

# Cohesion policy implementation, performance and communication – Podkarpackie Voivodship (Poland)



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# Introduction

The Podkarpackie Voivodship is a NUTS2 region with a population of 2,129,000, covering an area of approximately 17,800 km², situated in south-eastern Poland and bordering on Slovakia and Ukraine. The voivodship is partly self-governing, i.e. it is ruled by the local (regional) and central governmental authorities, which means it has a regional government elected in a popular vote, headed by the marshal (marszałek), and the governmental (state) administration, represented in the region by the voivod (wojewoda). The competences of the Marshal's Office (Urząd Marszałkowski) include carrying out the region's development policy and implementing the Regional Operational Programme financed from the EU's Cohesion policy funds.

The aim of the report is to present the findings from the field research conducted in Podkarpackie Voivodship as part of regional comparative analyses carried out under the Cohesify project. In particular, the study sets out to assess how the Cohesion policy affects the perception of the European Union by the local residents and looks at the effectiveness of its communication strategies. As a result, it offers tentative recommendations on shaping the relationships between the Cohesion policy of the European Union and its evaluation by the residents and the local elites in a given regional context.

The Podkarpackie Voivodship was selected for the study due to a number of reasons, including the following:

- Low development level, coupled with a substantial scale of Cohesion policy funding,
- Relatively poor perception of the European Union compared to other Poland's regions, a situation which has observably changed for the worse after the 2008 financial crisis,
- High absorption level of the EU funds in the financing perspective 2007-2013,
- The 2014 local government elections won by a party which is relatively sceptical about the idea of European integration.

Other than the data from regional and national planning documents and statistics, and the following papers prepared as part of the Cohesify project:

- Capello R., Perucca G. (2017). Regional Implementation Settings for Cohesion Policy: A Definition and Measurement. Cohesify Research Paper 2,
- Debus M., Gross M. (2017). Position On and Issue Emphasis of European Integration and EU Cohesion Policy: Analysing (Sub-) National Party Manifestos. Cohesify Research Paper 4,
- Dąbrowski M., Stead D., Mashhoodi B. (2017). Towards a Regional Typology of EU Identification. Cohesify Research Paper 6,
- Smętkowski M., Płoszaj A., Rok J. (2017). Multidimensionality of Implementation and Performance of Cohesion Policy in EU regions. Cohesify Research Paper 8.

A number of primary data were used, including:

- stakeholder online survey
- stakeholder interviews
- focus groups
- citizens survey

The online survey of stakeholders was carried out in May-October 2017 in all COHESIFY case study regions. It referred to stakeholders' perception of implementation and effects of cohesion policy and the impact of cohesion policy on the perception of the European Union by the citizens. In Podkarpackie, a total of 295 respondents had been identified, mostly representatives of local governments, and members of the Regional Operational Programme Monitoring Committee. The response rate (full responses only) was 23.1%, and the share of Monitoring Committee members

among the respondents equalled 23.5%. Along the survey, a set of 16 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders has been carried out in the region. It has been further complemented by data gathered from citizens. Three focus group interviews were organised in various cities in the Podkarpackie Voivodship, and the quantitative survey carried out by an external contractor with a representative sample of 500 residents of the Podkarpackie Voivodship.

The structure of the case study report covers, firstly, a summary of the regional background for the implementation of the Cohesion policy and communicating its results, and presenting the findings from the empirical research relating to: a) the Cohesion policy's implementation process and evaluation of its performance by the local and regional stakeholders, b) mode of communicating the effects of the Cohesion policy, and c) evaluation of the European Union and the Cohesion policy by the region's residents.

# Context and background

# 2.1 EU attitudes and identity

According to the typology developed by M. Dąbrowski (et al. 2017), the Podkarpackie Voivodship is classified as "positive" both in terms of the EU image as viewed by the residents and the EU attachment. The category in question groups most of the Polish regions except Lubuskie, Świętokrzyskie and Podlaskie, whose residents were found in the Eurobarometer surveys to be more neutral in their opinions about the EU image and EU attachment.

In a dynamic approach, looking only at the category of the EU image in 2008-2016, a change of the residents' opinions for more negative could be observed in the Podkarpackie Voivodship. In 2008, the average opinion (expressed on a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 – very negative, and 5 – very positive) was 3.43, which ranked the voivodship 12th in Poland. However, in 2016 that value fell to 3.15, which placed the region 14th in a total of 16 Poland's voivodships. These findings are consistent with the results of the 2003 accession referendum, in which support to Poland's EU membership reached 70.1% in Podkarpackie, also placing it 14th in Poland (compared to the national average of 77.4%).

According to opinion polls (CBOS 2015), Poland's residents (including the Podkarpackie Voivodship) first and foremost were attached to the local community/place of residence (51%), and, as the second choice, identified themselves with the whole country/Poland (25%). In this context, the regional identity was clearly weaker, and declared by 14% respondents, while the European identity was listed as the first one only occasionally (4% of the respondents). In the question about the second major place of attachment, both these identities were quoted, by 33% and 8% respondents, respectively.

#### 2.2 Political context

An analysis of the political manifestoes of Poland's main political parties conducted for the years 2006, 2010 and 2014 reveals a relatively distinct polarisation of the Polish political scene in respect of their attitude to European integration (Debus M., Gross M., 2017). Among the major parties, there are those with a strong pro-European orientation such as Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska - PO) (6.53), Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej - SLD) (6.59) and, though to a lesser extent, Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe - PSL) (5.47), and those which are more sceptical approach to the European Union such as Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PIS) (3.82). It should be noted, however, that few differences could be observed between the major parties as regards their attitude to the Cohesion policy, which is definitely positive and, in quantitative terms, ranges from 6.38 (PiS) to 6.88 (PO). Moreover, all Poland's main political parties softened their stance in the recent years, which was manifested by a positive coverage of the Cohesion policy in their political agendas. Such a shift was particularly well visible in the case of Law and Justice (from 5.0 in 2006 to 6.4 in 2014).

In the Podkarpackie Voivodship, in the 2014 election to the regional parliament (Sejmik), Law and Justice won by a landslide, gaining 43.7% votes, which was the party's best election result in the country. As a result, PiS has been able to govern the region without forming a coalition, the only such voivodship in Poland. On the other hand, with a 15.4% of votes in Podkarpackie, Civic Platform recorded the second worst result in Poland, whereas 24.4% of votes for the Polish People's Party represented its average result as compared to other regions. The last of the major parties, the Democratic Left Alliance, won 7.4% of votes in Podkarpackie.

The comparison of these results with the attitude of the major political parties to European integration and the Cohesion policy may point to a potentially instrumental approach to the Cohesion policy in the analysed region. One manifestation of such an approach may be underscoring the significance of the beneficiaries' own contribution in the implementation of EU-funded projects and placing less emphasis on promoting the European Union among the residents.

#### 2.3. Socio-economic context

The Podkarpackie Voivodship is among the least developed regions of Poland and the European Union. In real terms, its GDP per capita (EUR) reaches only 27.6% of the EU average, rising to 48.0% if the purchasing power parity is included. Domestically, the voivodship's GDP per capita only slightly exceeded 70% of the national average. This was accompanied by a distinct, and increasing, intraregional disparities at the level of NUTS3 subregions, which reached a ratio of 1:1.62.

The voivodship's low development level can be attributed to an unfavourable economic structure on the one hand, and a low urbanisation rate on the other. Regarding the former, the share of the employment in inefficient agriculture is a staggering 31%. Similarly, the urbanisation rate remains very low, at a level of 41.5%, one of the lowest values in Poland, which means that the majority of the region's population live in rural areas, predominantly in rather inaccessible montane and submontane areas. The regional capital iRzeszów with a population of 186,000. The voivodship's settlement network is highly polycentric, demonstrated e.g. by the fact that the other nine largest cities have a population above 30,000, with three of them, Przemyśl, Stalowa Wola and Mielec having more than 60,000 residents.

Podkarpackie has long-established industrial traditions, dating back to the pre-War years and the Central Industrial District (Centralny Okręg Przemysłowy – COP) and, in the mining industry (petroleum), to the 19th century. In effect, the region has many traditional sectors of the economy such as the steel or metal industries. However, the region is also – partly thanks to inward capital – home to high-tech sectors, associated mostly with the aviation and IT clusters.

As regards the determinants of Cohesion policy implementation (Capello, Perucca 2017), it can be pointed out that Podkarpackie, just as the majority of the Polish regions, is an example of an area where the implementation of the Cohesion policy may be regarded as potentially ineffective (inefficient institutional context). This is due to the poor assessment of the quality of governance in the Polish regions (Charon et al. 2014), which takes into account such parameters as corruption, rule of law, bureaucratic effectiveness and strength of democratic and electoral institutions.

# Cohesion policy implementation and performance

# 3.1 EU Cohesion policy strategic and implementation framework

Since 2004, i.e. after Poland's accession to the European Union, three stages of Cohesion Policy have been implemented in the Podkarpackie Voivodship:

- 2004-2006, as part of the Integrated Regional Development Programme (IRDOP) and national sectoral programmes. This initial period largely involved gaining experiences in the implementation of Cohesion Policy programmes;
- 2007-2013, as part of the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) and national sectoral programmes as well as macroregional operational programme 'Eastern Poland';
- in 2014 Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2014-2020 and national sectoral programmes as well as macroregional operational programme 'Eastern Poland' were launched.

Below is a detailed presentation of the Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 2007-2013, which was of crucial importance for the Cohesify research as well Regional Operational Programme (ROP) 20014-2014 with special focus on adopted changes in comparison to previous programming period.

#### 3.1.1 Operational Programme for Podkarpackie Voivodship 2007-2013

The Regional Operational Programme for the Podkarpackie Voivodship 2007-2013 (ROP PV 2007-2013) was one of the implementation instruments of the National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013, a national-level document that defined the policies of using EU funds for the country's development. The preparation and delivery of the Programme rested with the Managing Authority, i.e. the **Board of the Podkarpackie Voivodship**.

The strategic goal of the Podkarpackie ROP was to increase the domestic and international competitiveness of the economy and improve the transport accessibility of the region.

The above goal was to be attained by fulfilling specific objectives from across a wide range of issues not only directly related to competitiveness and accessibility, but also to such vital factors as information society, social capital, natural environment, cultural resources, while also taking into account intraregional disparities in the development level.

Creating the conditions for the promotion of **entrepreneurship and innovative economy**, the major components underpinning the fulfilment of the Programme's overarching goal, was to be boosted by projects which involved among others capital and institutional support as well as promotion and advisory services for businesses. It was anticipated that this should boost economic activity, mainly of SMEs, and help to attract hi-tech investments. Such interventions also planned to include support to technological research and development activities and development of collaboration between scientific establishments, business environment institutions and entrepreneurs. Particularly strong support was envisaged for activities building the region's indigenous economic potential, especially in the aviation and IT sectors and tourism.

The **development of technical infrastructure**, also including environmental protection infrastructure, was regarded as indispensable for conducting business and investment activity. It was assumed that the region's transport accessibility, improved thanks to the construction and modernisation of road, rail and air infrastructure, and coupled with the development of public transport, would help to narrow the internal disparities in development on the one hand, and on the other that investment projects undertaken as part of the transport corridors (TEN-T) would help to improve the region's competitiveness and attractiveness for investors.

Similarly, building **fast and efficient communication systems**, also with the use of digital information and communication technologies underpinning the development of information society,

was also regarded as essential. It was acknowledged, that wide access to broadband Internet will help to reduce developmental disparities in the region. Moreover, a dynamic growth of electronic services was expected.

**Preventing environmental degradation** was to be ensured by activities aimed to regulate water and sewage management and by rational waste management. It was also planned to implement projects aimed to prevent natural disasters, particularly floods, thus improving the safety of the local population and the economy.

Investments in public infrastructure to improve the standards in education and health care and enhanced access to public assistance benefits, particularly in less-developed areas, were regarded as components needed to build a modern society. It was assumed that improved access to learning and its better quality would strengthen the knowledge base and level of education of the region's population. Such support was to be provided to initiatives fostering cooperation between secondary schools and entrepreneurs, particularly in the context of economic modernisation processes, and was to cover in particular the infrastructure of higher education institutions, schools and other establishments operating within the education system, as well as NGOs.

It was planned to support the **development of tourism, protection of the cultural heritage and to upgrade the infrastructure of cultural institutions**. The relatively low standard of tourist facilities was regarded as the reason for the low significance of tourism in the regional economy. Activities which were considered as crucial included not only those aimed to improve the standard of service, but also those which helped to create new tourist products and ensured their effective promotion.

One of the objectives that the programme planned to achieve was also **to reduce intraregional disparities in the level of development**. Activities in that regard were particularly intended to focus on areas affected by economic marginalisation, physical degradation and social exclusion.

ROP PV was implemented via 8 priority axes, including technical assistance. An indicative ERDF allocation broken down by specific Priority Axes is shown below.

Table 1. Priority axes and allocations in 2007-2013 – ROP Podkarpackie Voivodship

Podkαrpackie voivodship ROP 2007-2013								
Priority axes	EFRD allocation (%)	EFRD allocation (EUR)						
1. Competitive and innovative economy	25.4%	288,640,033						
2. Technical infrastructure	30.0%	341,083,247						
3. Information society	6.0%	67,987,570						
4. Environment protection and risk prevention	15.0%	170,446,174						
5. Public infrastructure	10.6%	120,448,629						
6. Tourism and culture	3.7%	37,071,388						
7. Intra-regional cohesion	7.0 %	79,541,547						
8. Technical assistance	2.7 %	31,089,235						
Total	100.0	1,136,307,823						

As shown above, ROP PV 2007-2013 received a total funding of ca. EUR 1.15 billion (ca. EUR 530 per capita).

The sources of financing for ROP PV included the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the accompanying national co-financing. The ERDF allocation for the financing of the Programme totalled EUR 1,136,307,823, which accounted for 1.70% of the total ROP allocation as part of the Convergence Objective and 6.86% of the aggregate ERDF allocation to Poland's 16 Regional Operational Programmes. Taking into account the additional ERDF funding allocated to the Podkarpackie ROP in 2011 from the National Performance Reserve and the Technical Adjustment in the amount of EUR 42,340,885, the overall value of ERDF funding invested in the Programme totals EUR 1,178,648,708.

In line with the assumptions of the indicative financial plan for the Podkarpackie ROP, the aggregate value of funds committed for ROP PV (both European and national) totalled ca. EUR 1.35 billion, including the national public contribution of over EUR 210 million.

According to interviewees ROP VP 2007-2013 addressed the major problems that the Podkarpackie Voivodship faced in 2007, that is:

- poor transport accessibility, coupled with very low development level of the peripheral, mostly agricultural, parts of the region (including the phenomenon of hidden rural unemployment),
- 2) weak SME sector and poorly developed collaboration between academia and business,
- 3) training profiles ill adapted to the market needs, leading to high unemployment, particularly in cities affected by industrial restructuring,
- 4) environmental protection and energy infrastructure that requires further extension and modernisation,
- 5) local technical infrastructure (including social infrastructure) in need of upgrading, especially visible in rural areas.

# 3.1.2 Operational Programme for Podkarpackie Voivodship 2014-2020

In 2007-2013, the region's situation was substantially improved, also thanks to ROP interventions. It should be borne in mind that the ROP 2007-2013 interventions covered only ERDF-funded assistance, whereas social issues were addressed as part of the Human Capital OP ESF-funded, managed nationally. The ROP 2014-2020 is more comprehensive as it comprises development of 'hard' infrastructure alongside social issues such as education, employment or assistance to those threatened with poverty and social exclusion.

The overarching goal of ROP 2014-2020 is to strengthen and effectively use the region's economic and social potentials for the smart and sustainable growth of the Podkarpackie Voivodship.

The major changes that could be observed in comparison to the 2007-2013 programming period included the strengthening or weakening of the former challenges and areas of intervention or the emergence of new ones, i.e.:

- **greater focus on innovations** in the enterprise sector, at the expense e.g. of purchases of basic equipment by small enterprises,
- **improved access to the motorway and expressways**, and improved intraregional access to the main cities functioning as centres of social and economic activity,
- **reduced expenditure on infrastructure** to direct the thrust of the Programme on tapping the region's economic and social potentials,
- **higher selectivity and concentration** of the Programme's funds (reduced number of smart specialisations; targeting expenditure on network infrastructure in urban areas),
- focus on equalising educational opportunities of children and youth; modernisation and adaptation of vocational education and training processes to the needs of the regional labour market,

- increased significance of environmental and energy-related issues, primarily including improved energy efficiency and increased share of renewable energy sources in the energy balance,
- **broader inclusion of social issues** such as e.g.: social and vocational activation of those suffering from specific difficulties in functioning in the society and on the labour market; improved access to social (including assisted living facilities) and healthcare particularly for the elderly) in the region, including reducing the burden on social welfare institutions,
- **introduction of Integrated Territorial Investments** in the Rzeszów functional urban area, with the aim of strengthening its role nationally and boosting the development processes within the region.

