

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES

POLICY DEPARTMENT **B**

STRUCTURAL AND COHESION POLICIES



Agriculture and Rural Development



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RESEARCH FOR REGI COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF THE ADOPTED PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

STUDY



DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR INTERNAL POLICIES
POLICY DEPARTMENT B: STRUCTURAL AND COHESION
POLICIES

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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REVIEW OF THE ADOPTED
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

STUDY

This document was requested by the European Parliament's Committee on Regional Development.

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Abstract

This study is a comprehensive analysis of the Partnership Agreements adopted in the 28 EU Member States, also offering insight into the implementation of the elements that were endorsed by the European Parliament during the negotiations on the legislative framework. The research mainly highlights the compliance of the Partnership Agreements with the legal provisions, the state of play of the ex-ante conditionalities, and the alignment with the Europe 2020 Strategy. Strategic choices of the Member States as well as their programme architecture and coordination tools are described in the 28 summaries included in the study. Research results are synthesised in a cross-cutting analysis of the 28 Partnership Agreements showing differences and similarities of approaches taken by the Member States.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
Bn	Billion(s)
CEF	Connecting Europe Facility
CEMR	Council of European Municipalities and Regions
CF	Cohesion Fund
CLLD	Community Led Local Development
CP	Cohesion Policy
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
EAC	Ex-ante Conditionalities
EC	European Commission
EAFRD	European Agricultural Funds for Rural Development
EIB	European Investment Bank
EMFF	European Maritime and Fisheries Fund
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF	European Social Fund
ESIF/ESI Funds	European Structural and Investment Funds
ETC	European Territorial Cooperation
EU 27	All Member States except Croatia
EU 8	Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia
EU 10+2	Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia
EU 15	Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom
EUSAIR	EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region
EUSALP	EU Strategy for the Alpine Space Region
EUSBSR	EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
EUSDR	EU Strategy for the Danube Region
EP	European Parliament

FEAD	Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived
FLAG	Fisheries Local Action Groups
GExAC	General Ex-ante Conditionalities
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IP	Investment Priority
ISF	Internal Security Fund
ITI	Integrated Territorial Investments
LAG	Local Action Group
MC	Monitoring Committee
MLG	Multi-Level Governance
MRS	Macro-Regional Strategy
MS	Member State(s)
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
OP	Operational Programme
PA	Partnership Agreement
RDP	Regional Development Programme
ROP/RP	Regional Operational Programme
SF	Structural Funds
SFC	System for Fund Management
SME(s)	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise(s)
CPR	Common Provision Regulation
NRP	National Reform Programme
EaE	Ex-ante evaluations
PP	Position Paper
TO	Thematic Objective

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 21 December 2013 a new set of European Union rules and legislation for the programming period 2014-2020 came into force. One of the main novelties consists in implementing common rules for the European Structural and Investment Funds. The Member States were required to prepare and implement strategic plans with investment priorities covering these five European Structural and Investment Funds. These Partnership Agreements are negotiated between the Commission and national authorities, based on extensive processes carried out at national level involving different actors at various levels of governance, local and regional representatives, as well as the representatives of interest groups and the civil society.

The 2014-2020 programming period introduces many novelties to Cohesion Policy which are based on the perceived need at European level for more efficiency, coherence, transparency and legitimacy of policy-making. Presenting a comprehensive analysis of these adopted Partnership Agreements is the main objective of the present study. This includes giving insights into elements and concepts that were endorsed by the European Parliament during the negotiations on the new legislation.

All Member States prepared Partnership Agreements detailing how they intended to use the European Structural and Investment Funds in the 2014-2020 period based on the selection of Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities. The Member States use the European Structural and Investment Funds and the Thematic Objectives in a comprehensive manner. All 28 Member States will be using the European Social Fund, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Only Luxembourg will not be using the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The Cohesion Fund will be used by all 15 Member States that are eligible.

The Partnership Agreements are divided into two parts. One part is subject to a Commission decision (sections 1 and 2 of the PA template – corresponding to Article 15 (1) of the CPR) with a socio-economic and territorial analysis, a description of Thematic Objectives, an ex-ante evaluation, horizontal and transversal principles and objectives for implementation. The other part (integrated approaches and e-cohesion, corresponding to Article 15(2) of the CPR), in principle, is not subject to a Commission decision. Most countries respect this division and detail the relevant contents in the two parts of the Partnership Agreement.

