation objective.

In fact the document provides a more in-depth description of the strategy, its structure and the overall management arrangements with particular focus to convergence and competitiveness and employment objectives only.

As far as the overall strategy structure is concerned four macro objectives have been added in order to clarify the overall internal consistency of the Framework by grouping the same 10 Priorities already defined in the previous draft. They are:

a) Developing knowledge circuits:

- 1 Human resources improvement and enhancement
- 2 Research and innovation promotion for competitiveness

b) Increasing standards of living, security and social inclusion

- 3 Sustainable and efficient use of environmental resources for development
- 4 Social inclusion, services for quality of life and territorial attractiveness

c) Fostering clusters, services and competition

- 5 Promotion of natural and cultural resources to enhance attractiveness and development
- 6 Transport networks and links
- 7 Competitiveness of productive systems and employment
- 8 Competitiveness and attractiveness of cities and urban areas

d) Internationalising and modernising

- 9 Internationalisation and investments, consumptions and resources attractiveness
- 10 Governance, institutional capacity and effective market and competition

The reference to the territorial cooperation objective remains substantially unchanged and so the considerations provided in the previous external coherence analysis note with CEC and SEES also are still valid.

Provisional ERDF funds allocations for the two programmes are provided:

- CEC PO 32.946.071 EUR
- SEES PO 43.050.642 EUR

General criteria and indicative percentage for the Italian national co-funding to territorial cooperation OPs are provided as well. The range of the ERDF co-funding provision is stated being between 75 to 85 % of eligible expenditure, according to the art. 53, par. 3 of the General SF Regulation. These thresholds shall be defined and ensured at OP level, therein modulating the specific percentages at Priority axes level. For all the objectives the percentage the ERDF funds cannot be under any circumstances lower than 20% of the eligible expenditure.

There is no separate chapter for territorial and/or transnational cooperation in the national strategy document.

The NSRF new draft still gives a strategic role to territorial cooperation through horizontal mainstreaming particularly concerning Priorities 1, 2, 4 and 8, and the overall strategic approach of territorial cooperation is incorporated in the general Framework strategy perspective.

Neither specific objectives nor chapter are devoted to the TC objective in the NSRF. In fact is stated that: "Territorial cooperation objective will be pursued through the implementation of the territorial cooperation OPs under a perspective of its strong coherence and integration with the unified regional development policy programming, both communitarian and national".

There is a national consultation process concerning the participation in transnational programmes.

The national consultation process is ensured by the on-going operations of the specific technical working group on Objective 3.

NSRF new draft in general does not provides further details, compared to the previous draft release, concerning the partners and other actors involved in its preparation and the approach adopted to ensure wide and active participation.

Ex-ante Evaluation CENTRAL EUROPE Programme

External Coherence - Synthesis Report

Country	Hungary
Name of documents consulted	"National Strategic Reference Framework (2007-2013): "The new Hungary Development Plan – Employment and Growth" Accepted by the Hungarian Government, Oct. 2006 CENTRAL OP Drafts 2.0 and 3.0
Name of people consulted	Mr. Kleinheincz

General information: The new Hungary Development Plan (2007 – 2013)

General objective of the "New Hungarian Development Plan" is "Increased employment and a long term growth".

The specific objectives of increasing employment are:

- improving the employability and activity of individuals on the labour market,
- increased labour force demand, that is promoting the creation of more and better jobs (especially in wayward regions),
- the development of a labour market environment that ensures the balance between supply and demand.

The specific objectives of long term growth are:

- improvement of competitiveness, incl.
 - o strengthening knowledge economy and innovation
 - o increasing productivity
- broadening the foundations of the economy, incl.
 - o regional development
 - o development of the capacities for capital involvement
 - o market extension
 - o connection to a higher level of market integration
 - o wider spread of modern technologies
- developing the business environment, incl.
 - o improvement of accessibility
 - o improvement of the regulatory environment and of the efficiency of the services and operation of the state

Horizontal policies include sustainability, cohesion (in economic, regional and social terms) as well as equal opportunities.

Coherence with National strategies

In general it can be stated that the objectives of the CENTRAL EUROPE Draft OP and the specific goals are coherent. All Priorities and Areas of Intervention are covered by thematic Priorities of the "New Hungary Development Plan". No inconsistencies or contradictions were found.

There is a small paragraph on European Territorial Cooperation in Priority 5 (Regional development). There it is indicated that cross-border and cross-regional developments considerably contribute to the development and competitiveness of individual regions and the country as a whole. In order to ensure viability of developments encompassing two or more countries or regions, Hungary is preparing an independent document which at the same time forms the integral part of the New Hungary Development Plan.

Thus, **the NSRF is only focussed on Objective 1 and 2 – Objective 3 will be dealt with in a separate document**. There all programmes in the framework of European Territorial Cooperation are collected and provided in an independent document.

Therefore in the table below a comparison between general goals and Priorities of the NSRF and Priorities and Areas of Intervention of CENTRAL EUROPE Draft OP is elaborated.

Interview result:

Mr. Kleinheincz confirmed that Objective 3 is not part of the "New Hungary Development Plan" which focuses only on Convergence and Regional competitiveness. In addition he confirmed the elaboration of a separate document for European Territorial Cooperation that consists of all programmes developed within Objective 3. As the development for some programmes is still in process this document is not finalized yet.

Table number 1: General comparison of the Hungarian NSRF-Priorities and CENTRAL-OP-Priorities

Operational Programme-Draft „CENTRAL Europe“					
		Priority 1 “ Facilitating Innovation across Central Europe ”	Priority 2 “ Improving Accessibility of and within Central Europe ”	Priority 3 “ Using our Environment Responsibly ”	Priority 4 “ Enhancing Competitiveness and Attractiveness of Cities and Regions“
		P1.1 Enhancing framework conditions for innovation	P2.1 Improve Central Europe's interconnectivity	P3.1 Development of a high quality environment by managing natural resources and heritage	P4.1 Developing polycentric settlement structures and territorial cooperation
		P1.2 Building up capabilities for the diffusion and application of innovation	P2.2 Develop multimodal logistics cooperation	P3.2 Reducing risks and impacts of natural and man-made hazards	P4.2 Addressing the territorial effects of demographic and social change on urban and regional development
		P1.3 Fostering knowledge development	P2.3 Promote sustainable and safe mobility	P3.3 Supporting the use of renewable energy sources and increasing energy efficiency	P4.3 Capitalize on cultural resources for more attractive cities and regions
			P2.4 Information and Communication Technologies and alternative solutions of enhancing access	P3.4 Supporting environmental friendly technologies and activities	
NSRF Hungary	Priority 1: Economic Development	■ 1.1., ■ 1.2, ■ 1.3,	■ 2.2., ■ 2.4,	■ 3.4	
	Transport development		■ 2.1, ■ 2.2, ■ 2.3, ■ 2.4		

Social renewal	■ 1.3	■ 2.1., ■ 2.4.		
Environment and energy development			■ 3.1, ■ 3.2, ■ 3.3, ■ 3.4	
Regional development		■ 2.1, ■ 2.4		■ 4.1, ■ 4.2., ■ 4.3,
State reform	■ P1	■ P 2 ■ 2.4		