Table 2. Priority axes and allocations in 2014-20 - ROP Podkarpackie Voivodship

Podkarpackie voivodship ROP 2014-2020									
Роакаграскіе чоїчоа:	Snip ROP 2014-2	020							
Priority allocation	Source of financing	ERDF+ESF allocation (%)	ERDF +ESF allocation (EUR)						
1. Competitive and innovative economy	ERDF	17.7	374,372,710						
2. E-Podkarpackie	ERDF	3.8	81,039,212						
3. Green energy	ERDF	12.0	253,741,612						
4. Natural resources and cultural heritage	ERDF	8.8	186,159,639						
5. Transport infrastructure	ERDF	19.2	406,382,648						
6. Social inclusion	ERDF	10.3	217,821,373						
7. Labour market	ESF	10.8	227,385,570						
8. Social integration	ESF	8.0	169,088,779						
9. Education and competences	ESF	6.1	128,549,197						
10. Technical assistance	ESF	3.3	69,703,020						
Total	ERDF+ESF	100.0	2,114,243,760						

According to desk research and based on interviewees opinion the results of the ROP implementation to date (2014-2020) have been relatively small, which is due to the continued, low level of contracting (approx. 30% of the total allocation by mid-2017) and disbursements evidencing the project completion (a mere 1.7% of the total allocation). Such a situation can be attributed to the following reasons:

- delays in the programme approval procedures and guidelines necessary for its implementation,
- changes in the implementation policies which necessitate adaptation on the part of officials, who need to change their habits that they developed in the former programming period,
- reduced absorption capacity either due to more stringent award criteria (such as innovation requirements in the case of support to enterprises), as well as serious difficulties related to securing the beneficiary's own contribution (liabilities contracted for the implementation of projects co-financed during the previous programming perspective),
- ambiguities in the implementation provisions which required relevant interpretations to be issued (such as e.g. opinions from the Office of Competition and Consumer Protection).

# 3.1.3 Implementation framework and partnership structures

# Implementation framework

The management system in ROP PV 2014-2020 is essentially based on specific pragmatism drawing on extensive experience gained in the years 2007-2013. The management system both in 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 was similar in a way that it offered the same instruments and funds to regional institutions (and all institutions in general). However, the share of EU funds allocated to regional level have increased from 25% to 40% as a result of transfer of part of ESF funds focused on human capital development to Regional Operational Programmes.

The contemporary system provides information which arrangements are effective and which should be avoided. The management system is designed in such a way as to ensure that all the complicated EU requirements are fulfilled in the most effective and least cumbersome manner. Being practically devoid of any superfluous red tape, it is not exactly straightforward because it needs to address all the European and national regulations and guidelines, as well as the whole diverse scope of the Programme's interventions. Significant difference is that the most important regulation was published six months before the start of the 2007-2013 period, while the earliest day of publishing key regulations for 2014-2020 period was just two weeks before the start of the programming period.

In comparison with the previous financing perspective (2007-2013), the following changes have been made in the Programme's management system:

- First, the Regional programmes (ROP) were established in 16 NUTS 2 regions (voivodships) with 25 % of share in total Polish Cohesion policy budget allocation 2007-2013, while currently the share have increased up to 40%.
- It is important to note that the funding for all the ROPs was done till 2013 through one fund (EFRR), while currently the Programme is a two-fund one, which means that it has the sign on of both the European Regional Development Fund and the European Social Fund. This solution helped to avoid the situation in which only one fund was operating in the regions and could spend only up to 10% for the needs that normally were difficult to justify. These two are to some extent 'worlds apart', which, however, have been quite effectively integrated.
- While in the 2007-2013 perspective ROP in some cases mattered more than the voivodship development strategy (though Podkarpackie Voivodship had one), while in the current financial perspective ROP is subordinated to the regional development strategy. The reason is probably simple: the budget of the EU was larger than the Polish budget. A characteristic feature is linking the management system of ROP PV 2014-2020 with the implementation system of the Development Strategy for the Podkarpackie Voivodship 2020 (SRWP 2020), in operation at the Marshal Office. Many strategic projects arising from the Strategy are being implemented as part of ROP PV 2014-2020 on a competitive and non-competitive basis. One example of the synergy between the two systems is the participation of officials in charge of strategic projects in the evaluation of projects submitted under ROP 2014-2020.
- Despite the fact that in 2010 the Europe 2020 Strategy was adopted, the beneficiaries pretended not to know about it and not to use it in daily life till the end of 2013. As a result all parties (beneficiaries, management authorities and Brussels services) turned out to accept some displacement, such as urban regeneration instead of renovation, etc.
- An important change has been the implementation of parts of the Programme using the ITI formula in case of functional urban areas of larger cities.
- A special role has been assigned to the selection of regional policies concerning smart specialisation; this was done in an elaborate procedure aimed to eliminate initial proposals with the participation of external experts, also from abroad. These policies, although not always written down in the Regional innovation strategy till 2020, are linked to the leading sectors of the region's economy with major enterprises of at least national significance, well-

developed R&D; activity and ties with the local science and academic centres. It is based on the triple helix formula nowadays

To sum up, thanks to changes in regulations for 2014-2020 period, and not only thanks to significant increase of ROP financing (from 25% in the period of 2007-2013 to 40% on the country level for ROPs in 2014-2020) and strict utilization of rules there is a good chance that the funds for the contemporary period will be used even more effectively.

#### **Partnerships**

Partnership principle is actively implemented in the framework of the Regional Operational Programme for the Podkarpackie Voivodship. Engagement of various stakeholders is secured by EU regulations, as well as by national, regional and local practices. Moreover, stakeholders are involved on different stages of the preparation and implementation of RPO and by different policy measures and structures. The most vital aspects of this phenomena will be discussed in this section of the report.

At the preparatory stage, i.e. during drafting and negotiating of the programme, non-governmental partners were invited to participate in the work of the Marshal Office. For the most part, active social partners came from the group already involved in the implementation of the European funds in the region, name those involved in the Monitoring Committee of the former programme for the period 2007-2013. Involvement of stakeholders on the preparatory stage ranged from formal engagement in the work of working groups to participate in targeted consultation and public consultation events, as well as informal discussions. Also, monitoring committee working on the 2007-2013 funds formed a platform for different stakeholders to participate in the drafting the programme. Based on the information included in the ROP, the draft of the programme have been formally consulted with: 61 local authorities, five national authorities (ministries), five education providers (Higher Education institutions), and 45 civil society organisations and economic & social partners (including stakeholders for the business sector).

At the implementation stage, the critical role in addressing partnership principle is played by the Monitoring Committee. This body consists of 61 individuals representing regional and local authorities (18 people), national authorities (11 people), partners from business, non-governmental sector, higher education and R&D sector, labour unions, etc. (17 people). These three groups have voting rights—i.e. they can directly influence the decision of the Monitoring Committee. Additionally, the committee is supplemented by observers (with no voting rights): 12 national observers (for the most part from the regional institutions) and 3 emissaries for the European Commission. In general, the composition, operation and the role in the system played by the monitoring committee have not changed considerably between periods 2007-2013 and 2014-2020. Moreover, a number of member of the MC 2014-2020 have been involved in the previous MC. This is seen as a positive feature—mainly because this allows for accumulation and transfer of knowledge and good practices between programming periods.

In addition, stakeholders can be, and indeed are, involved in the discussion on the state of the ROP carried on during sessions of the regional assembly (Voivodeship sejmik). However, this platform is far less critical than the MC. Some interviewees also mentioned the regional Boar of Public Benefit Organization (Rada Działalności Pożytku Publicznego) as a potentially useful platform for discussing the ROP between governmental and non-governmental sectors — however, as for now, this opportunity remains largely underused.

# 3.2 Assessment of performance

#### 3.2.1 Programme performance

#### Program outputs and results

Total number of completed projects financed under ROP 2007-2013 reached almost 2,600, roughly 55% of the total number of applications submitted under 76 calls for proposals. There were 1,312 of beneficiaries in total, with enterprises accounting for 79% of this value, and local communes – 11%. 94% of all local communes in the region benefitted directly from ROP 2007-2013 funds. According to share of funds obtained, local governments were the main beneficiary (59% of the total ERDF funding), followed by enterprises (22%), academic and research institutions (8%), and NGOs (5%). Financial instruments were used as a tool for distributing part of the ROP funds to local enterprises. In total 3,767 loans and guarantees were extended to micro, small and medium enterprises, amounting to EUR 53.5 million.

The total ERDF spending under ROP 2007-2013 amounted to EUR 1120,8 million. The breakdown across 8 priority axes is presented in the table below. The biggest share of funds were spent on Technical infrastructure, followed by support for the Competitive and innovative economy.

Table 3. Total ERDF funding and no of projects across priority axes, ROP 2007-13, completed

projects

Podkarpackie voivodship ROP 2007-2013									
Priority axis	No of projects	ERDF funding [million EUR]	ERDF funding [% of total]						
1. Competitive and innovative economy	1268	268.5	24%						
2. Technical infrastructure	466	383.4	34%						
3. Information society	60	61.7	6%						
4. Environment protection and risk management	256	147.8	13%						
5. Social infrastructure	237	122.5	11%						
6. Tourism and cultural heritage	72	33.4	3%						
7. Intra-regional cohesion	144	74.2	7%						
8. Technical assistance	89	29.2	3%						
Total	2592	1120.8	100%						

Source: own elaboration, based on ROP Podkarpackie Final Implementation Report, 2017

The absorption of funds offered under the Podkarpackie ROP 2007-2013 significantly stimulated the region's economic development. The regional GDP per capita in PPP terms has grown from 37% to 48% of the EU-28 average between year 2007 and 2014. According to macroeconomic estimations ROP funds has increased the regional **GDP growth by 0.92 pp annually**. It has also lead to **creation of 3583 jobs in enterprises** (gross value, full-time eq.).

Support for entrepreneurship included assistance for 18 business environment institutions, that has led to creation of over 140 new services for enterprises. Almost 1,000 projects of SMEs has been completed, resulting in over 1,100 new products and 361 new technologies. However, in relation to declared targets there was a considerable underperformance in fostering R&D and business-to-science cooperation. This might be attributed to risk-aversion among entrepreneurs, and lack of tradition in such cooperation.

Development of transport infrastructure focused predominantly on road network, with over 1,100 km of newly built or renovated local and regional roads, and lay-offs amounting to EUR 235 million. A significant number of projects – 12, totalling EUR 33 million – were dedicated to developing the regional airport in Jasionka. Infrastructural investments were accompanied by a significant increase

in passenger traffic at the airport, from 280 thous. in 2007, to almost 650 thous. in 2015. On the other hand, targets aimed at improving rail infrastructure has not been met, with only 75 km of renovated railroads and no newly created lines. Developing this type of infrastructure turned out to be a too complex endeavour, given the limited absorption capacity of the state owned rail network operator.

Energy investments also fall under the Technical infrastructure priority axis. Thermomodernization of over 600 buildings allowed for energy savings of 157 GWh per year. Investments in renewable energy sources, mainly solar, added 27 MW to regional energy mix and allowed for primary energy savings of 86.7 thous. GJ per year. However, one of the energy-related targets (energy transmission networks) was not achieved, probably due to targeting the assistance to final energy consumers instead of infrastructure operators.

Almost 60 km of broadband network has been built, with 52 thous. individuals and over 1 thous. enterprises gaining access to it. However, number of both schools and public administration entities that gained access to broadband network was much below the set targets. It is mostly due to procedural problems arising from the category of state aid, that requires notification of European Commission. In terms of total funds expended, main investments under Information society axis focused on developing e-administration services for citizens.

Under the Environment protection and risk management priority axis main investments were channelled in developing water and sanitation networks – EUR 82.1 million. Sewage system was extended, with 10 new sewage treatment plants, over 1,500 km of pipes and 80 thous. individual users, that gained access to it. Water supply system was also extended and renovated, with over 500 thous. individuals and 20 thous. enterprises benefitting from these investments. Risk management investments constituted the second most important area of investment under this priority axis. The funds were mostly directed for flood protection infrastructure, and for improving capacity of rescue services. In terms of raising environmental awareness, 17 centres of education has been supported, and the total number of their visitors exceeded 160 thous.

Social infrastructure investments focused on education, healthcare, welfare services and sports & recreation. Completed projects aimed at improving the existing infrastructure and buying new equipment. Education infrastructure received a largest share of funds, i.e. EUR 80.3 million, followed by healthcare – EUR 30.9 million. In terms of number of individuals that indirectly benefitted from these investments, it ranged from over 3,300 thous. for sports infrastructure to 18 thous. in case of welfare services. The only targets that were not met relate to sphere of education – number of students benefitting from the projects and number of lifelong learning facilities supported. This underperformance might be attributed, accordingly, to higher than expected rate of emigration of youth people, and to low level of absorption capacity of lifelong learning facilities, that are usually dependent on financially-constrained budgets of *poviats*.

Tourism and culture investments were mostly directed for renovation of cultural heritage objects and institutions as well as for developing tourism infrastructure. **Despite the high regional potential in terms of tourism, the total funding in this area was rather limited**, amounting only to EUR 5.75 million or 0.5% of total ERDF funding for ROP 2007-13.

The Intra-regional cohesion priority axis focused mainly on renovation and revalorization of housing infrastructure and public space. Despite using the term "revitalization", completed projects lacked social dimension that would complement the infrastructural developments in order to prevent degradation and marginalization of vulnerable communities. Surprisingly, the largest project in terms of funding received aimed at renovation of the historic monastery located in Rzeszów. Also, a significant share of funds originally allocated for revitalizing marginalized areas was later channelled for rebuilding infrastructure that has suffered due to severe floods.

Out of 113 ex-ante targets set in the ROP 2007-13, majority has been met, with only 14% falling below the threshold of 75% of an expected value. Share of failed targets across priority axes is rather stable (11% $\div$ 25%), with a positive exception of tourism and cultural heritage, where no targets have fallen below the 75% threshold.

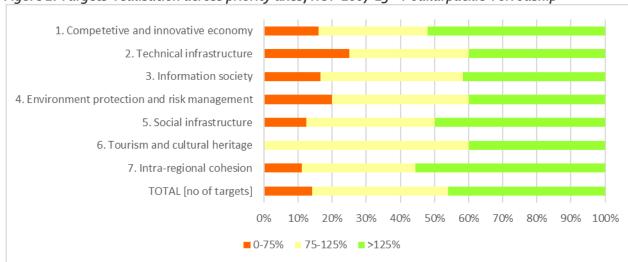


Figure 1. Targets' realisation across priority axes, ROP 2007-13 – Podkarpackie Voivodship

Source: own elaboration, based on ROP Podkarpackie Final Implementation Report, 2017

#### Main achievements and obstacles

To sum it up a study on the results of the Programme found that it produced visible effects both on the macro scale (higher GDP, employment and investment rate) and on the micro scale (changes in specific municipalities or firms). The sectors which received more substantial financing from ROP PV compared to the remaining voivodships included R&D infrastructure, grants for businesses and investments in environmental infrastructure, whereas tourism and business environment institutions were allocated less support than was the case in the other regions.

Based on the desk research and findings from the stakeholder interviews, the following can be regarded as the Programme's main achievements (while also indicating some of the difficulties in the implementation of the Podkarpackie ROP):

- European funds allocated to the Podkarpackie Voivodship influenced practically all the spheres of socio-economic life, but as visibly noted by the respondents with a predominance of investments in hard infrastructure compared to soft infrastructure initiatives, and a prevalence of initiatives related to the economy rather than activities aimed to solve social problems,
- The respondents widely noted the improved condition of the technical infrastructure, particularly transport (with the A4 motorway, funded from the national Infrastructure&Environment OP, being cited, and the airport in Jasionka), water, sewage infrastructure (but with the share of the population having access to water supply systems being higher than that with access to sewerage, a situation regarded as disadvantageous) as well as the infrastructure of higher education institutions, with investments in social infrastructure being quoted less frequently,
- Opinion on the technological advancement stemming from Cohesion Policy investments were mixed. Some respondents highlighted achievements in creating better research infrastructure and increased technology-readiness of regional economy and public services, while other emphasized that main changes were limited to basic infrastructures, with only an outlook for a more technologically advanced projects in the coming years

- According to some of the respondents, substantial funding allocated to business support
  helped to improve the competitiveness of the region's economy and increase the number of
  jobs.
- ROP spending in the region resulted in growing recognition of the European Union funding schemes, considered as a chance for both personal and socio-economic development.

The respondents agreed that - given the low level of spending - it is too early to assess the achievements of the ROP 2014-2020.

According to final implementation report of ROP 2007-13 (ROP Podkarpackie Final Implementation Report 2017), there were significant obstacles encountered during the implementation phase. The first one was a limited consistency between Polish and EU law, e.g. the delay in implementation of EU environmental directives and guidelines regulating state aid to Polish legal system. It resulted in some confusion and delays in the application procedures. Another difficulty was related to instability of the Polish law, e.g. change of the VAT thresholds and novelization of the law on public finance in 2010. The growing demand for evaluation studies overloaded existing capacity, and therefore the MA had difficulties in ordering an interim study that would help to assess the implementation system and adjust it to current needs of beneficiaries. The latter group also experienced some problems that influenced the performance of the programme, especially errors and delays in procurement procedures. Finally, the severe consequences of the 2010 flood necessitated some adjustments in goals of Interregional cohesion priority axis, and flexibility with regard to projects that have been directly affected.