The principle of partnership (Art. 5 of the Common Provisions Regulation) has been implemented with the active participation of a broad range of national and regional bodies and the economic and social partners as well as of civil society in various forms of public consultations, with some focusing on the Partnership Agreements and others on the Operational Programmes. All layers of government (central, regional and local) and all stakeholders across the board (ministries, economic and social partners, civil society and research institutes and universities) are planned to be involved in the implementation of the Partnership Agreements and the Operational Programmes as well. These partnerships tend to be well described with lists of partners being provided in the Partnership Agreement.

In the preparation phase, the Member States had the possibility to introduce either mono-fund or multi-fund operational programmes by combining the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund. All Member States have introduced mono-fund OPs. 20 Member States chose to introduce multi-fund OPs.

Despite the requirement for thematic concentration, most Member States selected all the Thematic Objectives in their PAs. Only a handful of Member States concentrate on a limited number of Thematic Objectives (e.g. Luxemburg, Denmark and the Netherlands). Thematic Objective 11 (Enhancing institutional capacity) was chosen by only 18 Member States and had a budget allocation of 1% of the total allocated to Thematic Objectives across the EU as it was only used in the Member States eligible for the Cohesion Fund with the exception of France and Italy. Similarly, Thematic Objective 2 (Information and Communication Technology) has not been chosen in four Member States and had the second lowest overall budget allocation (3.3%). Thematic Objective 7 (Promoting sustainable transport) has not been selected in five Member States but given its importance in the Convergence countries in particular, it is the Thematic Objective with the second highest budget overall (14.8% of the total budget allocated).

The Thematic Objectives with the highest percentage of overall funding are Thematic Objective 6 (Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency - 15%), Thematic Objective 7 (Promoting sustainable transport - 14.8%) and Thematic Objective 3 (Enhancing the competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises - 13.9%).

The Country Specific Recommendations are taken into account in all the Partnership Agreements. The Country Specific Recommendations were generally found to be consistent with the national strategies and the relevant parts were decisive for the choice of Thematic Objectives and priorities in the Operational Programmes.

There are no major problems with regards to the issue of balancing the thematic concentration and the expectation from the Member States to address the Treaty based objectives of the European Structural and Investment Funds. Member States' needs and strategies are broadly aligned with the Europe 2020 targets and the European Structural and Investment Funds priorities. The synergies between the use of European Structural and Investment Funds and national instruments are also outlined in most Partnership Agreements. The macro-regional strategies are present in the different Partnership Agreements and there are also no major discrepancies between national strategic priorities and the EU macro-regional strategies such as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Regions or the EU Strategy for the Danube Region either.

The coordination of the European Structural and Investment Funds as laid out in the Partnership Agreements is organised in a variety of ways in the Member States. The lead is sometimes taken by a government office or a line ministry or by a specially designated body. The Managing Authorities and Monitoring Committees play a significant role in the coordination of the funds and OPs. In a number of Member States, thematic working groups have been set up to deal with specific themes across the funds. A number of Partnership Agreements provide details on how the European Structural and Investment Funds are coordinated with national funding programmes or other international sources. However, the articulation with the European Investment Bank does not get much attention in the Partnership Agreements.

Member States had to fulfil general and thematic ex-ante conditionalities. The general ex-ante conditionalities and most of the thematic ex ante conditionalities tend to be fulfilled in the older Member States. The newer the Member States to the European Union, the fewer general ex ante conditionalities appear to be fulfilled.

Another simplification in 2014-2020 consists in the increased use of e-cohesion systems enabling the beneficiaries to submit proposals by way of electronic data exchange

(decrease in the administrative burden for beneficiaries and a reduction of costs for the administrations). Most countries had already made good progress in introducing e-cohesion mechanisms in the previous programming period (2007-2013) and these are being adapted and updated in the current period to enhance interoperability with the Commission's System for Fund Management (SFC). Again no major problems are expected in this field. Only in a few countries the PA is not specific on the subject of e-cohesion and the IT systems. There are also a few countries favouring decentralised systems which have the disadvantage of not always having all data stored in one place. While timetables of completion of systems are not included in a number of Partnership Agreements, there is no risk that these will not be up and running in time.

Most countries, with the exception of Germany, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Luxemburg, describe which geographical areas will receive specific attention. A number of countries also outline their territorial approach to addressing poverty (Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and the United Kingdom). The majority of Member States include details of which geographical areas will be targeted for either territorial development or anti-poverty measures. So-called poverty mapping has been carried out in some Member States with the aim of concentrating resources on these areas. Member States with either very small or homogenous territories do not provide any detailed descriptions of geographical targeting.

Integrated approaches in the form of Community Led Local Development and Integrated Territorial Investments are being used in all Member States. Community Led Local Development is used in all 28 Member States, Integrated Territorial Investments in most but not all countries (20 Member States). Most countries address the urban dimension (22 Member States), most frequently under Integrated Territorial Investments. A large proportion of countries include Community Led Local Development as a continuation of the LEADER Local Action Groups under the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development but also under European Regional Development Fund. Some countries have also introduced urban Community Led Local Development. The urban dimension is however more often supported under Integrated Territorial Investments.

This study helps understanding how the novelties introduced in the 2014-2020 programming period have been adopted and interpreted by the EU Member States, in view of ensuring a smooth and efficient implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds over the next years.

1 INTRODUCTION AND EP POSITION TOWARDS THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

On 21 December 2013 a new legislation came into force, laying down rules governing EU investments for the 2014-2020 programming period. The main novelty consists in the fact that common rules have been set for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF/ESI Funds), which is intended to enable that EU funding sources are used in a more strategic and complementary manner. The Member States are required to prepare and implement strategic plans with setting out priorities and arrangements for using these five ESIF. These Partnership Agreements (PAs) between the Member States and the European Commission are negotiated between the Commission and national authorities, based on extensive processes carried out at national level involving different actors at various levels of governance, local and regional representatives, as well as the representatives of interest groups and the civil society.

The PA is the basis of using the following five ESI Funds:

- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF),
- The European Social Fund (ESF),
- The Cohesion Fund (CF),
- The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), and
- The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

The PA defines the main challenges the Member State faces, funding priorities, goals, results, coordination principles between the five funds and other funding sources. The strategic focus of the PA is contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy and its national counterpart, the National Reform Programme (NRP), through the use of ESI funds.

Box 1: The programming process and the main strategic documents in cohesion policy

The cohesion policy framework is prepared in the following steps. Once the budget and related rules are jointly decided for the 7-year period by the European Council and the European Parliament on the basis of a proposal from the Commission (ESIF and specific fund rules), the principles and priorities of cohesion policy are distilled through a process of consultation between the Commission and the EU countries. Each Member State produces a draft Partnership Agreement¹, which outlines the country's strategy and proposes a list of programmes. In addition to this Member States also present draft operational programmes (OP). The Commission negotiates with the national authorities on the final content of the Partnership Agreement, as well as each programme. The OPs present the priorities of the country and/or regions or the cooperation area concerned. Workers, employers and civil society bodies can all participate in the programming and management of the OPs. The programmes are then implemented by the Member States and their regions.

Source: European Commission InfoRegio website, Programming and Implementation.

The Commission services had produced “position papers” in 2012 for each Member State setting out how EU investments should support smart, sustainable and inclusive growth based on the advantages, challenges and relevant growth sectors identified in each

¹ European Commission, Public contracts and funding:
http://ec.europa.eu/contracts_grants/agreements/index_en.htm

country. The "position papers" also included the approach of the Commission towards the content of the strategic programming documents. Thus further to the legislative texts, these constituted a basis for negotiation. Only after a successful conclusion of the pre-defined process of negotiations between the Commission and the Member States (end of 2014) could the OPs finally be approved.

The 2014-2020 programming period introduces many novelties to Cohesion Policy which are based on the perceived need at European level for more efficiency, coherence, transparency and legitimacy of policy-making. The following innovations to Cohesion policy have particularly been highlighted in the debates at EP level.

A major novelty is the fact that the PA will serve as a strategic document covering all five ESIF. The PA can be described as a national umbrella for the five funds and describes the coordination between them. The EP has taken a positive stance on the idea that the Member States are to draw up PAs in dialogue with the Commission and relevant partners in the 2014-2020 programming period. This dialogue aims to ensure a strong commitment towards achieving the strategic goals at national and regional levels. The PA is divided in two parts, one that includes elements that have to be adopted by a Commission decision and a second part that that does not. This decision was based on the Council's position and was accepted by the EP during the negotiations.

For the Partnership Agreement as well as the Operational Programmes, the Member States are asked to establish a partnership with regional and local partners (including urban partners, social and economic partners, and civil society).

Another positive development is the alignment of the PA with the Europe 2020 Strategy through 11 thematic objectives (TO) and by identifying the development needs and defining the 'Investment Priorities' for ERDF, ESF and CF and 'Union priorities' for EAFRD and EMFF for the funding period. Therefore, the PA is concluded between the Members States and the European Commission to establish a balance between thematic concentration and territory-specific development needs. The PA is in fact also informed by the NRPs and the relevant country-specific recommendations and Council recommendations². The EP argued that EU cohesion spending with should be aligned with NRPs rather than with country specific recommendations. The EP was concerned in fact, that frequent re-programming in the annual European semester cycle could increase instability. NRPs are however long-term strategic planning documents and they could hence fit to a multi-annual policy followed by the PA and the OPs better than country specific recommendations proposed by the European Commission. The final agreement included both documents, as laid down in Article 15.1(a)(i) of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR)³. All Member States have committed to the Europe 2020 Strategy. However, each country has different socio-economic circumstances and translates the overall EU objectives into national targets in its National Reform Programme.