The implementation of the Podkarpackie ROP in the view of interviewees was hindered by the following phenomena and processes:

- spatial polarisation of growth, which is constantly growing the intraregional disparities in the development level are getting wider. However, it can hardly be expected of the Podkarpackie ROP to reverse this process, although the Programme may alleviate it. On the one hand ROPs offered opportunities for the less developed parts of the region to overcome their structural barriers, but on the other hand more funds were absorbed in better-developed areas, especially in Rzeszów,
- the respondents pointed out the issue of excessive dispersion of funds (and also the scattered, punctual nature of the solutions applied, e.g. in the development of information society); also, the effects of support offered to firms and of training programmes were found highly controversial (some of the respondents stressed low effectiveness of expenditure made in those areas),
- ambitious goals related to increasing the innovation level of the regional economy need time, and therefore stronger linkages between academia and the business sector were still regarded as a considerable challenge,
- instability and uncertainty of legal regulations and various guidelines and interpretations definitely made the Programme's implementation process much more demanding.

Over the period of implementation the MA came up with a number of solutions to identified problems. For instance, a more even distribution of funds – both spatially and across various beneficiaries – was achieved by setting limits to minimum and maximum value of allocation per project and to number of projects per beneficiary. This regulation, along with trainings for potential beneficiaries, resulted in raising both the quality of submitted applications and its number, which was important for meeting the performance targets.

#### Implementation structures

According to interviews the effective and efficient management of the adopted implementation system facilities helps to select good projects. Therefore, the system's effectiveness can be viewed as high. At least formally, though strict use of regulation also contributed to significant improvement.

In particular it has to be seen (from outside) as high for demand side projects. "Significant improvement" can be noticed mostly among those interviewed in the region.

Thanks to that, the system in place also helps to select good projects. A considerable number of projects funded from the Programme are selected in a non-competitive process. These are projects pursuing the ITI strategy or the regional strategy of the Podkarpackie voivodship 2020, and therefore – by definition – these are good, viable projects, which – in a comprehensive and cohesive way – address the main problems and challenges identified during the multifaceted process of formulating each of these strategies.

In turn, the quality of projects selected in a competitive procedure (calls for proposals) is ensured by the selection criteria which warrant their high standard and give priority to projects which best meet the Programme's objectives. The higher priority given to on-going project evaluation favours their successful realisation. This is to some extent caused by the annual accounting mode.

Project readiness for evaluation and implementation has posed a serious challenge. In order to select good projects, there must be a pool to choose from. For strategic projects, this often meant the need to formulate their detailed content with the involvement of many partners. For instance, urban regeneration projects are typically prepared in a lengthy and complicated process. In projects selected in a competitive procedure, the problems associated with their reaching readiness for implementation are frequently associated with carrying out the environmental impact assessment and obtaining the required permissions and approvals. In the final implementation stage of the Pomorskie ROP 2007-2013, part of the Programme funds, coming mainly from savings in the tenders, was earmarked for beneficiaries to prepare the necessary documentation for projects which were to be implemented in the 2014-2020 period.

The main challenges regarding implementation include:

- The simplification of procedures that are criticised by many institutions' representatives (mostly those institutions as they were void of European regulation till May 2014).
- The sticking to the requirements of the EU regulations and restrictions (and similarly ability of the European Commission to follow the regulations and not to change it in order to spend more money).
- Unknown (as yet) results of Brexit from EU and its impact on Union's budgets.
- For instance, the selection of best projects under urban regeneration (and other) schemes.

Otherwise it is clear that effectiveness strongly improved in Podkarpackie region (and other regions, as regulation was addressed to the countries, not to specific regions). However, the differences in spending money effectively can be observed between various regions. In general these structures were good for implementation. Especially for implementation of projects on demand side.

#### General orientation of ROP

In the Programme's 2014-2020 delivery, the greatest emphasis in the opinion of respondents falls on several issues whose roles are changing as ROP advances to subsequent implementation stages:

- compliance with the regulations and guidelines at all the implementation stages as a precondition for being awarded financial support,
- significant focus on efficient and effective use of the funds in the first programme phase, which is a condition for being included in the national contingency reserve to be distributed in 2018, but also in the subsequent phases so as ensure absorption of the entire available programme allocation,
- the effects of the Programme arising from the arrangements related to the competitionbased criteria of awarding funds, developed in the initial implementation phase,

• communicating the effects in the subsequent stages of the Programme, when the first effects become visible; however, programme promotion is as important in the phase of encouraging potential beneficiaries to apply for assistance.

# 3.2.2 Programme performance – survey results

In general the respondents have a positive opinion on implementation of programmes within framework of Cohesion Policy funds. They appreciate even more projects implemented at local level, but also almost 68% of respondents asses at least as well the implementation at regional level

Q1. How well – in your opinion – have Cohesion policy funds been used in your municipality and region?

	Very well	Well	Acceptable	Poorly	Very poorly	Don't know
Your municipality	29.4%	38.2%	22.1%	5.9%	0.0%	4.4%
Your region	22.1%	45.6%	25.0%	2.9%	0.0%	4.4%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

The majority of respondents (c.a. 2/3) believe that Cohesion Policy 'largely' of 'completely' reinforced development objectives both at local and regional level. Less than 3% of respondents assess negatively achievements of cohesion policy in this respect.

Q2. To what extent have the Cohesion Policy objectives reinforced the development objectives of your municipality and region?

	Completel Y	Largely	,	Not much	Not at all	Don't know
Your municipality	13.2%	51.5%	27.9%	2.9%	0.0%	4.4%
Your region	10.3%	57.4%	25.0%	2.9%	0.0%	4.4%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

There is a general believe that Cohesion Policy funds lead to a decrease of differences in all analysed dimensions. According to respondents the impact of Cohesion Policy was especially positive in terms of catching up of poorer countries with EU average. The same refers to a decrease of interregional differences in level of development and to lesser extent between urban and rural areas within individual countries. However, more respondents tend to notice that the impact on reduction on intraregional disparities have been less significant, but no so many (9%) accuses Cohesion Policy of growth of such a disparities.

Q3. To what extent have Cohesion policy funds helped to increase or decrease:

	, ,					
	Decreased	Somewhat	Had no	Somewha	Increase	Don't
		decreased	impact	t increased	d	know
Differences in the development levelopment levelopment levelopment in your country		58.8%	8.8%	1.5%	4.4%	4.4%
Differences in the development levelopment levelopment levelopmen between rural and urban areas in youregion	. •	52.9%	4.4%	7.4%	2.9%	4.4%

Differences in the development level	19.1%	50.0%	17.7%	5.9%	2.9%	4.4%
between poorer and richer areas in your						
region						
Differences in the development level	26.5%	55.9%	5.9%	2.9%	1.5%	7.4%
between your country and other EU						
Member states						

Vast majority of respondents underline that Cohesion Policy helped residents of Podkarpackie Voivodship to support European Union even more than in 2006, so at the beginning of Polish membership in the EU. Almost 1/3 believe that the impact of Cohesion Policy was very significant in this respect.

Q4. In your opinion, has the Cohesion Policy during the last 10 years or so helped to make residents of your municipality/region support the European Union more?

It has helped a lot	It has	rather	t has	had no	It has	had a	It has had a very	Don't know
	helped	į	mpact		rather	negative	negative impact	
					impact			
32.4%	57.4%	ı	5.9%		0.0%		0.0%	4.4%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

Respondents reports some problems associated with the implementation process of the Cohesion Policy. The most popular reason for complaints included excessive bureaucracy (red tape), in many cases also associated with problems in ensuring co-financing for the projects implemented from the Cohesion Policy funds. Another frequently reported difficulty were the audit and inspection requirements concerning the implemented projects. Among the less frequently reported obstacles to the implementation of the Cohesion Policy, the relatively most popular were unclear objectives for evaluating project results and excessive audit and control during or after the project completion. At the same time, the respondents seldom mentioned the difficulties in the access to loans and credits, difficulties in the access to qualified staff and finally cooperation of the partners in the implementation of projects.

Q5. How significant was the impact of the following problems and challenges during the implementation of Cohesion policy projects?

	Very significan t		Average	Insignifican t		Don't know
Scarcity of Cohesion policy funds	14.7%	45.6%	30.9%	2.9%	1.5%	4.4%
Problems with obtaining Cohesion policy financing such as complicated rules for submitting applications	0 0	47.1%	23.5%	2.9%	0.0%	2.9%
Excessive, cumbersome reporting	19.1%	44.1%	26.5%	5.9%	1.5%	2.9%
Unclear objectives for evaluating project results	17.7%	32.4%	38.2%	8.8%	0.0%	2.9%
Poor cooperation between project partners	4.4%	11.8%	50.0%	26.5%	1.5%	5.9%

Excessive audit and control during or after the project completion	17.7%	32.4%	32.4%	10.3%	4.4%	2.9%
Lack of funds for own contribution (co- financing)	25.0%	41.2%	25.0%	4.4%	0.0%	4.4%
Difficult access to credit and/or loans for own contribution	8.8%	30.9%	35.3%	17.7%	0.0%	7.4%
Lack of capacity such as qualified staff	11.8%	32.4%	23.5%	25.0%	4.4%	2.9%

The respondents viewed most positively the changes in their environment which would not have been possible without EU funding. The relevance of the disbursed funds was also assessed very well. According to respondents the spending of Cohesion policy funds is adequately controlled and the administration of Cohesion policy has been delivered in an efficient (cost effective) manner.

These opinions were accompanied by the belief that fraud, including corruption and nepotism were extremely rare during the Cohesion Policy implementation. However, some respondents expressed concerns regarding irregularities in the disbursement of funds caused by the lack of compliance with the EU law. Nevertheless, very small share of respondents believed that in most cases EU money were wasted on the wrong projects

Q6. To what extent have Cohesion policy funds helped to increase or decrease:

Cohesion policy funds finance those	agree 16.2%	Agree 67.7%	agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree 1.5%	
investment projects which your municipality/region needs the most						
In your municipality/region Cohesion policy funding goes to investment projects which are most valued by the local residents	_	52.9%	23.5%	7.4%	0.0%	5.9%
There are many irregularities in spending Cohesion policy funds due to non- compliance with EU rules	_	19.1%	30.9%	29.4%	2.9%	14.7%
Fraud, such as corruption or nepotism, is common in spending Cohesion policy funds		8.8%	22.1%	36.8%	13.2%	14.7%
There have been many positive changes in your municipality/region thanks to Cohesion policy funds, which would not have been achieved without the funds		58.8%	1.5%	2.9%	0.0%	2.9%
The spending of Cohesion policy funds is adequately controlled	10.3%	57.4%	20.6%	5.9%	0.0%	5.9%

The money from Cohesion policy funds is in most cases wasted on the wrong projects	0.0%	10.3%	25.0%	47.1%	10.3%	7.4%
The administration of Cohesion policy has been delivered in an efficient (cost effective) manner	5.9%	58.8%	22.1%	4.4%	1.5%	7.4%

Accessibility and adequacy of monitoring and evaluation reports are assessed rather positively. However, there are some concerns regarding their understandability and usefulness for improving the policy-making cycle. It may thus suggest that in this area the focus is rather on compliance with external regulations, than on actually employing this data in everyday practice.

Q8. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The monitoring and evaluation reports provide adequate information on the implementation and performance of the programme/s		51.5%	25.0%	10.3%	0.0%	7.4%
The monitoring and evaluation reports of the programme/s are easily accessible	2.9%	47.1%	29.4%	13.2%	0.0%	7.4%
The monitoring and evaluation reports of the programme/s are easy to understand	0.0%	33.8%	36.8%	19.1%	2.9%	7.4%
The monitoring and evaluation reports results are used to improve policy-making and implementation	_	30.9%	38.2%	11.8%	2.9%	14.7%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

Policy workshops and training are rather widespread, with only 23.5% of respondents claiming that no representatives of their organization took part in such events over the last two years. Management is by far the most prevalent topic, with almost 2/3 of respondents confirming that someone from their organization participated in such a training event. Trainings in communication are much less popular, suggesting that this type of events are rather targeted for specialists only.

Q9. In what Cohesion policy workshop or training sessions did the representatives of your organisation/municipality/region participate in the last two years?

	Yes
Management	64.7%
Control	42.7%
Monitoring	30.9%
Evaluation	35.3%
Communication	23.5%

Nobody participated in such events	23.5%

# 3.2.3 Partnership principle

Partnership arrangement established in the framework of ROP implementation play decisive role in mobilising regional stakeholders and encouraging civil society engagement in Cohesion Policy. However, this positive influence should be assessed as limited. First, at the drafting stage of the ROP, the involvement of stakeholders have been varied. On the one hand, civil servants involved in the drafting of the programme appreciated the expert insights provided by stakeholders – mainly form NGOs and business sector – into fields that are far from the expertise of public administration. On the other hand, stakeholders, especially from non-governmental sector, emphasised that their involvement had been limited during the critical phase of the negotiations of the programme, due to the rapid pace of talks.

At the implementation stage, the Monitoring Committee remains the primary platform for stakeholders' involvement. Although this platform is largely appreciated by regional and local authorities as well as stakeholders, the latter point out a number of its weak points. First, the selection procedure of candidates for the MC has been unfriendly and limited the number of potentially interested parties (demanding voting procedure – voting cards had to be delivered to the Marshalls Office). Second, some interviewees stressed that while stakeholders can voice their opinions during MC gatherings, the shared feeling is that their voice is treated less seriously. Third, the role of MC is limited to a number of ROPs implementation areas, e.g. establishment of selection criteria for projects. Moreover, at the same time, stakeholders have very limited access to others facets of the ROPs implementation, e.g. actual process of project evaluation end selection. On the other hand, interviewees representing regional and local authorities point out that the non-governmental sector in the region is moderately developed. Only a limited number of non-governmental organisations in the region have decent capacities to efficiently be involved in the MC and other possible platforms for discussions on ROPs implementation. Moreover, those organisations face the risk of being overwhelmed by the tasks associated with the full involvement in the MC.

The general opinion of the stakeholders on the implementation of the partnership principle is positive, especially with regard to providing an effective mechanism for creating shared understanding and shared commitments to achieve programme's objectives. However, almost half of all respondents reported that partners tend to be interested only in promoting their own interests. It may suggest that expectations regarding the functioning of the partnership principle were rather low.

Q7. How strongly do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the operation of the partnership principle in practice?

	Strongly agree	3	Neither agree nor disagree		Strongly disagree	
The way the programme partnership operates is inclusive, open and fair	2.9%	55.9%	25.0%	1.5%	0.0%	14.7%
The operation of the programme's partnership principle facilitates a shared understanding and shared commitments by partners to achieving the programme's objectives		64.7%	13.2%	2.9%	0.0%	11.8%

Partners are only interested in promoting	4.4%	42.7%	27.9%	11.8%	2.9%	10.3%
their own organisational and financial						
interests						ļ

All in all, there is a shared feeling in the region, that the structures provided as a part of partnership principle implementation deliver an efficient framework for accountability and multilevel governance. No significant issues with openness, access to information or procedures have been identified.

#### 3.3 Assessment of added value

The added value concept understood not only as additional impacts on developmental outcomes provided by EU involvement in regional policy, but also to governance, learning and visibility effects as well as spill-overs into domestic systems and related innovation and efficiency improvements was presented bellow regarding financial, strategic, administrative as well as democratic indirect results of Cohesion Policy.

## Financial additionality

The financial dimension of added value of ROP implementation is exhibited by induced additional investment, totalling EUR 207 million. The emphasis in the region was put on developing transport infrastructure, using various sources of Cohesion Policy funds (both national and regional OPs). In effect, a considerable leap forward happened, with new highway crossing the region, coherent regional road network and numerous, although dispersed, investments in local roads. Secondly, the regional airport benefitted significantly from Cohesion Policy funds, and these investments has been accompanied by large increase in number of passengers. Apart from basic infrastructure, the region has further developed its innovative capacity, manifested especially in the Aviation Valley cluster. Although it is spatially concentrated in the core part of the region, there is a potential for increased spill-overs. Growing focus on vocational education allow for establishing links between schools and enterprises, thus facilitating the transition of graduates to labor market.

# Strategic complementarity

One important aspect in analysing the achievements of ROP 2007-13 in various thematic fields of intervention is the complementarity with other sources of Cohesion Policy funds spend in the region. As shown in the figure below, 4 thematic fields covered by ROP 2007-13 – tourism, transport, information society and entrepreneurship was financed in over 3/4 from multiregional (Eastern Poland OP) and national Operational Programmes.