The new architecture for Cohesion policy foresees two goals, the "Investment for growth and jobs in Member States and regions" goal and the "European Territorial Cooperation"

² Article 15.1(a)(i) of the Common Provisions Regulation.

³ European Union (2013), Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and laying down general provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1083/2006 (OJ L 347, 20.12.2013, p. 320).

goal (as opposed to the 3 objectives of the period 2007-2013 that were linked to categories of regions, the 2014-2020 goals apply to the entire territory of the EU, and the categories of regions are used to determine the level of support).

Regions are grouped into three categories (CPR, Article 90.2):

- Less-Developed regions (GDP per capita < 75% of EU27 average)
- Transition regions (GDP per capita 75% to 90% of EU27 average)
- More-Developed regions (GDP per capita > 90% of EU27 average)

Support for the newly introduced category of transition regions is harmonized (the so called 'phasing-out', and 'phasing-in' categories do not exist anymore).

Cohesion policy instruments are aligned along 11 Thematic Objectives, The Thematic Objectives defined in Article 9 of the CPR and derived from the Europe 2020 Strategy are the following:

Smart Growth

- (1) Strengthening research, technological development and innovation;
- (2) Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies;
- (3) Enhancing the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, the agricultural sector (for the EAFRD) and the fisheries and aquaculture sector (for the EMFF);

Sustainable Growth

- (4) Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors;
- (5) Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management;
- (6) Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency;
- (7) Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures;

Inclusive Growth

- (8) Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility;
- (9) Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination;
- (10) Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning;
- (11) Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration.

One of the main changes in Cohesion policy compared to the 2007-2013 programming period is the thematic concentration especially that within the ERDF and ESF programme structure⁴. Based on the regional division, the regulations foresee different levels of thematic concentration on the first four Thematic Objectives for ERDF and between Thematic Objectives 8, 9 and 10 for the ESF. Investment from the ERDF supports all 11

⁴ European Union (2013), Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, Article 9 and 18.

objectives, but 1-4 are the main priorities for investment. The main priorities for the ESF are 8-11 though the Fund also supports TO 1-4. The Cohesion Fund supports TO 4-7 and 11.

Member States were given the opportunity to create multi-funded Operational Programmes combining ERDF, ESF and CF.

Ex-ante conditionalities apply to all 5 ESI Funds and are divided into general and thematic conditionalities. General ex-ante conditionalities (GExAC) are included in Annex XI of the CPR, together with the thematic ex ante conditionalities (T-EAC) that apply to the ERDF and ESF as well as CF. In addition, both the EAFRD and EMFF have their own T-EAC in their respective regulations. Thematic conditionalities should support a strategic policy framework to better implement Operational Programme interventions.

The newly introduced intervention logic helps to better align Thematic Objectives and specific Member State objectives, as well as interventions and output-and-result indicators. The 2014-2020 programming period highlights the need to focus on results. Result indicators should help to provide a better understanding of the effects of Structural Funds' interventions in Member States.

Simplifications are being enforced at administrative and project management levels. However, most of them were already introduced during the 2007-2013 programming period, and Member States have now been asked to implement financial instruments in broader terms more strongly (European Parliament, 2014).

Another novelty of the legislative framework consists in the inclusion of provisions related to administrative capacity, also in relation to beneficiaries and the simplification of the policy for beneficiaries. The following measures have been introduced in the 2014-2020 programming period with the aim to simplify implementation processes:

- Member States can establish either mono-fund or multi-fund programmes by combining ERDF, ESF and CF. Although this change is seen as a measure of increasing the efficiency of ESIF implementation, some Member States fear a consequent increase in the administrative burden due to strict sectoral divisions between subjects along different administrations (sharing competencies between various ministries, often in combination with different political stances across the administrations). It remains to be seen if this new need for coordination will in fact decrease or increase the administrative burden.
- Introduction of Joint Action Plans (JAP), extending the simplified costs system in order to reduce management and control costs. The approach proposes a higher focus on results rather than outcomes.
- Introduction of the CLLD, which aims to facilitate the bottom-up approach of local communities.

The following simplification measures have been foreseen in the delivery system:

- Harmonisation of rules on eligibility and durability of different EU funding instruments which includes the harmonisation of eligibility of overheads and staff costs and the consistency and compliance with other EU policies and legislation;
- Proposition of flat rates and unit costs to be implemented at national and regional levels;

- E-cohesion system enabling the beneficiaries to submit proposals by way of electronic data exchange (decrease in the administrative burden for beneficiaries and a reduction of costs for the administrations).

Position of the European Parliament

The EP has been the advocate of the strengthened territorial dimension in the 2014-2020 programming period; and more specifically, the EP has highlighted the importance of the integrated approach to territorial development, including a strengthened urban dimension of cohesion policy, which allow for a more place-based of Cohesion policy. This approach can also be facilitated through new instruments such as integrated territorial investments (ITI)⁵ or Community Led Local Development (CLLD)⁶. These tools are to contribute to the development of specific sub-regional areas. Some Member States have been reluctant with regard to using these instruments fearing too much local influence in territorial development.

The EP position on the legislative package also included the fostering of synergies already in the programming phase between ESI Funds programmes and macro-regional and sea basin strategies. Moreover, a strong position was taken on including specific provisions related to demographic challenges. The EP supported the fact that the Member States have to include information on the state-of-play and more importantly on the measures planned with regards to issues that were considered more sensitive in the past (e.g. the needs of persons with disabilities, the reinforcement of the administrative capacity, the implementation of the partnership principle).

The strengthened transparency of the PA preparation process is also seen as an improvement by the EP. Increased transparency goes hand in hand with applying the partnership principle, i.e. a stronger involvement of different types of relevant partners, at all levels of administration (see Article 14.2 of the CPR). A joint national elaboration of ESIF, drawn up in cooperation with partners, is underpinned by the code of conduct on partnership: “The code of conduct is intended to provide a framework for partnership, in accordance with Member States’ institutional and legal frameworks, taking account of national and regional competences⁷”.

Methodological approach

This study provides a comprehensive overview elaborated via desk research at Member State level by analysing the 28 adopted PAs and a selected number of documents (Country Specific Recommendations, accompanying national documents, in some cases position papers of the Commission) following the conclusions on the remarks in the following chapters and other recent studies elaborated for the EP⁸. The study covers three different types of information:

- A synthesis of the strategic approaches (chapter 2),
- Factual information on selected individual features of the PA (chapter 3),
- A summary overview of the 28 PAs (chapter 4).

⁵ European Union (2013), Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, Article 36.

⁶ European Union (2013), Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, Article 33.

⁷ European Union (2014), Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds; p. 1–7.

⁸ Especially the following EP study which tackles 11 Member States: European Parliament (2014) Strategic coherence of Cohesion Policy: comparison of the 2007-13 and 2014-20 programming periods, author: EPRC, University of Strathclyde, February 2014; EP, Directorate-General for Internal Policies, February 2015.

The study unfolds from the general to the specific and moves from a synthesis of programming processes and strategic dimensions to a more detailed comparative review of selected features of the PAs. The study includes comprehensive summaries about the PAs developed in each MS. These summaries present the PAs in a compact and structured way along with visual elements to facilitate their reading.

The content of the PA across the MS was compared, highlighting differences and common aspects in relation to the depth of elaboration and some specific features. The study then presents a synthesis of individual Member States' choices made during the programming process.

The main methodological challenge consisted in synthesising the data collected in the most efficient manner, after collecting the appropriate information from a large bulk of documents. The PAs are generally extensive documents written in the mother tongue of the MS which led to the need of involving a large pool of geographic experts.