Qualitative analysis of complementarity were undertaken in selected evaluation studies. With regard to transport infrastructure, there were 4 different sources of Cohesion Policy funds spend in the region, i.e. national OP, multiregional OP, CBC programmes and Regional OP. The assessment (EGO 2010) proved that investments in public transport and in the regional airport had high degree of complementarity between various types of funding schemes. In case of road network, the results are mixed. Regional roads (financed mostly under ROP) are well connected with investments in supraregional network, while local roads do not create a coherent network, both in terms of internal and external complementarity. Another study (2012) focused on environment protection infrastructure. The degree of complementarity in this case was limited, especially due to embedding water-related projects in administrative boundaries, instead of creating broader partnerships spanning whole river basins. ROP investments in information society – i.e. mostly e-services and broadband infrastructure – created a potential for complementarity with Human Capital OP 'soft' projects, e.g. raising IT competences, and capacity-building of public administration staff.

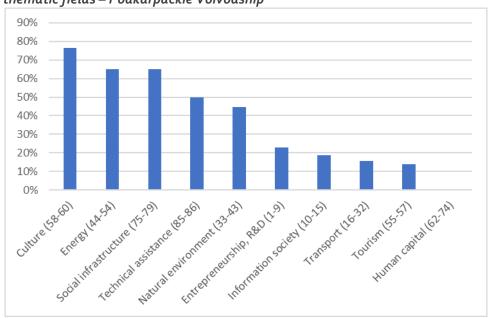


Figure 2. Share of ROP 2007-2013 funding in total Cohesion Policy funds in the region, across thematic fields – Podkarpackie Voivodship

Note: numbers in brackets refers to the list of 86 priorities definded by European Commission for the 2007-13 period; CBC programmes are not included.

Source: own elaboration, based on ROP Podkarpackie Final Implementation Report, 2017

#### **Administrative**

As mentioned before, main achievements in terms of value added in administration are abilities to changing approach to domestic policy systems. In 2004, 2007 and in particular 2014 regional authorities were able to adjust to all the changes. The regional authorities turned out to be very skilful in adopting the changes of the domestic policy systems to the needs of the region (in particular through implementing projects of innovation or SMEs sectors as a infrastructural support for these sectors (and, though not too big, other as well). There is a suspicion that it is a more general problem in all less developed countries and regions. Mentioning of 2014-2020 programming period is not meaningless, as this period has brought up-to-date most significant, complex and full of sanctions reforms (in regulations). If the Podkarpackie region has managed to adjust to it, it was most ready to adjust to previous changes (reforms) and make a good use of them..

#### Democratic

There is some evidence that cohesion policy strengthened the role of consultations, partnerships, multilevel-governance in the region. On the one hand, the involvement of stakeholders in ROPs preparation and implementation strengthened the belief that their knowledge, know-how and insights can be beneficial for public policies creation and delivery. In effect, regional and local authorities see stakeholders' involvement at least as a good practice, if not the necessary element of efficient policymaking. On the other hand, one can argue, that the process of increasing involvement of stakeholders (or democratisation of public policy making at the regional level), was an expected development (taking into account the continuous improvement of civil society in Poland and the process of innovation diffusion in policy making) and could well happen even without ROP or the overall Cohesion Policy.

# Significance of Cohesion Policy added value

The value added of programs financed from European sources was particularly visible in the first period of Poland's membership in the EU, especially in the context of lower funding levels in 2004-2006. On the one hand in the later period of 2007-2013, the importance of products and results achieved by operational programs in terms of additional effects and overall added value increased.

On the other hand, the growth of allocation has strenghten also the importance of domestic financial contribution. In the case of public sector entities, this often led to an increase in the level of debt, which in the current programming period has reduced the absorption capacity of some beneficiaries - especially at the local level. Larger resources allocated to the enterprise sector have triggered private capital partly because not all projects costs were eligible for EU funding. In the 2014-2020 programming period, the stronger links between the Regional Development Strategy and the Regional Operational Program have been developed, although it is still important to note that the scale of the European funds is much higher than domestic public resources. The importance of monitoring and evaluating the effects of EU programs has undoubtedly increased, but it is still possible to express concerns about the use of the knowledge gained in this way in the programming and implementation of EU programs, and the transfer of good practice to national regional policy. Undoubtedly, the role of partnership in the implementation of EU programs has been strengthened. To sum it up on the one hand, the significance of the additional effects and value added of the ROP has increased, but on the other, taking into account the increase in the tangible effects of the implemented program as a result of increased financial allocation, it should be noted that the role of Cohesion Policy added value was relatively lower than in the first years of Poland's membership in the European Union.

# 4 Cohesion policy communication

# 4.1 Approach to communication

# 4.1.1 Overall approach to communication in 2007-2013 and 2014-2020

The main strategic objective of the ROP Podkarpackie communication plan in 2007-2013 was to support the implementation of the objectives set out in the Regional Operational Program for Podkarpackie Voivodship for the years 2007 – 2013.

In order to achieve this strategic objective, 6 detailed operational goals were introduced:

- to inform potential beneficiaries about the possibilities and rules of the support from the European Regional Development Fund within the framework of the Podkarpackie ROP and to mobilise them to apply for available funds;
- 2. to support and motivate beneficiaries in the process of preparation and implementation of projects;
- 3. to promote European Funds and programs, in particular the Regional Operational Program of the Podkarpackie Region for the years 2007 2013;
- 4. to strengthen mechanisms for cooperation with social and economic partners and public opinion leaders in order to promote transparent and effective use of European cohesion policy;
- 5. to raise awareness about benefits of the Poland membership in the EU, as well as benefits of the use of EU funds within the framework of the Podkarpackie ROP;
- 6. to promote good practices and effects of implementation of European Funds, including ROP, in Podkarpackie Voivodship.

It is important to underline that these objectives mirror objectives from the National Communication Strategy within National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 prepared by the Coordinating Authority in the Ministry of Regional Development (the same applies to many regional communication plans in other ROPs). As a result, all regional programs in Poland used similar communication framework for 07-13 programming period.

As far as 2014-2020 period is concerned, objectives were formulated in more precise and concise way and the regional dimension of communication activities was underlined (to prevent overlapping with national communication activities).

As a result, the main strategic objective for 14-20 communication actions was **to support the use of Podkarpackie ROP funds in achieving regional development goals.** 4 detailed operational objectives have been introduced:

- 1. to motivate citizens of Podkarpackie Region to submit project proposals for ROP 2014-2020;
- 2. to support regional beneficiaries in project implementation;
- 3. to provide Podkarpackie citizens with information about EU funded projects;
- 4. to strengthen the acceptance for development policies and programmes co-financed with EU Funds in Podkarpackie;

In this regard communication targets for 2014-2020 programming period are identical in both Polish regions selected for case studies.

#### **Target Groups**

The different audiences mentioned in the 2007-2013 communication plan were divided into 6 key categories:

- regional public opinion (local and regional communities)
- potential and actual beneficiaries, e.g. local authorities, HEIs, R&D institutes, public healthcare providers, NGOs, business support organizations, SMEs, educational institutions, housing associations, cultural institutions);
- youth (recognized as a group of future beneficiaries or project participants);
- local and regional media information providers
- decision-makers and local leaders (influencers)
- public institutions involved in the implementation system of the NSFR 2007-2013.

In 2014-2020 3 main target groups were chosen. Firstly, potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries implementing projects. Secondly, project participants, i.e. people with disabilities, people 50+, SMEs, unemployed and threatened by unemployment, people and families at risk of poverty or social exclusion, farmers and members of their families, pregnant women, young mothers, school pupils, teachers and other school staff). Thirdly, communication activities designed to promote the ROP effects were to be tailored for broad public opinion in the region (the recipients of programme final results).

The actual segmentation for 2014-2020 is identical in both studied Polish regions (as a result of adjustments made between regional communication strategies and national EU Funds communication strategy in order to improve coherence and create more synergic communication managed by different actors).

## Tagline and key messages

Authors of the communication plan for the ROP Podkarpackie 2007-2013 formulated the following tagline and key messages:

a) **Tagline:** 'Regional Operational Programme – we invest in development of Podkarpackie Voivodship'

#### b) Key messages:

- "Between 2007-2013 more than one billion euro will be allocated to our region. This will allow us to co-finance a lot of valuable initiatives which will support development of our region."
- o "Podkarpackie ROP 2007-2013 opens new horizons. The money invested in region will support dynamic growth of Small and Medium Enterprises."
- o "Podkarpackie ROP 2007-2013 aims to create favorable conditions for innovativeness, entrepreneurship and knowledge-based economy."
- Podkarpackie ROP 2007-2013 means thousands of new investments, technologies and innovative solutions"

In comparison, the key message in the communication strategy for 2014-20 programming period in Podkarpackie is expressed as follows:

• "European Funds support those who - by realizing great ideas - increase opportunities and improve the quality of life of the of Podkarpackie Region citizens."

This key message is supported by the following auxiliary messages:

- "European Funds support people and organizations who want to develop Poland and its regions"
- "European Funds catalyze changes (accelerate and strengthen change process)"
- "European Funds are a comprehensive change mechanisms (not just financial aid)"

- "European Funds support big changes in the country and region, but also improve local communities and people's everyday life"
- "European Funds encourage Polish people to cooperate".

Once again, the purpose of changes introduced between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 was to increase coherence between regional and national communication activities. As a result, both Polish case study regions use almost identical key messages.

Those changes were also implemented as a result of introducing recommendations from various evaluation researches telling that focusing on promotion of the concrete, administrative names of separate Operational Programmes, i.e. Regional Operational Programme for Podkarpackie Voivodship, is not optimal choice. People tend to have serious problems with remembering all those separate names. Instead, a unified and simplified brand of "European Funds" could be easier to understand and remember by citizens.

#### Activities foreseen in plans

To achieve strategic goals and deliver key messages, responsible authorities decided to utilize a number of different tools and channels of communication about Regional Operational Programme in 2007-2013. The communication mix included - among others - the following measures:

- Broad awareness campaign using TV, radio and outdoor to raise awareness about ROP;
- Printed and online publications (guidelines, manuals, administrative documents, brochures, booklets, reports) mainly for beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries;
- Trainings, workshops, meetings for potential beneficiaries (to deliver information when and how to apply for funding) and actual beneficiaries (to deliver information how to implement projects);
- Information/consultation points in cooperation with the Ministry of Regional Development
  1 regional (in Rzeszów) and 5 sub-regional contact points were established (in Krosno,
  Przemyśl, Tarnobrzeg, Stalowa Wola and Dębica). These points were mainly providing
  support (information, trainings, consultancy) for potential and actual beneficiaries;
- Online activities (web-site, www.rpo.podkarpackie.pl) provision of most important and up-to-date information about Program implementation;
- Conferences, seminars to support dissemination of information about ROP and promote awareness about programme effectiveness;
- Study tours to promote EU funded investments among local/regional media workers and public opinion leaders;
- Cooperation with local/regional media to spread information about funding possibilities and inform about progress in implementation
- Cooperation with sport clubs to promote ROP brand and awareness about EU funding in Podkarpackie;
- Posters, information boards, outdoor to increase awareness which investments are cofunded from ROP Podkarpackie budget;
- Direct consultations with MA staff Marshal Office personnel directly involved in implementation of the ROP was available for direct contact and consultations with beneficiaries in order to help them solve possible problems occurring during project implementation and formal closure phase;
- Promotional gadgets and accessories (calendars, pens, notebooks, toys) distributed during events, meetings to strengthen awareness about ROP official name and visual identification;

The communication mix described in 2014-2020 strategic document consisted of similar activities, but the initial segmentation of target groups and the alignment of communication tools to this segmentation was more precisely elaborated.

Additionally, the 14-20 strategy introduced broader strategic framework which aim was to secure more coherent use of different communication tools and channels. This framework consisted of the following call to actions: see (discover) and show interest!, use/benefit and recommend to others!, see (discover)!

As in previously described building blocks of communication strategies, these changes were introduced in all Polish ROPs for 2014-2020.

Conceptual linkages between target groups, calls to action and activities are shown in the table below:

Table 4. Conceptual linkages between target groups, calls to action and activities

7. 2336		get groups, calls to action and activities 2007-2013
Target group	Communication mechanism "Call to action"	Measures/activities
Potential beneficiaries/pr oject participants	SEE! (DISCOVER) AND SHOW INTEREST!	Indirect reach:  - Mass media advertising campaigns - Social media activity - Mailing - PR activities in local media  Direct reach: - Promotional events - Websites (both ROP and country wide EU Fund websites) - Information provided by Information Points network - Conferences, workshops, trainings - Print/online promotional materials  Education: - Online guidelines, handbooks, - Information and consultancy services provided by Information Points network - Seminars, lectures, presentations - Educational campaigns in media - Printed brochures and guidelines;
Actual beneficiaries/pr oject participants	USE (BENEFIT) AND RECOMMEND TO OTHERS!	Indirect reach:

		<ul> <li>Educational campaigns in media</li> <li>Printed brochures and guidelines;</li> </ul>
Broad public (consumers of the ROP results)	SEE! (DISCOVER)	Indirect reach:  - Mass media advertising campaigns - Social media activity - Mailing - PR activities in local media  Direct reach: - Promotional events - Websites (both ROP and country wide EU Fund websites) - Competitions
		Education: - Print (guidelines, brochures) - Open seminars, lectures, presentations - Expert interviews

Source: Communication Strategy for ROP Podkarpackie 2014-2020, pp. 17-18.

Comparison of the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 communication strategy shows that, as a result of more coherent framework, communication mix is now composed of smaller number of activities, more precisely targeted towards specific groups. Moreover, concrete, desired behaviors from target groups are explicitly mentioned in the actual strategic documents. In addition to that social media activities gained more significant role among other communication tools included in the communication strategy.

#### 4.1.2 Indicators

The monitoring system of 2007-2013 communication plan consisted of 42 indicators grouped in 16 categories – according to the type of communication activities undertaken:

- a) Information/Consultation Points
- b) Organization of Conferences, meetings
- c) Study tours
- d) Participation in external meetings
- e) Written Publications
- f) Cooperation with media
- g) Advertising
- h) Outdoor (billboard and poster campaigns
- i) Outdoor events
- j) Competitions/contests
- k) Information campaigns
- l) Sport advertising
- m) Newsletter network
- n) ROP Podkarpackie website
- o) Participation in external events devoted to EU Funds
- p) Evaluation of communication activities

The full list of indicators is included in Annex 1. 24 indicators were simple output indicators, e.g.: number of organized meetings for potential and actual beneficiaries; number of commercials produced (radio and television), number of organized outdoor events. Additionally 18 result indicators were measured, e.g.: number of answers provided by electronic means; number of people attending the meetings; number of poster campaign recipients; number of visitors to the site. As a result, responsible authorities predominantly measured how much effort and resources have been

put in communication activities and the size of different audiences reached by those means. No impact indicators were directly incorporated in the monitoring plan, which was also underlined by external evaluators, who concluded that "the basic deficiency of the set of indicators is the lack of qualitative indicators allowing to assess the effects of information and promotional activities of the PV ROP (e.g. raising the awareness of residents concerning the PV ROP)" (Ecorys 2014)

However, it should be remember that the impact of communication activities was assessed with other means. Firstly, ROP Managing Authority commissioned external evaluations of communication activities (more details about results can be found in the section: Assessment of effectiveness of communication strategies).

Secondly, the Coordinating Authority located in the former Ministry of Regional Development (currently Ministry of Development and Finance), commissioned yearly independent public opinion research to assess the knowledge, opinions and attitudes of Polish citizens about European Funds and European Union (results of these researches are shown in section: Implications for citizens CP perceptions and attitudes to the EU). Data collection and analysis in those researches was designed to capture both national and regional levels.

There was a significant shift in the approach to monitoring of communication activities between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming period. For the 2014-2020 Managing Authority has chosen only 13 indicators:

- Number of visitors on ROP Podkarpackie websites (MA and IB)
- Number of broad information campaigns about funding possibilities
- Level of awareness which socio-economic groups could participate in the ROP as beneficiaries;
- Number of people participating in workshops for potential beneficiaries of ROP Podkarpackie;
- Number of consultancy service delivered in Information Points in Podkarpackie (consultancy themes: funding possibilities and application procedures)
- Number of consultancy service delivered in Information Points in Podkarpackie (consultancy themes: project implementation issues)
- Number of beneficiaries participating in targeted workshops and trainings;
- Number of promotional activities with broad media reach about the Programme achievements;
- The level of the "European Funds" brand recognition among Podkarpackie citizens;
- The level of awareness/knowledge about the strategic objectives, priority axes or activities of the Podkarpackie ROP among regional community
- The level of awareness/knowledge about EU funded projects in respondent's vicinity (among Podkarpackie citizens)
- The percentage of Podkarpackie citizens claiming that EU Funds support development of their region.
- The percentage of Podkarpackie citizens claiming that they personally benefit from EU Funds

Additionally, communication strategy mentions several qualitative measures to be used for on-going assessment of the communication activities, e.g.