2 COMPARATIVE REVIEW OF STRATEGIC APPROACHES AND CROSS-CUTTING ANALYSIS OF KEY FEATURES

KEY FINDINGS

- The ESI Funds and the Thematic Objectives (TO) have been applied in a comprehensive manner. All 28 Member States have chosen to use the ESF, the ERDF and the EAFRD. 27 Member States have applied the EMFF (only Luxembourg did not) and all eligible Member States have used the Cohesion Fund.
- The principles of partnership and public consultation (Art. 5 of the CPR) have been implemented in most Member States with an active participation of a broad range of national and regional bodies, economic and social partners as well as the civil society in the consultation process. The partnership arrangements are well described in the PA documents.
- All Member States have mono-fund OPs. 20 Member States have used the option to use multi-fund OPs. Those that do not use this option can be described as having a rather sectoral approach to the funding.
- Most Member States used all TOs. Only Luxemburg, Denmark and the Netherlands have concentrated on a limited number of TOs due to the small size of the budget.
- The TOs with the highest percentage of overall funding are TO 6 (preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency - 15%), TO 7 (14.8%) and TO 3 (enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs - 13.9%).
- Looking at the use of ESIF to support the TOs, the ERDF and the EAFRD support a wide range of TOs; the CF funds mainly TOs 4 to 7; the ESF 8 to 11 TOs. TO 11 will mainly be funded through the ESF. The EMFF mainly supports the TOs 3, 4, 6, 8. Landlocked countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia use the EMFF to support SMEs.
- The Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) are taken into account in all the PAs. The CSR have generally been seen as consistent with the national strategies and the relevant parts were decisive for the choice of TOs and priorities in the OPs.
- There appear to be no major hurdles to establishing coherence between national needs as defined in national development programmes and the CSR on the one hand, and the requirements of thematic concentration and the Europe 2020 targets on the other hand. The synergies between the use of ESIFs and national instruments are also outlined in most PAs.
- In addition to the coordination between the ESIF, the PAs describe the coordination with other EU funding programmes and national instruments.
- The general ex ante conditionalities and most of the thematic ex ante conditionalities tend to be fulfilled in the older Member States. The newer the Member States to the Union, the fewer general ex ante conditionalities appear to be fulfilled.
- Most countries developed functioning IT systems in the previous programming period. These are being further developed and adapted in the current period to improve interoperability between the systems catering for the different ESI funds and in order to be fully compatible with the Structural Funds Management.

- A large proportion of countries include CLLD as a continuation of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the EAFRD or ERDF. Others foresee a combination of ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF, EAFRD and ESF or EAFRD and EMFF or EAFRD, ERDF and ESF in an integrated CLLD approach.
- ITIs are often used exclusively for the urban dimension and are mainly funded through the ERDF, although some countries also use them for rural or mixed areas.
- Most countries are involved in macro-regional strategies (MRS) and sea basin strategies with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) being the most prominent.
- Most countries, with the exception of Germany, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands and Luxemburg, describe which geographical areas will receive specific attention. A number of countries also outline their territorial approach to addressing poverty (Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and the United Kingdom).

2.1 General Reflections

In the framework of the study, the 28 Partnership Agreements (PA) were screened according to a common questionnaire based on the research questions raised in the Terms of Reference. The results of this screening are described below.

2.1.1 The use of the ESI Funds

The Member States have applied the ESI Funds and the Thematic Objectives in a comprehensive manner. All 28 Member States have used the ESF, the ERDF and the EAFRD. Only Luxembourg has not chosen to use the EMFF. The Cohesion Fund was chosen by those Member States that are eligible to do so, i.e. Member States with a per capita gross national product (GNP) of less than 90 % of the Union average. For the 2014-2020 period these include Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

2.1.2 The provisions in the two parts of the PAs

According to the CPR, the elements outlined under sections 1 and 2 of the PA template⁹ (corresponding to Article 15 (1) of the CPR) are subject to a Commission decision. The elements outlined under sections 3 and 4 of this template (corresponding to Article 15 (2) of the CPR) will not be subject to a Commission decision unless the Member State has made use of the provisions of Article 96(8) CPR (when a Member State prepares a maximum of one OP for each Fund). The informal dialogue and the formal assessment by the Commission cover the entirety of the document.

In nine countries, the division between the two parts of the PA is not clear. In 19 Member States, the division is clear with the first part focusing on the essential elements that are to be adopted by the Commission decision and the second part including the non-essential elements that are not subject to adoption by the Commission.

⁹ Draft Template and Guidelines on the Content of the Partnership Agreement, p. 1, http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/pa_guidelines.pdf

In those countries where the division is clear, the first part usually includes two sections. Section 1 includes socio-economic and territorial analysis, a description of the TOs, and ex-ante evaluation, horizontal and transversal principles and Objectives for implementation. Section 2 includes a more detailed description of the measures planned for the implementation of the partnership principle.

The second part of the PA includes the third section covering the analysis of territorial development Instruments (CCLD, ITI, MRS, European Territorial Cooperation) and a fourth section on information and data systems used for PA implementation. The countries that include such sections in their PAs or that have a clear division between part one and two are: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Spain, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The PA of Latvia is written as one integral document. No major discernible differences are evident between the different parts of the PA in terms of the importance of the subject discussed and level of detail and argumentation provided. Most of the sections of the PA contain some cross-referencing between sections.

In Belgium, France, Italy, Luxemburg and Poland the two parts are difficult to discern but the essential elements are clearly included in the first four to five chapters.

The PAs for the Czech Republic and for Slovakia do not include an explicit reference to distinct national policy mechanisms – this is understandable given the fact that EU Cohesion Policy constitutes the key public investment resources in most of the policy areas concerned.