- Training sessions satisfaction (quantitative surveys with participants)
- Readability of written materials (both in print and on-line) calculated with Gunning fog index method;
- Accessibility of websites (user experience methodologies);
- Number of unique visitors and conversion rates (e.g. how many visitors subscribed for newsletter or registered for an event);
- Number of social media interactions (share)

#### Reach of media campaigns;

The evolution of strategic documents at the national level, followed by regional level strategies shows that the responsible authorities participating in information-promotion network have seriously taken into account "lessons learned" from previous programming period and the current approach to communication is more integrated, designed with more precision and clarity. Moreover, this approach is up to date with current developments in other media sectors (e.g. commercial companies approach to communication) and to some extent similar tools are used.

# 4.1.3 Budget

The total budget for all communication activities listed in the Communication Plan for the period 2007-2013 was estimated at  $\epsilon_4$ ,6 mln). Comparable amount was foreseen for the 2014-2020 period with only a small rise in funding up to ca.  $\epsilon_4$ ,7 mln.

The following table illustrates the planned yearly allocation for communication activities in the ROP Podkarpackie 07-13 and 14-20.

Table 5. Communication Strategy for ROP Podkarpackie 2014-2020

Total allocation	Podkarpackie		Unit
Allocation [2007-2013]	2007	0	EUR
	2008	124 665	7
	2009	253 795	1
	2010	481 593	
	2011	612 517	
	2012	715 798	
	2013	833 676	
	2014	783 582	
	2015	780 994	
	Total	4 586 620	
Allocation [2014-2020]	2014	0	EUR <sup>1</sup>
	2015	658 023	
	2016	498 504	
	2017	498 504	
	2018	498 504	
	2019	498 504	
	2020	498 504	
	2021	498 504	_
	2022	498 504	_
	2023	498 504	_
	Total	ca. 4 735 793	

Source: ROP Podkarpackie Communication Plan for 2007-2013 and ROP Podkarpackie Communication Strategy for 2014-2020

# 4.1.4. Governance

Communication strategies for both periods (2007-2013 and 2014-2020) univocally indicate the Managing Authority as the administrative body responsible for developing plans, managing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> The EUR to PLN currency exchange rate applied in the ROP Podkarpackie Communication Strategy for 2014-2020 was 4,012 (as of 29th April 2015).

communication activities, collaborating with institutional partners at regional and local level, as well as monitoring and evaluation of communication activities.

At the operational level this coordinating tasks are located in the Communication and Promotion Unit within the Department for ROP Managing Authority in the Marshall Office (formerly it was: Training, Information and promotion Unit located in the Department for Regional Development).

At the intraorganizational level two other departments are actively involved in communication activities: the Department for Infrastructural Projects Implementation and the Department for Entrepreneurship Support – both focus mainly on communication with potential and actual beneficiaries.

Moreover, in the 2014-2020 programming period, due to the inclusion of ESF funding in ROP, one Intermediary Body plays active role in communication in regard to VII, VIII and IX Priority Axes (Voivodeship Labour Office in Rzeszów).

Finally, other departments from the Marshall Office that are involved in implementation of ROP are engaged in communication activities as far as VII-IX priority axes are concerned.

Table 6. Governance framework in the communication area

Governance framework	in the Communication
2007-2013	2014-2020
Communication networks	Communication networks
Regional Network of Local Partners – ca. 400 representatives of different local and regional institutions. Network participants received frequent updates about EU Funds implementation, invitations for information meetings and targeted training for selected groups of beneficiaries and potential beneficiaries.	Communication strategy intends to create coordination platform with all authorities involved in implementation of 5 European Funds in the Podkarpackie, i.e. ERDF, ESF, CF, EARDF and EMFF.
Interorganizational Network of EU Fund Implementing Bodies Managing Authority cooperated with other implementing bodies, e.g. EAFRD Department in the Marshall Office (and other agricultural agencies in Podkarpackie), Interreg Department in the Marshall Office, Voivodeship Labour Office in Rzeszów, EU Funds Information Point in the Ministry for Regional Development.	
Additionally, Podkarpackie ROP Managing Authority representatives took part in coordination and knowledge exchange network of information and promotion units from other ROP Managing Authorities and Coordination Authority (Ministry for Regional Development).	
Bodies responsible for implementation of the measures	Bodies responsible for implementation of the measures

Governance framework	in the Communication
2007-2013	2014-2020
a) Managing Authority in the Marshall Office, i.e. Training, information and promotion unit in the Department for Regional Development (coordination and management of all communication activities);	a) Managing Authority in the Marshall Office, i.e. Communication and Promotion Unit in the Department for ROP Management (coordination and management of all communication activities);
b) Department for Infrastructural Projects Implementation in the Marshall Office (communication with beneficiaries of the II-VII priority axes, provision of detailed information and consultancy about project implementation);  c) Department for Entrepreneurship Support in the Marshall Office (communication with beneficiaries of the I priority axis, provision of detailed information and consultancy about project implementation);	b) Department for ROP Infrastructural Projects Implementation and the Department for Entrepreneurship Support (both located in the Marshall Office): (communication with beneficiaries of the I-VI priority axes, provision of detailed information and consultancy about project implementation, cooperation with information points);  c) Intermediate Body - Voivodeship Labour Office in Rzeszów – communication activities related to implementation of the VII, VIII and IX Priority Axes  d) other Marshall Office departments in regard to the VII-IX priority axes (provision of information and preparation of materials for beneficiaries).

Source: authors' own elaboration

Most of IDI respondents agreed that the communication of ROP Podkarpackie was designed to activate beneficiaries to apply for funds and to increase recognition of the Programme. Additionally, as underlined in interviews, the overall communication approach was strictly aligned to the stage of the policy cycle (ROP implementation stage). At the beginning, responsible bodies were focusing on informing potential beneficiaries and motivating various socio-economic actors to submit project proposals. Subsequently, with the progress of the ROP implementation, more actions were undertaken to raise awareness about effects of the EU support.

Majority of interviewed Monitoring Committee members declared that communication is sometimes discussed during the MC meetings but this is not a key issue. Monitoring Committee have other priorities, especially discussion about selection and awarding criteria for different calls for proposals. Nevertheless some of them were able to recall discussion about adoption of the communication strategy by the Committee. IDI content analysis allow to say that majority of interviewed key stakeholders and Monitoring Committee members are not deeply engaged in communication activities – it is difficult for them to provide any detailed information about communication activities. They mention regional and local media auditions (mainly sponsored by Managing Authority), outdoor campaigns (billboards) and information boards visible at the EU co-funded investments, printed brochures and booklets distributed during information meetings, conferences or seminars.

In respondents' view, responsible units in Managing Authority execute their communication tasks properly, and the scale of communication activities is appropriate (or even too extensive, as some respondents claim).

Moreover, key stakeholders underlined that most of local political leaders (elected local officials, parliament members from Podkarpackie) frequently refer to EU Funds during public meetings and official events. Successful implementation of projects (especially big infrastructural investments) is seen by local leaders as a leverage for their personal popularity among citizens.

# 4.2 Assessment of effectiveness of communication strategies

#### 4.2.1 Evaluation results

Two evaluation studies of communication activities were undertaken in 2007-2013 programming period. Both were entitled 'Assessment of information and promotional activities — ROP Podkarpackie 2007-2013". The first study was conducted in the first half of 2011, while the second one was conducted during July-September 2014. Both studies were commissioned to external evaluation company.

The following table summarizes most important information from both studies.

	2011 (mid-term of 2007-2013)	2014 (ex-post of 2007-2013)
	Methods used i	in the evaluation
0	Quantitative interviews (CATI) with: Voivodeship's general population (representative sample of 1039), beneficiaries and possible beneficiaries;	analysis)
0	CAWI survey with members of the Regional Network of Local Partners.	• · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
0	In-depth interviews with the MA staff,	(n=337)
0	FGIs with youth representatives, beneficiaries and communication experts;	<ul> <li>Qualitative research tools (IDI, TDI, FG with key stakeholders and experts;</li> </ul>
0	ITIs with representatives of regional and local media (press, radio).	o eye-tracking methods
	beneficiarie	e.g. relevance of aims, measures, relative focus on es/public etc.)
Main fi	ndings:	Main findings:
0	communication plan lacks in-depth initial diagnosis; "the relations between target groups, the selection of communication methods and instruments and indicators have not been documented to a sufficient extent in the communication plan"	freedom of decision left to the regional planner about optimal channels and instruments of communication, as well a selection of the most adequate indicators, due to the strict compliance with higher level external strategic documents.
	Implementation experien	nces (positive and negative)
Main fi	"implementation of informational and promotional activities was considered highly effective, relevant, useful and efficient" "professionalism and vast knowledge of the team which executed informational and promotional activities brought about favourable effects"	PV ROP 2007 - 2013 ensures good internation and good coordination of activities at MA level. The participator model of PV ROP promoting implemented, however, to a limited exten

has been implemented in full or in part, or

- considered as recommendations implement in the future"
- "Issues related to comprehensible, correct and adequate message are areas that need improvement. On average, only every second inhabitant and every second beneficiary (in this case the entrepreneur) is able to fully understand almost all formulated messages."
- "ROP websites are the most important information channel which accumulates the largest number of current information and guidelines."
- "Approx. 2/5 beneficiaries (39 %) of the Podkarpackie ROP took part in trainings (...) Generally, trainings must be assessed as positive. This is a very important information channel allowing for two-way communication."
- Althoug social media usage satisfactory in terms of visibility, there is a need to increase responsiveness and interaction with social media audiences.

Achievements and results (e.g. in relation to objectives, quantified outputs, results etc.)

## Main findings:

- As far as output indicators are concerned implementation went far beyond expectations;
- o Yet "Descriptions of the results of activities are not quantified in the Communication Plan." (evaluators recommended introduction of quantified result indicators)

#### Main findings:

- "The quantitative analysis of indicators of the product and result shows that the level of execution of objectives is compliant with the assumptions made Communication Plan."
- "The awareness of EU funds utilization is relatively common among inhabitants of Podkarpackie Voivodship. (...) However, as part of spontaneous awareness test, half of respondents was unable to properly name any operational program or EU fund."

Source: authors' own elaboration based on Assessment of information and promotional activities – ROP

#### 4.2.2 Monitoring results

Podkarpackie 2007-2013, 2011 and 2014.

As noted earlier, only output and input indicators were selected for the monitoring purposes of the communication plan in the 2007-2013 programming period. The following table shows monitoring data for selected communication indicators for 2007-2013 programming period.

Table 8. Monitoring data for selected communication indicators, 2007-2013

Progress of the monitoring indicators of the Communication strategies/plans 2007-2013					
Output indicator	Estimated 2007-2013	% impl.	Result indicator	Estimated 2007-2013	% impl.
Number of Info Points operating	6	100%	Number of information points' clients	35 000	82%
Number of organized meetings for potential and actual beneficiaries	2 000	70%	Number of answers provided by electronic means	5 000	67%

Progress of the monitoring indicators of the Communication strategies/plans 2007-2013									
Output indicator	Estimated 2007-2013	% impl.	Result indicator	Estimated	% impl.				
Number of organized study trips (project presentations)	14	86%	Number of people attending the meetings	32 000	98%				
Number of publications	30	100%	Number of participants in the trips	400	90%				
Number of commercials produced (radio and television)	35	80%	Number of recipients of promotional and informational materials	250 000	91%				
Number of billboard campaigns conducted	1	100%	Number of recipients of a poster campaigns	5 000	100%				
Number of organized outdoor events	25	84%	Number of participants in outdoor events	40 000	88%				
Number of sports clubs promoting RPO WP (through information and promotional materials)	10	360%	Number of visitors to the site	3 100 000	101%				

Regarding the effectiveness of communication activities, evaluators concluded that: "The implementation performance of indicators in all communication areas is highly effective, in many cases far exceeding the plans. However, it is largely the result of a rather cautious formulation of goals in particular years." (Assessment of information and promotional activities – ROP Podkarpackie 2007-2013, 2014).

Table 9. Impact indicators

Impact indicators	Estimated 2007-2013	% implement ation (2010)	% implement ation (2013)	Estimated 2014-2020	
Level of awareness which socio-economic groups could participate in the ROP as beneficiaries				46%	
The level of the "European Funds" brand recognition among Podkarpackie citizens		93%			
The level of awareness/knowledge about the strategic objectives, priority axes or activities of the Podkarpackie ROP among regional community	Such indicat				
The level of awareness/knowledge about EU funded projects in respondent's vicinity (among Podkarpackie citizens)	2007-2013	tion plan	82%		
The percentage of Podkarpackie citizens claiming that EU Funds support development of their region.	monitoring system. They were introduced for the 2014-2020 period 94				
The percentage of Podkarpackie citizens claiming that they personally benefit from EU Funds	66				

# 4.2.3 Policy lessons and recommendations

In general, implementation reports do not provide any analysis of effectiveness, i.e. if they simply list communication activities and measures undertaken with no deep analysis.

The communication strategy for Podkarpackie ROP 2014-2020 begins with the following synthesis of policy lessons and recommendations from evaluations conducted in previous perspective:

a) Citizens of Podkarpackie are predominantly positive about EU Funds, but only less than 50% understands that there is a regional allocation devoted directly for their region. More should be done to promote understanding that regions are key actors in implementing majority of EU funding.

- b) Although the name "Regional Operational Programme for Podkarpackie" generates positive attitudes among citizens, it is difficult to create a strong brand of a single programme (partly due to difficult, administrative name). As a result, ROP detailed name should be only communicate to audiences engaged in implementation, while more general name "European Funds" should be promoted for general audiences;
- c) Websites are primary and most important source of information for beneficiaries (combined with targeted training), yet they require upgrade in terms of functionality, design, navigation, content (all EU Funds' websites for 14-20 programming period were built on the same information architecture and layout);
- d) TV is the best media channel to reach general audience, while Internet and Radio coming in second and third places. Public broadcasters (regional branches of Polish Radio and TV) should be more engaged in raising awareness about EU funds, e.g. providing information on open call for proposals;
- e) Good and constant collaboration with media workers (e.g. inviting journalists, reporters, website editors to participate in study tours) was an important part of communication activities in Podkarpackie. It is regarded as relatively cost-effective tool to promote EU Funds in the region and increase the quality of external media content about Cohesion Policy implementation;
- f) Beneficiaries should be more active in informing broader public about their projects. This is still hidden potential of communication activities that could be only unlocked with systematic and organized support provided for beneficiaries (and not isolated capacity building actions). SMEs are a challenging partner in this regard their reluctance to engage in promoting projects' achievements conditioned mainly by time constraints and commercial confidentiality protection.
- g) European Funds Information Points capacities should be used to cooperate with beneficiaries. Plain language needs to be use in all communication activities, especially in all materials prepared for beneficiaries and media communication.

Most of the IDI respondents agreed that the overall **communication activities within Podkarpackie ROP are at the satisfactory level and no major changes are required**. What could be improved is the coherence of different campaigns' elements so that they create unified narration about EU Funds in Podkarpackie Region. For some respondents this incoherence was caused by too many activities undertaken at the same time which could create information noise.

In addition to that, some respondents claimed that most of communication about results focuses on infrastructural investments. As a result "soft" projects, e.g. those related to strengthening human capital capabilities, are less visible. Yet, respondents understand that promotion of new buildings, roads and innovations is easier and more cost-effective in terms of attracting wider audiences and promoting ROP impact on regional development.

Another challenge is communication with potential beneficiaries, especially those whose projects were rejected during application procedure (in some call for proposals only ¼ of proposals is being accepted). Managing Authority need to find ways to engage those rejected applicants in a dialogue and to explain reasons behind proposal failures. Additionally, potential and actual beneficiaries could be discouraged by the bureaucratization of language and complex procedures – that is why direct communication, training and consultancy efforts are essential. Some respondent praised MA staff for their engagement in this area.

Also, some more critical remarks occurred. For some respondents too much money is spent on printed materials (booklets, brochures, books). Such printed materials are mainly distributed during meetings, conferences and seminars but they either replicate information already available online or focus on graphic presentation of infrastructural investments (photos). In both ways utility of such

printed materials is limited. 2-3 interviewed people shared the opinion that too many communication activities undertaken could cause information overload and people could be overwhelmed by the constant messaging about EU funds in region. As a result – as directly pointed out – in Podkarpackie people tend to think that more have been done with EU funds than it actually was.

# 4.3 Good practice examples in communication

As reported by the Managing Authority in the final implementation report, there have been several examples of communication good practices. Three of them are described below:

- a) Study tours for regional journalists and public opinion leaders during 2007-2013 14 study tours were organized (each lasting 2 days). Each of such tours visited EU funded projects. Visits and social events were combined with information meetings and workshops aimed at raising awareness about effectiveness of EU funding in Podkarpackie.
  - These study tours are good practices because they combine attractive form, tailored to the needs of the selected target group with cost-effectiveness (via engagement of opinion leaders who could subsequently reach their audiences and multiplicate desired messages). Some interviewed stakeholders admitted that MA was able to increase the quality of the media content about EU funds through these study tours and more importantly create the real curiosity in regional development topics among local/regional journalists.
- b) EU Knowledge Quiz/Challenge for schools Managing Authority organized 5 editions of the knowledge contest on European Funds. Each year there were 2-stage procedure (the school stage and the provincial stage). The competitions were addressed to young people from high schools from the region. At the provincial stage of the competition laureates and their schools were awarded valuable prizes. Moreover, all contest participants and their teachers received boxes of information materials promoting the Podkarpackie Regional Operational Program.
  - These contests are good practices because they reach wide youth audience with specific communication preferences in a way that could be engaging (gamification is one of the most effective ways in increasing emotional engagement).
- c) **EU Outdoor Events** Managing Authority organized or co-organized several outdoor events, e.g. the Summer Family Picnic, Juvenalia (an annual higher education students' holiday), Farewell to Summertime with EU Funds, Fall Colors with EU Funds, Nights of Galician Culture with EU Funds, Culture Evening with EU Funds, 3 Family Bike Rallies with EU Funds, which route passed through the EU Funded regional investments. Each event was a combination of different publicly available activities, e.g. info points about EU Funds, pop star concerts, classical music concerts, exhibitions of EU funded innovative products, outdoor competitions, conferences, meetings with beneficiaries implementing EU funded projects.

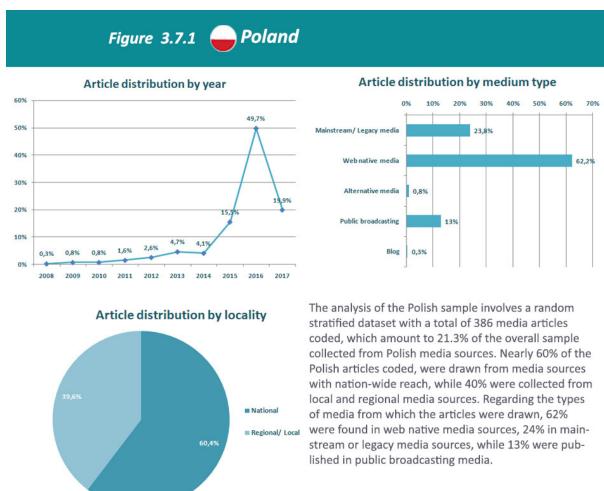
Unfortunately, there is no robust quantitative evidence about the effectiveness of those practices. Also, during interviews respondents were not able to mention any concrete examples of good practices.

They were rather willing to share their opinions about "bad practices", i.e. tools or activities they regarded as ineffective. There is an agreement that the production and distribution of promotional gadgets and accessories is an example of poorly spent money on promotion and should not be continued in 2014-2020 programming period.

## 4.4 Media framing of Cohesion policy

The media framing was analysed at the national level - the results are presented below, followed by some insights from interviews with key stakeholders in the region. The sample for media framing

analysis consisted of 386 articles, out of which 153 (39.6%) were of regional reach, including 67 (17.4%) articles from Podkarpackie region (Triga, Vadratsikas, 2018).



As far as the framing analysis is concerned, a significant finding regarding the Polish case is the high percentage of news items that did not apply any frame. In fact, the coders did not identify any frames in 36.3% of the analysed items, which is the highest percentage among the analysed cases studies, suggesting that the Polish media tend to present merely the facts related to EU Cohesion policy, without offering specific interpretation of the news. However, 22.3% of the analysed items frame EU cohesion policy in terms of "economic consequences" and another 21.4% in terms of "quality of life" following the norm that was identified in all the case studies included in this study. Moreover, it is worth noting the high percentage of the articles that applied the "Incompetence of local and national authorities" (12.4%) indicating a critical stance of the Polish media towards the government and the Polish political personnel.

# **Dominant Frame Frequencies (Poland)**



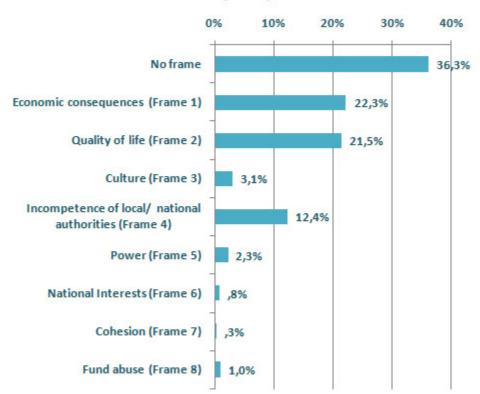


Figure 3.7.2

Dominant frame frequencies in Polish media

# **Dominant Subframe Frequencies (Poland)**

(n=386)

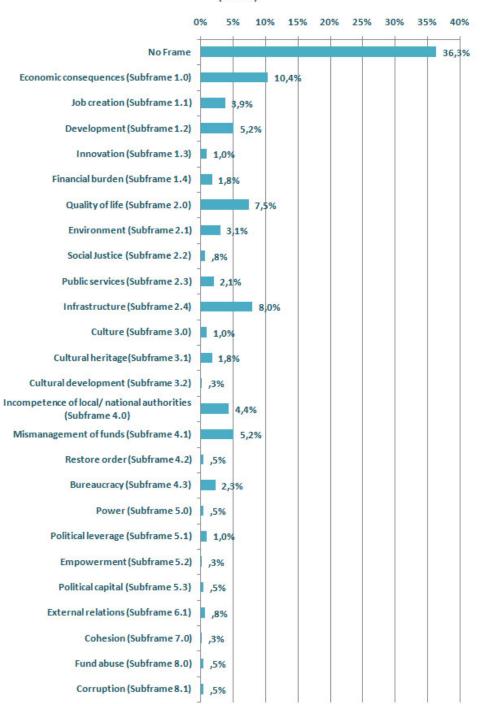
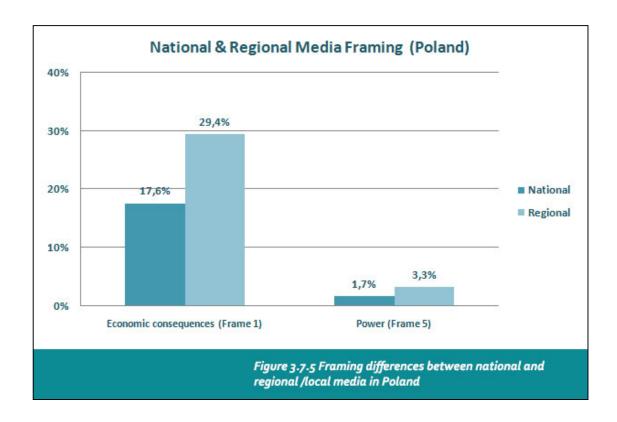


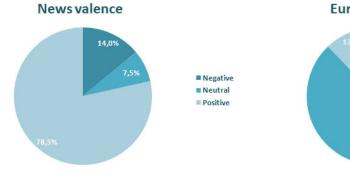
Figure 3.7.3

Dominant Suframe frequencies in Polish media

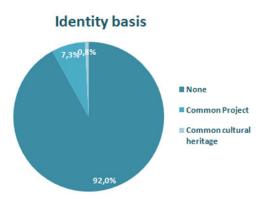
The framing analysis of the Polish sample revealed some striking differences in framing between national and regional media. As shown in Figure 3.7.5 below, regional media tend to interpret EU Cohesion policy in terms of its implications on national economy (Frame 1), while they also employ Frame 5 ("Power") twice as often as national media.



# Figure 3.7.4 — Poland - Europeanization variables







Turning to the way the articles on EU Cohesion policy evoke the construction of the European identity, it was found that a large percentage of the articles (78.5%) involve positive news which are expected to trigger positive attitudes towards the EU and raise readers' sense of belonging to a European community. In addition, 12.2% of the articles approach EU Cohesion policy from a European perspective, which is among the highest percentages found in this study, while nearly 8% approach the EU Cohesion policy as a common European project, indicating a positive contribution of the Polish media to promoting the notion of a European community and identity.

The analysis of the Europeanisation variables reveals no striking differences between national and regional media in Poland.

## Stakeholders' perspective

Most respondents are convinced that information about European Funds and ROP Podkarpackie is constantly present in regional and local media (press, radio, TV and websites). Nevertheless it is evident that majority of that coverage is a product placement sponsored either by managing Authority or beneficiaries promoting their projects (which is obligatory). As a result the dominant tone is informative and positive. Yet, sometimes media inform about problems in big, visible projects, e.g. financial corrections or long delays.

Additionally Managing Authority has created and maintained very good working relations with journalists. Some respondents claim that this resulted in better quality articles and auditions.

As far as objective, independent journalism is concerned, the topic of European Funds is mainly covered when big infrastructural investments are launched or finished. Majority of media articles are absorption-centered, and reflection about ROP objectives or strategic rationale behind Cohesion Policy is not often. Some respondents attribute this situation to the broader problems of regional/local media, which have serious financial limitations and have no capacity to prepare long-term, coherent radio or TV auditions about development or EU integration. So the majority of EU-related information is partial, detached from broader context.

# 4.5 Implications for citizens CP perceptions and attitudes to the EU

The following chapter analyses the stakeholders perception of CP communication activities, drawing on the results of the COHESIFY Stakeholder survey.

Q10. How regularly are the following communication tools used to disseminate information about

the use of Cohesion policy funds?

	Never	Rarely	Sometim	ies Often	Very often
Television	36.8%	29.4%	25.0%	2.9%	5.9%
Radio	32.4%	32.4%	22.1%	7.4%	5.9%
Local and regional newspapers	5.9%	13.2%	32.4%	29.4%	19.1%
National newspapers	48.5%	22.1%	17.7%	7.4%	4.4%
Workshops, seminars	13.2%	23.5%	32.4%	20.6%	10.3%
Brochures, leaflets, newsletters	7.4%	11.8%	27.9%	36.8%	16.2%
Press releases	14.7%	30.9%	22.1%	22.1%	10.3%
Programme website	10.3%	22.1%	14.7%	30.9%	22.1%
Film clips/videos	45.6%	26.5%	10.3%	13.2%	4.4%
Plaques/billboard with EU flag	13.2%	7.4%	22.1%	29.4%	27.9%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, Youtube)	25.0%	14.7%	20.6%	23.5%	16.2%
Advertising campaigns on television and/o	or				
radio	51.5%	20.6%	20.6%	5.9%	1.5%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

Firstly, majority of respondents (57%) say that information about the use of Cohesion policy funds in Podkarpackie Region is often or very often delivered on billboards and plaques. Secondly, over half of respondents (53%) think that such information was delivered most often through programme website and brochures/leaflets.

On the other hand, nearly three quarters of surveyed stakeholders say that advertising campaigns on television and/or radio, national newspapers and film clips/videos are the least often used for the studied purpose.

Q11. How satisfied are you with:

	, satisfied		satisfied nor unsatisfi ed		unsatisfi ed	Don't know
The way Cohesion policy is communicated to citizens	1.5%	54.4%	33.8%	7.4%	0.0%	2.9%
The branding and messages used to communicate Cohesion policy	0.0%	55.9%	27.9%	8.8%	1.5%	5.9%
The use of human interest/personal stories	1.5%	45.6%	38.2%	8.8%	1.5%	4.4%
The support from the European Commission on communication	0.0%	44.1%	36.8%	8.8%	1.5%	8.8%
The targeting of different groups with different communication tools	0.0%	47.1%	32.4%	11.8%	4.4%	4.4%
The administrative capacity and resources dedicated to communication activities	1.5%	44.1%	35.3%	11.8%	1.5%	5.9%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

It is worth noticing that in regard to all 6 statements noticeably large fraction of respondents were unable to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction (from one third in statement about branding

and messages to nearly half of respondents in regard to the statement about European Commission support. These results are concordant with findings from qualitative interviewing (detailed topics related to communication activities were not discussed during MC meetings).

Nevertheless, more than a half of respondents say that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with the way Cohesion policy is communicated to citizens and the branding and messages used to communicate Cohesion policy. Additionally less than 20% of respondents expressed their dissatisfaction in relation to survey statements.

Q12. To what extent are the communication efforts effective in:

	Very effective		effective nor ineffecti		<u> </u>	Don't know
Conveying the achievements of Cohesion policy programmes overall and the the role of the EU	_	67.7%	ve 16.2%	1.5%	0.0%	7.4%
Conveying the achievements of co-funded projects and the role of the EU	5.9%	64.7%	16.2%	0.0%	0.0%	5.9%
Using social media to promote the programme and projects (e.g. Twitter, Youtube, Facebook)		36.8%	30.9%	5.9%	0.0%	8.8%
Fostering good working relations with the media and press to reach the general public		55.9%	20.6%	2.9%	0.0%	10.3%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

Majority of surveyed stakeholders say that communication efforts undertaken in Podkarpackie were either 'very effective' or 'effective'. 7 in 10 respondents claim that this effectiveness was evident in both conveying the achievements of Cohesion policy programmes overall and the role of the EU and conveying the achievements of co-funded projects and the role of the EU. Noticeably, nearly two thirds of respondents say that fostering good working relations with media was either effective or very effective. Similar view was hold by the respondents of in depth interviews.

Q13. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
The media mainly report negative stories about EU Cohesion policy	0.0%	10.3%	13.2%	61.8%	4.4%	10.3%
During publicity events, politicians mainly highlight the local/regional dimensions of projects to claim credit for themselves, rather than the role and contribution of the European Union		35.3%	23.5%	23.5%	0.0%	8.8%
The media do not highlight the European Union role and contribution in a sufficient way		19.1%	23.5%	41.2%	2.9%	7.4%
The key programme communication messages have adopted an appropriate form to reach their target audiences	_	52.9%	25.0%	11.8%	0.0%	7.4%

The communication messages have been 2.	.9%	45.6%	29.4%	10.3%	2.9%	8.8%
consistent at country or regional levels						
There is insufficient resources and priority 1.	.5%	29.4%	32.4%	23.5%	1.5%	11.8%
dedicated to communication by						
programme stakeholders						

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

First of all, the majority of respondents (56%) agree that the key programme communication messages have adopted an appropriate form to reach their target audiences. This substantiates similar evidence gathered during desk research and qualitative interviewing. Additionally, nearly half of respondents strongly agree or agree that the communication messages have been consistent at country or regional levels.

Respondents are divided in their assessment on the politicians' attitude towards communicating EU contribution. Although 4 out of 10 respondents say that politicians mainly highlight the local/regional dimensions of projects to claim credit for themselves, almost one ouyt of 4 neither agree nor disagree and the same fraction disagree with this statement.

On the other hand 2 out of three surveyed stakeholders from Podkarpackie disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that the media mainly report negative stories about EU Cohesion policy. In addition to that nearly half of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that the media do not highlight the European Union role and contribution in a sufficient way.

Q14. How effective do you think each of these communication measures are in increasing citizens'

awareness of EU Cohesion policy?

an archess of to comesion	Py -						
	Very effective	Effective	Neither effective nor	Ineffective	Very ineffective	Don't know	Not used in my region
			ineffective				
Television	33.8%	47.1%	10.3%	4.4%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Radio	17.7%	51.5%	17.7%	8.8%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Local and regional newspapers	20.6%	55.9%	17.7%	1.5%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
National newspapers	16.2%	51.5%	25.0%	2.9%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Programme website	22.1%	51.5%	17.7%	4.4%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Video/film clips and presentations	13.2%	48.5%	23.5%	7.4%	0.0%	7.4%	0.0%
Plaques/billboard with EU flag	20.6%	52.9%	20.6%	1.5%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Youtube)	_	54.4%	17.7%	1.5%	0.0%	4.4%	2.9%
Media/advertising campaigns on television or radio		51.5%	14.7%	5.9%	0.0%	5.9%	1.5%
Press releases	10.3%	57.4%	16.2%	11.8%	0.0%	4.4%	0.0%
Brochures, leaflets, newsletters, other publications	10.3%	51.5%	23.5%	5.9%	4.4%	4.4%	0.0%
Events	23.5%	52.9%	13.2%	4.4%	0.0%	5.9%	0.0%

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

Noticeably, each communication measure (separate survey possibility) was assessed as effective or very 'effective' by at least 6 out of ten respondents. Yet, there are some visible differences between evaluated items. Majority of surveyed stakeholders of the ROP Podkarpackie say that Television (81%), Local press (77%), Programme website (74%), as well as Plaques and Social Media (74%) are very effective or effective in increasing citizens' awareness of EU Cohesion policy. In addition to that only 1 out of ten respondents said that press releases and brochures/leaflets were ineffective or very ineffective.

Q15. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements:

		<u>9</u>			
	Strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly
	agree		agree nor		disagree
			disagree		
The communication activities have led to an	22.1%	66.2%	8.8%	2.9%	0.0%
increased awareness among citizens of the					
contribution of Cohesion policy to regional and					
local development					
The communication activities of Cohesion policy	14.7%	55.9%	25.0%	4.4%	0.0%
funds increase the sense of belonging of citizens					
to the European Union					
The communication activities of Cohesion policy	13.2%	51.5%	33.8%	1.5%	0.0%
funds contribute to increasing citizens' support					
for the European Union					
Citizens mistrust Cohesion policy	2.9%	5.9%	41.2%	47.1%	2.9%
communication activities and messages or					
consider them to be propaganda					

Source: COHESIFY Stakeholder survey, N=68

As far as communication impact is concerned, majority of surveyed stakeholders (88%) think that the communication activities have led to an increased awareness among citizens of the contribution of Cohesion policy to regional and local development. About 7 out of ten respondents say that the communication activities of Cohesion policy funds both increased the sense of belonging of citizens to the European Union. Moreover, two thirds of respondents say that the communication activities contributed to increasing citizens' support for the European Union.