In some countries, the second part of the PA containing the elements that are not subject to adoption by the Commission is slightly less detailed than the section with the essential elements. This is the case in Denmark, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In other countries that have PAs with two clearly distinguishable parts, both parts are of equal quality.

2.1.3 The application of the horizontal principles: Partnership and multi-level governance

The PAs were requested to include a section on partnership in section 1B¹⁰. The description was meant to include the arrangements for the partnership principle including an indicative list of the partners referred to in Article 5 CPR and a summary of the actions taken to involve them in accordance with Article 5 CPR and of their role in the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and the progress report referred to in Article 52 CPR.

The principles of partnership and public consultation (Art. 5 of the CPR) have been implemented in many Member States with the active participation of a broad range of ministerial partners, economic and social partners as well as the civil society in the consultation process. Indeed, as noted in Metis 2013, “Whether more centrally or regionally organised, all Member States assured a very coordinative and cooperative PA-process approach. Although this process seemed of high complexity, many stakeholders appreciated the involvement and information flow. The most mentioned advantage has

¹⁰ Article 15 requests a “summary of the preparation of the Partnership Agreement, with a specific focus on partnership, including: authority which has coordinated the preparation of the Partnership Agreement and the public institutions directly involved (for example, the ministries directly concerned by the ESI Funds). A description of the key stages of the preparation process and the involvement of the relevant partners referred to in Art. 5 CPR.

been the better understanding of the Structural Fund system through the information flow¹¹”.

The majority of the PAs describe the partnership arrangements in detail and include lists of the participants in working groups and committees.

In all countries, the main ministries, often in the form of inter-ministerial committees, are involved in the working groups as well as the Managing Authorities of the ESIF (often the same). The PA process is sometimes coordinated by a government office (e.g. the newly-established Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (GODC) in Slovenia, the Government Office of the Slovak Republic in Slovakia, the Office of the Permanent Secretary in Malta, the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills on behalf of the United Kingdom Government, or the Federal Chancellery in Austria) or by a ministry (e.g. the General Directorate for Community Funds (Dirección General de Fondos Comunitários (DGFC), under the aegis of the Ministry of Economy and of Public Administrations in Spain, the Ministry of European Funds (MEF) in Romania, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy in Finland, the Ministry of Economic affairs and Energy in Germany, or the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) in Ireland), or the body responsible for the coordination of the ESIF (e.g. DATAR in France). In Romania, the institutional coordination for 2014-2020 will be carried out at three different levels, where economic and social partners will represent 40%, and the remaining 60% will include central and local public authorities.

The civil society institutions and NGOs as well as experts and research institutes were also involved in the consultation process, in Hungary, interestingly, even the church was involved.

Looking at multi-level governance, there has generally been a strong involvement of the regional level with three quarters of the countries specifically mentioning the involvement of regional authorities. In many countries, there have been concerted efforts to involve the regions in the planning and in the implementation with significant devolution of responsibilities and budget of the National OPs to the Regional ones (e.g. in Austria and Greece). In some countries (e.g. Hungary), regional events were organised to discuss the PA. In order to encourage the participation in working groups of more remote regions, the Slovak government provided support for travel costs.

Not all Member States carried out public consultations on the PA itself. In Denmark and Finland for example, public consultations were held on each OP but not on the PA. In the United Kingdom, there was no public consultation on the PA for the whole country but Scotland and Wales held public consultations for their parts of the PA. In Hungary and Ireland, public consultations were held on both the OPs and the PA. This was also the case in Scotland, where a consultation process was applied undertaken on the PA, in conjunction with the consultations for each OP as well as through road shows and information on official websites. In Wales, a full public consultation - ‘Wales and the EU: Partnership for Jobs and Growth’ and “Rural Development Plan 2014 – 2020: Next Steps” - was launched in January 2013 to seek views from partners on the Welsh Governments proposals for Structural Funds and the RDP.

¹¹ Following a Metis observation during the ex-ante evaluation process in Germany and Austria 2013.

In an additional effort towards transparency, many countries (including Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and the United Kingdom) have uploaded the PA on a government website.

2.1.4 OP architecture 2014-2020

Member States were free to establish either mono-fund or multi-fund operational programmes by combining ERDF, ESF and CF. All Member States have mono-fund OPs. 20 Member States used the option for multi-fund OPs. The three Baltic States (Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia) and Slovenia have the same programme architecture and each has a multi-fund OP with all three funds, the ERDF, the ESF and the CF as well as two mono-fund OPs for the EAFRD and the EMFF. The most frequent combination was ESF and ERDF. Eight Member States (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom) decided not to use any multi-fund OPs. This is due to the sectoral approach in some Member States with different Ministries being responsible for different ESIFs. Even in Member States that apply a very coordinated approach in implementing the PA such as Austria, the logic of mono-fund Operational Programmes has prevailed.