Finally, although half of respondents disagree or strongly disagree that citizens mistrust Cohesion policy communication activities and messages or consider them to be propaganda, there is also a large fraction (41%) that neither agree nor disagree with this staement. Overall the impact of the EU funds comm activities on attitudes towards EU was assessed rather positively.

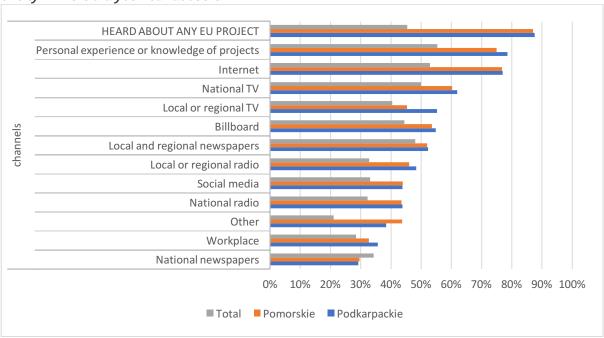
# 5. Citizen views of Cohesion policy and the EU

#### 5.1 Survey results

The majority of inhabitants in both Polish regions: Podkarpackie and Pomorskie are very appreciative of the use of European funds. Almost 88% of the respondents have heard about the EU funding for infrastructure, business development and training allocated to regions and cities, which is nearly twice as high as the average in the surveyed group of regions.

Personal experiences and the Internet were the main sources of information about the EU funds. More than three in four respondents in both Polish regions pointed out these sources. Moreover more than 60% of respondents regarded national TV as the important source of information. Local and regional TV was also acknowledgeable, however was more important in Podkarpackie than in Pomorskie region (55% vs 53%). On the other hand, national press was regarded as the least important source of information about EU funds. Interestingly, it was the only source more often indicated on average in the surveyed group of regions than in Podkarpackie and Pomorskie in particular.

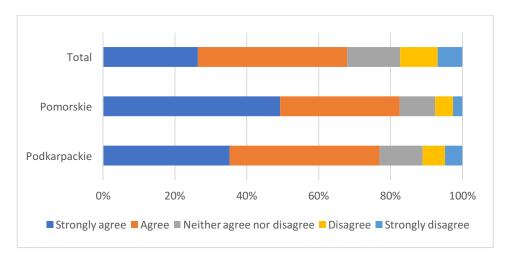
Q1-2. The European Union provides funding for infrastructure, business development and training to regions and cities. Have you heard about any such EU funded projects to improve your own region or city? Where did you hear about it?



Source: COHESIFY Citizens' survey; regional N=500

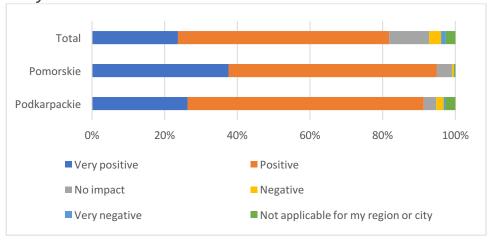
By and large, a very positive attitude towards the EU and the European funds was expressed; in the opinion of 76% respondents in Podkarpackie and 82% in Pomorskie, Poland benefited from being a member of the EU. The answers were more positive in comparison to the group's average by 10 percentage points in case of Podkarpackie and by 15 percentage points in case of Pomorskie. Also clearly lesser share of respondents in both Polish regions expressed disagreement with the statement of positive influence of EU funds (11% in Podkarpackie, 7,6 in Pomorskie vs. 17% on the average).

Q3. To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "My country has benefited from being a member of the European Union"



Enthusiastic attitude towards the influence of the EU on the regional development was expressed in both Polish regions. More than 90% of the respondents in Podkarpackie and 94% in Pomorskie were convinced that EU membership positively influenced the development of the their regions. The answers were more positive in comparison to the group's average by 12 and 16 percentage points respectively. The share of neutral answers in both regions were very low and negative opinion – negligible.

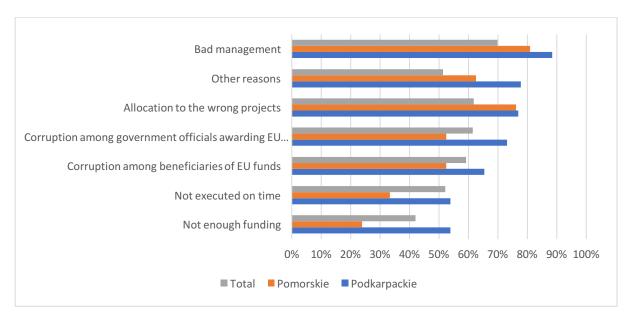
Q6. How positive or negative was the impact of the funding of the European Union on your region or city?



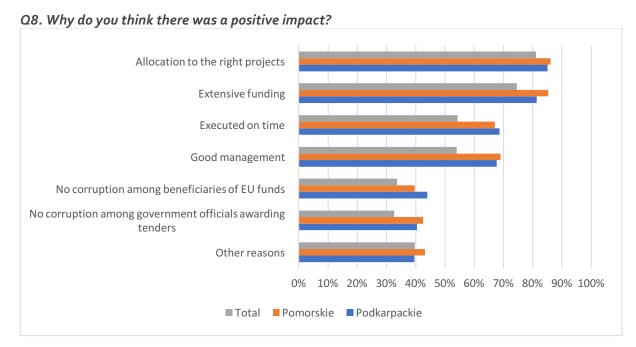
Source: COHESIFY Citizens' survey; regional N=500

The respondents in Polish regions who expressed their negative perception of the EU funds' impact, blamed bad management in the first place (81% in Pomorskie and 88% in Podkarpackie), as well as allocation to the wrong projects (76% in each region). In case of Podkarpackie among factors that effected in lack of positive impact also corruption among government officials and among beneficiaries of EU funds were specified by the great majority of respondents (73% and 66% accordingly).

# Q7. Why do you think there was no positive impact?

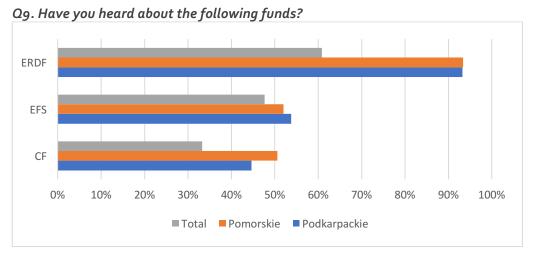


The positive perception of the impact of the EU funds was associated with the appropriate allocation of funds (desirable projects) and extensive funding, alongside good management of the EU projects and their timely execution.

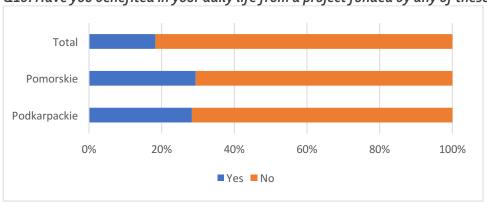


Source: COHESIFY Citizens' survey; regional N=500

The respondents in Polish regions did not associate the EU funds with Cohesion Policy instruments as such. Half of the respondents in Pomorskie and by 5 percentage points less in Podkarpackie were familiar with the term 'Cohesion Fund'. This result was, nevertheless, higher than the average (1/3 of the respondents). Other Funds were better recognisable.



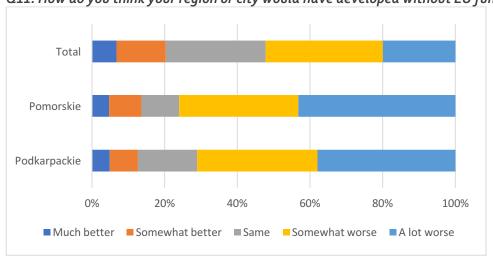
The knowledge of the EU Funds, the Cohesion Fund included, seems to be superficial. It was proved by the fact that 70% of respondents in each Polish region declared that they did not benefited in their daily life from EU funded schemes. In is somehow unexpected in comparison to declarations of pervasive presents of EU funded project. It's however worth noticing that on the average the answers were even more negative, as 78% of respondents noticed no personal benefits.



Q10. Have you benefited in your daily life from a project funded by any of these three funds?

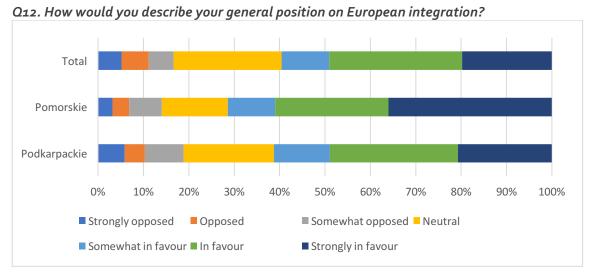
Source: COHESIFY Citizens' survey; regional N=500

Only 15% of the respondents in Podkarpackie and 9% in Pomorskie shared the opinion that the region would perform the same without the EU funds, while region ca 70% in each region pointed out that it would perform somehow worse or a lot worse. And here again the perception of EU influence in Polish regions was indeed more enthusiastic towards the influence of EU funds than in the group of regions under study on the average.



Q11. How do you think your region or city would have developed without EU funding?

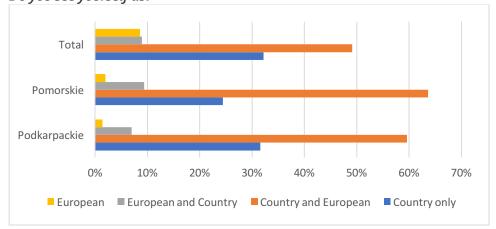
Euro-enthusiastic attitude of Pomorskie's inhabitants compared to other regions under study (also Podkarpackie) was confirmed by the fact that 71% of respondents were in favour of integration, while both groups: neutral and opposing, exceeded the low level of 14%. In Pomorskie the share of Euro-enthusiastic opinions was lower by 10 percentage points while on the average by 12 ppt.



Source: COHESIFY Citizens' survey; regional N=500

The European identity and enthusiasm towards EU integration are observably high in Pomorskie. Three in four respondents in Pomorskie declared European identity (together with the country one or – however rarely – exclusively). The results in Podkarpackie were more in line with those of the reference group: approximately 68% of the respondents declared European identity (simultaneously with country identity, and hardly ever exclusively so), while 32% underlined their country identity.

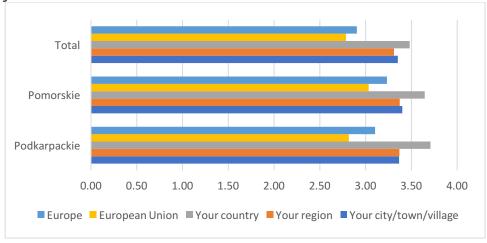
Q13. Please listen to the following options and pick one that describes best how you see yourself. Do you see yourself as:



In Podkarpackie, like on the average, the European identity does not fully equal EU identity since more respondents felt attached (to different degrees) to Europe (96.4%) than to the EU (89.6%). While in Pomorskie, a strong sense of European identity went in line with EU identity, as the respondents felt almost equally strongly attached to Europe (96.4%) and the EU (93.6%).

In Polish regions respondents declared the strongest attachment to the country and the lowest to the European Union. The situation in Pomorskie is specific in a way that the sense European identity is associated to the highest degree with EU identity.

Q14. People may feel different degrees of attachment to places. Please tell me how attached you feel to:\*

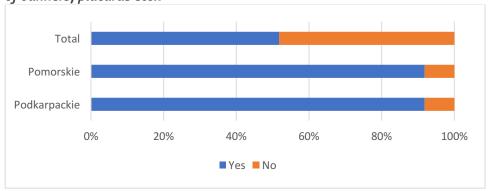


Source: COHESIFY Citizens' survey; regional N=500

Inhabitants of both Polish regions have much higher chance of encountering various public acknowledgements of EU funding, as compared to other regions. Banners, placards and other visual signs have been noticed by 92% of respondents in Podkarpackie Voivodship, 40 ppt. more, than mean value for the whole survey sample.

<sup>\*</sup> average value, where 4=very attached, 1= not at all

Q15. Have you noticed any public acknowledgement of EU funding in your region/town in the form of banners, placards etc.?



# 5.2 Focus group results

# 5.2.1. Focus groups demographics

Three focus groups with 16 participants were conducted in Podkarpackie:

Table 10. Priority axes and allocations in 2007-2013 – ROP Podkarpackie Voivodship

			, ,			
FG	Location	Date	Number of participants	Number of female participants	Age range (min age)	Age range (max age)
PL 4	Rzeszow	29/09/2017	7	3	35	60
PL 5	Przemysl	30/09/2017	4	2	19	70
PL 6	Brzozow	01/10/2017	5	3	20	69

## 5.2.2. Summary of focus groups discussions

# **Cohesion policy**

Participants from Podkarpackie were not particularly aware of the term "Cohesion policy". Those who had heard of the term before, could not explain it, while others explained that Cohesion policy is about cooperation between EU Member States and other neighbouring states (for example Ukraine) for a shared goal. One participant highlighted science as a component of Cohesion policy. The closest definition of Cohesion policy was the following:

Participant 7, PL4: "Support to infrastructure, increasing employment by development and investment projects. Territorial cooperation."

Despite not having heard of Cohesion policy before, the majority of participants could identify at least one project they believed was EU-funded (see Table 1). Several areas of investment were identified, for example infrastructure, education, business support and sustainable development.

Table 11. Participants' reference to projects' co-financed by EU funds

#### Education:

- Extension of an unspecified school
- Purchase of interactive whiteboards and computers
- Investments in the campus of East European State Higher School (Przemyśl) and kindergartens

#### Sports:

- Outdoor gyms in Iwonicz Zdrój
- Indoor swimming pool (Iwonicz Zdrój)
- Orliks

#### Health:

- Investments in local healthcare centre/hospital
- Construction of a helicopter landing area for a hospital
- The purchase of equipment for a physiotherapy centre

Sustainable development: Solar panels and thermal insulation of a kindergarten

#### Road infrastructure:

- Roads in general and roads between villages
- Ring road in Mielec
- Road in Krosno
- Bridge in Dzikówka
- Roundabout in Iwonicz Zdrój

## Business support:

- Grants for small business (example of a hairdresser and a restaurant/inn)
- Support for the afforestation of an area for commercial activity

Public transport: The purchase of buses by the MPK in Rzeszów

Human resources development:

- Trainings on how to write grant applications
- Financing assistance to students in a school in Jasienica Rosielna ("I have improved as you can see")

When asked about the impact of Cohesion policy, the participants did not formulate a clear opinion. Even though some participants expressed a general feeling of appreciation for the EU investment, the discussion was generally overshadowed by participants that highlighted mostly the challenges of Cohesion policy. There was a widespread feeling among several participants that EU-funding was not equally benefitting regions in Poland, for example (PL 5):

Participant 1, PL 5: "Yes, the conclusion is that, I am sorry to say, these regions are not developing evenly and this is a problem, that so-called pockets of affluence are forming, whereas the remaining areas are poor."

Moreover, participants believed that support in Podkarpackie was uneven and that funds went to the city of Rzeszów rather than to smaller towns. In two of the groups (PL4 and PL 6) the main point of discussion was that the authorities invest EU-funds in projects that do not contribute to the growth of the economy or address the real needs of the population. The perception was that it is easier to invest in projects such as parks and fountains than in activities stimulating economic growth and job creation. In one group in particular (PL6), several participants expressed negative views on the training programs for the unemployed, which in their view are without purpose since there are no jobs available. Many believed that funding should first and foremost go into creating jobs. Moreover, many perceived that investments made for the unemployed in Poland were benefitting the foreign labour market (PL 6):

Participant 1, PL 6: "Well, the only conclusion that comes to mind is that Poland is training a pool of professional resources for Europe, not for Poland but for Europe, for somewhere in the West, this is the only conclusion you can reach."

Below we provide some extracts to highlight in detail the way participants described the problems associated most often with Cohesion policy for the region of Podkarpackie.

Project mismanagement PL 6, Participant 1: "Coming back to co-funded courses, very often it is

businesspeople who profit from them. For example, they hire an employee in a labour office paid scheme that costs them nothing. Such employee will work for a year and gain experience but, afterwards, the

'for free' employee is sacked."

Project utility PL 4, Participant 7: "Why is the market square nicely fitted out, and not

the ring road? Because you can get some funds but you need to have your own money, too, plus money from the EU fund. For the ring road? There's no money, because you need to put in one third of the money from your own pocket, so, you choose to do what you can get the money for, and not necessarily what is needed at a given moment."

Foreign profit PL 6, Participant 3: "For example, where I work, there are courses for a

C or D category driving licence for the unemployed. The Problem is that even when people do pass the exam and get the driving licence, there's

no way they can find a job here and they go abroad."

## **European identity**

Participants in the three focus groups had similar thoughts as to what unites Europeans. Participants mentioned elements concerning EU membership, such as the freedom of movement, economic relations between Member States, and cooperation in science (e.g. European space research). Other elements were broader than EU membership and included a common way of thinking, sharing the culture of the Western civilisation, history and geography (territory). Common values, such as human rights, the absence of the death penalty and pacifism were also mentioned. That said, we could say that participants in both Polish regions where the focus groups were conducted advanced the representation of European identity to be based on civil rights, duties and benefits that derived from the process of the European integration.

However, an extended discussion took place on what divides Europeans. Besides linguistic differences and different interpretation of history, participants discussed the economic wealth and attitudes towards immigration in EU countries. According to the participants, the accession to the EU brought the opportunity to move freely and work abroad. However, the expectation was that the opportunities available abroad would with time become available in Poland as well. Participants felt this was not the case. As a result, after more than 10 years of EU membership, labour mobility is no longer an opportunity, but a forced option for several Polish citizens. Wage differences were mentioned several times as the main source of division within the EU (PL 6), highlighting the gap between rich and poor countries in Europe:

PL 6, Participant 4: "We earn much less than people in the West. If we earned as much as they do, then certainly we more strongly feel we belong to the EU."

Bridging the gap in wage differences between West and East European countries would strengthen a sense of European identity among the Poles. This argument which denotes that European identity

can be enhanced by eliminating mainly economic disparities among the member states, could be linked to Cohesion Policy, yet participants cannot achive this link due to their ignorance of the policy itself. The type of differences that exist between West and East European countries were further illustrated with the example of product quality differences (PL 5):

PL 5, Participant 1: "Everybody know that the same chocolate in Poland is not the same as the chocolate in Germany."

Participants discussed also the refugee and migration crisis, a very common topic that was employed by participants in many countries to show Europe's lack of unity. There was a common perception that the EU was imposing on Poland a "forced" and "bogus" tolerance. Moreover, polish identity was constructed as being under threat by Europe by using the example of the migration crisis in which the EU was portrayed as forcing Poland to change its policies and ultimately values. It becomes clear that such a representation of Poland vis-à-vis the EU unfolds a rather antagonistic relation between the two.

#### Cohesion policy and European identity

Since the EU did not deliver convergence between West and East European countries, participants were rather negative as to whether EU funding can promote a sense of European identity in Poland, an argument that contradicts participants' previous views on the notion of European identity. Despite this, participants perceived the potential of Cohesion policy as an element of European identity mainly described in utilitarian terms since for example, some believed that EU projects did create shared benefits for Europeans, such as motorway infrastructure and clean air investments.

# 6. Key findings and conclusions

The Podkarpackie Voivodship, similarly to other Polish regions, is categorised in the group of EU regions which received the most substantial financial assistance under the Cohesion policy (ca. EUR 2000 per capita in the period 2007-2013). At the same time, about one fourth of these funds in the period 2007-2013 (and about 40% in the financing perspective 2014-2020) was expended as part of the regional operational programme run by the local (regional) government. Similarly to other Convergence Objective regions, outlays on the development of basic hard infrastructure (mainly transport and environment) prevailed, at the expense of outlays spent on building an innovative business environment. It should be noted, however, that the share of the latter was relatively high in Podkarpackie compared to the rest of Poland and amounted to ca. 30%. In the current programming period, and in line with the Commission guidance, greater focus has been placed on: (a) innovation (including smart specialisations) at the expense of expenditure on technical infrastructure, (b) higher selectivity and concentration, (c) broader inclusion of social issues (as result of ERDF and ESF combination in ROP), and (d) Integrated Territorial Investments (functional urban areas of the capital city).

In the period 2007-2013, the implementation of the Cohesion policy in the Podkarpackie Voivodship, expressed by the scale of absorption of the Cohesion policy funds, was very effective – in 2014, about 80% of the allocated funds were committed. In addition, due to the considerable scale of financing coupled with its broad thematic scope, the European funds allocated to the Podkarpackie Voivodship influenced practically all the spheres of socio-economic life. However, one may notice a predominance of investments in hard infrastructure in comparison to soft measures, and a prevalence of ROP initiatives related to the economy (mixed respondents' opinions on technological advancement) rather than activities aimed to solve social problems (mixed respondents opinions on trainings).

The respondents positively viewed the absorption of the Cohesion policy funds at the local and regional levels. The opinions on the positive impact of the Cohesion policy on the perception of the European Union in the two Polish regions were the strongest of all the analysed case studies. Moreover, the stakeholders predominantly agreed with the statement that the programme adequately addressed the regional needs. At the same time, they listed cumbersome duties related to reporting the progress in the implementation of the programme/project, including the ambiguities associated with the evaluation process and excessive auditing requirements concerning the expended funds more frequently than was the case in the other Polish analysed region. The need to secure the beneficiaries' own contribution to finance the project was an issue that became more acute in the current financing perspective. At the same time, although problems with the correct spending of the funds or fraud/corruption during the implementation of the programmes/projects were brought up relatively seldom, it happened definitely more frequently than in the case of the Pomorskie Voivodship.

In Podkarkacpie, for 2007-2013, there was one strategic objective of the communication activities (to support the implementation of the objectives set out in the Regional Operational Program for Podkarpackie Voivodship for the years 2007 – 2013), accompanied by 6 specific operational goals. For the 14-20 programming period strategic goal was simplified (to support the use of Podkarpackie ROP funds in achieving regional development goals), and 4 objectives were selected. These objectives mirror objectives from the National Communication Strategy within National Strategic Reference Framework 2007-2013 prepared by the Coordinating Authority in the Ministry of Regional Development.

There were 6 target groups in the 2007-2013 communication plan (regional public opinion, potential and actual beneficiaries, youth (recognized as a group of future beneficiaries or project participants); local and regional media, decision-makers and local leaders, public institutions involved in the implementation system of the NSFR 2007-2013. In 2014-2020 3 main target groups were chosen:

potential beneficiaries and beneficiaries, project participants and public opinion in the region (the recipients of final programme results).

The actual segmentation for 2014-2020 is identical in both studied Polish regions (as a result of adjustments made between regional communication strategies and national EU Funds communication strategy in order to improve coherence and create more synergic communication managed by different actors).

The key message for 2007-2013 was framed to underline ROP Podkarpackie brand and to show its impact on regional development, while for 2014-2020 key messages were focusing on umbrella brand "European Funds" and the active role of people and organizations (funds' beneficiaries) was underlined.

The communication mix for 2007-2013 included many different activities (local media campaigns, print communication, broad and targeted events, info-points, online activities, study tours, cooperation with local journalists, posters and information boards, promotional gadgets and accessories). The communication mix described in 2014-2020 strategic document consisted of similar activities, but the initial segmentation of target groups and the alignment of communication tools to this segmentation was more precisely elaborated. Additionally, the 14-20 strategy introduced a broader strategic framework which aim was to secure more consistent use of different communication tools and channels. This framework consisted of the following call to actions: see (discover) and show interest!, use/benefit and recommend to others!, see (discover)!

The monitoring system of 2007-2013 communication plan consisted of 42 indicators grouped into 16 categories. 24 indicators were simple output indicators, e.g., number of organized meetings for potential and actual beneficiaries; the number of commercials produced (radio and television), number of organized outdoor events. Additionally, 18 result indicators were measured, e.g., a number of answers provided by electronic means; the number of people attending the meetings; the number of poster campaign recipients; the number of visitors to the site. As a result, responsible authorities predominantly measured how much effort and resources have been put in communication activities and the size of different audiences reached by those means. No impact indicators were directly incorporated into the monitoring plan. However, it should be remembered that the impact of communication activities was assessed with other means.

There was a significant shift in the approach to monitoring of communication activities between 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming period. For the 2014-2020 Managing Authority has chosen only 13 indicators. Additionally, communication strategy mentions several qualitative measures to be used for on-going assessment of the communication activities.

Most of the interviewed stakeholders agreed that the communication of ROP Podkarpackie was designed to activate beneficiaries to apply for funds and to increase recognition of the Programme. Additionally, as underlined in interviews, the overall communication approach was strictly aligned to the stage of the policy cycle (ROP implementation stage). In the beginning, responsible bodies were focusing on informing potential beneficiaries and motivating various socio-economic actors to submit project proposals. Subsequently, with the progress of the ROP implementation, more actions were undertaken to raise awareness about effects of the EU support. Most of the informants agreed that the overall communication activities within Podkarpackie ROP are at the satisfactory level and no significant changes are required.

Communication activities in ROP Podkarpackie were efficient (in terms of delivering what was planned) and had positive impact on EU Funds awareness in the region (evidenced both by the opinion polls commissioned by the Coordinating Authority and conducted within Cohesify project – almost 90% of respondents do know that EU funds are allocated to the region, more than 90% think that EU funding had very positive and positive impact on their region or city. Additionally, despite the fact that less than 2 out of three respondents claim that they have benefited from EU project in their

life, two-thirds say that their region or city would have developed somewhat worse or a lot worse without EU Funding ).

The majority of inhabitants in Podkarpackie are very appreciative of the use of European funds. Almost 88% of the respondents have heard about the EU funding for infrastructure, business development and training allocated to regions and cities, which is nearly twice as high as the average in the surveyed group of regions. Interestingly, however, the residents recognised the benefits of EU projects in their daily lives, as confirmed by two in three respondents. This result was better than average, i.e. where it remained on the level of 4/5. The respondents in Podkarpackie usually did not associate the EU funds with Cohesion Policy instruments as such. Less than half of the respondents were familiar with the term 'Cohesion Fund'. This result was, nevertheless, higher than the average (1/3 of the respondents). The impact of the EU funds was visible in all spheres of life. Many examples of projects in which some of the respondents took part were quoted during the focus interviews. Numerous respondents underlined the role of the information boards. Personal experiences, the Internet and the nationwide TV were the main sources of information about the EU funds. Public acknowledgement of EU funding in the region was expressed by 92% of the respondents, which was more than twice as high than on the average (40%).

By and large, a very positive attitude towards the EU and the European funds was expressed; in the opinion of three in four respondents, Poland benefited from being a member of the EU, and 90% of the respondents were also convinced that EU membership positively influenced the development of the Podkarpackie region. The answers were more positive in comparison to the group's average by 10 percentage points. The positive impact of the EU funds was ascribed by the respondents to the appropriate allocation of funds (desirable projects), extensive funding, but also timely execution and good management of the EU projects. Only 15% of the respondents shared the opinion that the region would perform the same without the EU funds, while 67% pointed out that it would perform somehow worse or a lot worse. And here again the perception of EU influence in Podkarpackie was indeed more enthusiastic than in the group of regions under study on the average (24% and 45% respectively).

However, based on the focus group results, at least three interrelated challenges to this generally Euro-enthusiastic view can be pointed out. First, the knowledge of the EU Funds, the Cohesion Fund included, seems to be superficial. It was proved by the fact that some people did not regard Poland as a net recipient of EU funds. Moreover, Podkarpackie's inhabitants did not have a sense of a pervasive presence of the EU funded schemes that influence each citizen's life, even if only indirectly. Second, simultaneously with the generally positive impact of EU funds, some people were convinced that their use resulted in the growth of internal disparities, visible in the personal income inequalities among the countries (and regions), as well as in intraregional disparities in the economic performance. Not surprisingly so, the highest economic performance (and incomes) was observed in the regional capital city and the lowest – in rural and border areas. Third, the European funds were considered as a compensation for Poland being regarded as a "second-class" Member State, characterised by higher emigration and lower salaries in comparison to the EU core.

Approximately 68% of the respondents in Podkarpackie declared European identity (simultaneously with country identity, and hardly ever exclusively so), while 32% underlined their country identity – the results are in line with those of the reference group. The European identity does not fully equal EU identity since more respondents felt attached (to different degrees) to Europe (96.4%) than to the EU (89.6%). The attitudes towards integration showed mixed grades: 60% of respondents were in favour of integration, while almost 20% were neutral and 19% were opposed (the results for the whole study show that, on average, the respondents expressed more often neutral attitute). The European Union was particularly appreciated for the freedom of movement. However, a limited openness to different cultures in the region was simultaneously expressed.

# Communication policy implications and recommendations

Lessons learned and policy recommendations for both analysed Polish regions regarding communication policy are the following:

- 1. It is overly challenging to build a strong brand of the particular regional programme. Lessons from Polish regions tell that ROP detailed name should be only communicated to audiences engaged in implementation, while the more general name "European Funds" should be promoted for general audiences.
- 2. As a result of introducing one umbrella brand EU Funds there is a strong need for coordination between communication undertaken at various policy levels, e.g. between actions undertaken by national authorities (coordinating bodies), regional authorities (managing authorities) and other actors (intermediate bodies). This could be achieved through unified planning framework, single corporate design elements (e.g. the same website structure for all programmes) and on-going working meeting and good practice exchange among units involved in communication.
- 3. The foundations of Cohesion Policy should be more underlined in the process of policy communication including such principles as territorial and thematic concentration and partnerships in the programming process i.e. design, management, implementation, monitoring, evaluation.
- 4. As websites are a primary and most important source of information for beneficiaries, they need to meet a high standard of usability, i.e.: valuable content, easy to follow and information architecture, language (clarity and simplicity), design.
- 5. Social media could have been regarded as innovative during 2007-2013 period but nowadays they should be used as a standard communication tool. Nevertheless creating content that is suitable for these channels demands appropriate capacities (so either external digital agencies should be engaged or institutional staff should be trained to use these channels).
- 6. Communication needs to be concise and targeted. It should use the mix of tools (both traditional media, events and direct engagement, as well as social media). Plain language standard should be applied to all communication tool targeting beneficiaries and broader public.
- 7. More have to be done to build beneficiaries capacity to act as EU Funds advocates. They should be more active in informing broader public about their projects.

Summing up, in the communication policy at the regional level, it is important to show that in the assumptions the system of cohesion policy implementation is carefully planned, efficient and reflecting the interests of regional and local communities. This does not mean that it is and will be free of errors, but it should be emphasized that it is not built on the basis of discretionary decisions of unknown actors.

# Annex 1: Tabular synthesis for communication plan 2007-2013 indicators

Output indicators	Result indicators
1. Number of Info Points operating	25. Number of information points' clients
2. Number of Consultation Points	26. Number of answers provided by
3. Number of organized meetings for potential	electronic means
and actual beneficiaries	27. Number of answers provided by
4. Number of organized study trips (project	telephone
presentations)	28. Number of the Consultation Points'
<ol><li>Number of organized meetings</li></ol>	clients
6. Number of copies of promotional and	29. Number of answers provided by
informational materials	electronic means
7. Number of types of promotional and	30. Number of answers provided by
informational materials	telephone
8. Number of publications	31. Number of people attending the
9. Number of commercials produced (radio and	meetings
television)	32. Number of participants in the trips
10. Number of advertising spots	33. Number of people attending
11. Number of advertising spots (radio and	organized meetings
television)	34. Number of recipients of promotional
12. Number of poster campaigns	and informational materials
13. Number of posters produced	35. Number of press articles, radio and
14. Number of billboard campaigns conducted	television programs resulting from
15. Number of posters produced for billboards	direct cooperation with media
16. Number of large format rental	representatives
17. Number of organized outdoor events	36. Number of poster campaign recipients
18. Number of organized contests	37. Number of recipients of a billboard
19. Number of prizes for contests organized	campaign
20. Number of campaigns	38. Number of participants in outdoor
21. Number of sports clubs promoting RPO WP	events
(through information and promotional materials)	<ol> <li>Number of people participating in the contests</li> </ol>
22. Number of information sent to potential and	40. Number of potential recipients of
actual beneficiaries	promotional and informational
23. Number of events promoting FE with the	campaigns
participation of representatives of the ROP	41. Number of registered entities that
MA	receive messages via bulletin
24. Number of communication evaluations	42. Number of visitors to the site
conducted	

# **Annex 2: List of interviewees**

Interview	Date	Type of organisation	Details
Interview A	18.05	Regional state institution	Marshall Office, Department of Environment Protection
Interview B	18.05	Business association or federation	Polish Confederation of Private Employers Lewiatan
Interview C	18.05	Regional state institution	Marshall Office, Department of ROP Management
Interview D	19.05	Other	University of Rzeszów
Interview E	19.05	Regional state institution	Marshall Office, Department of ROP Management, Communication Unit
Interview F	18.05	Regional state institution	Regional Employment Office, Department for Social Integration
Interview G	19.05	Third sector interest groups, civil society organisations, ngos	Non-governmental organisation
Interview H	19.05	Local state authority association or federation	
Interview I	18.05	Business association or federation	Rzeszów
Interview J	18.05	Local state authority association or federation	
Interview K	18.05	Regional state institution	Marshall Office, Department of Entrepreneurship
Interview L	18.05	Regional state institution	Voivodeship Office, Department of Infrastructure
Interview M	19.05	Local state authority association or federation	
Interview N	19.05	Business association or federation	Stalowa Wola
Interview O	5.07	Third sector interest groups, civil society organisations, ngos	Non-governmental organisation
Interview P	10.07	Regional state institution	Marshall Office, Department of ROP Infrastructural Projects

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