2.2 Alignment with the EU2020 Strategy and Treaty Based Objectives

2.2.1 Thematic concentration

As explained earlier, the CPR foresees a thematic concentration for each ESI Fund to support 11 Thematic Objectives in accordance with its mission in order to contribute to the Union strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth¹².

The Regulations foresee different levels of thematic concentration on the first four Thematic Objectives for ERDF and between Thematic Objectives 8, 9 and 10 for the ESF (see Table 1).

For the ESF, the 2014-2020 programming period foresees that: 'at least 20% of the total ESF resources in each Member State shall be allocated to the Thematic Objective "promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination"' (Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013 Article 4.2). The difference lies in the obligatory financial allocation, which gives the thematic concentration a much higher enforcement.

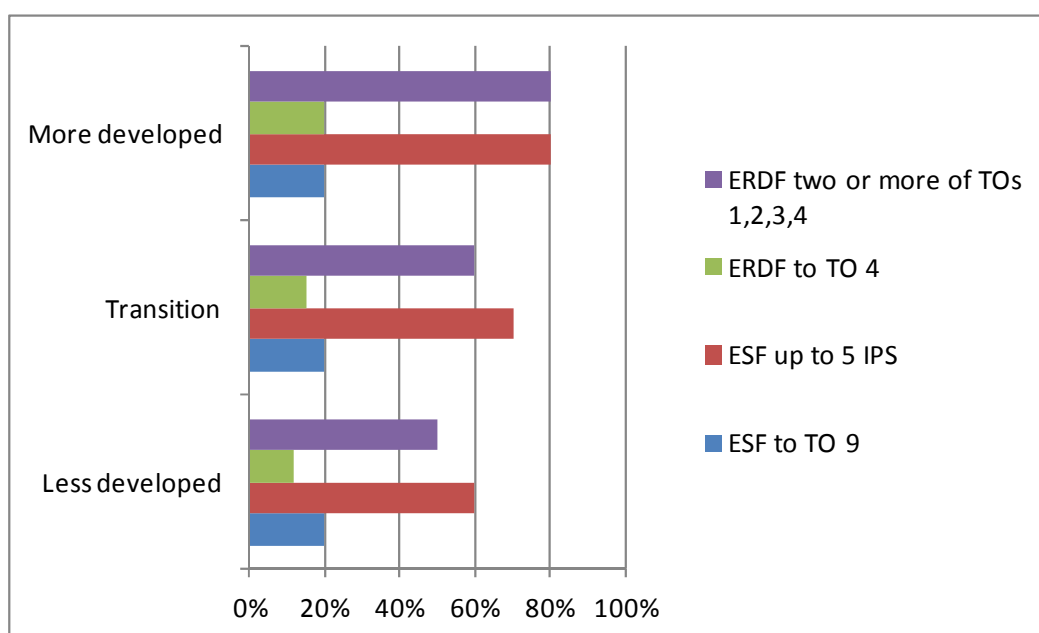
Table 1: Thematic concentration in ERDF and ESF

SF	More developed	Transition	Less developed
ERDF ¹³	80% of the financial allocation to two or more of TOs 1,2,3,4	60% of the financial allocation to two or more of TOs 1,2,3,4	50% of the financial allocation to two or more of TOs 1,2,3,4
	20% to TO 4	15% to TO 4	12% to TO 4
ESF ¹⁴	80% up to 5 IPs	70% up to 5 IPs	60% up to 5 IPs
	20% to TO 9	20% to TO 9	20% to TO 9

¹² European Union (2013), Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013 Article 9 and 18.

¹³ European Union (2013) Regulation (EU) No. 1301/2013, Article 4.

¹⁴ European Union (2013) Regulation (EU) No. 1304/2013 Article 4.



Source: Regulation (EU) No 1301/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Regional Development Fund and on specific provisions concerning the Investment for growth and jobs goal and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1080/2006

Regulation (EU) No 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the European Social Fund and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1081/2006.

Most Member States have chosen to use all the TOs. Only very few Member States concentrate on a limited number of TOs (e.g. Luxemburg, Denmark and the Netherlands). In the Netherlands, for example, most of the budget has been allocated to thematic objectives 9, 1 and 6, while TO 10 will get a minor part, in order to concentrate the small financial envelope on a limited number of objectives. Only TO 11 (Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration) has been used significantly less frequently (only by 18 Member States) and had a total budget allocation of EUR 3.983.392.058 (1% of the total budget allocated to all 11 TOs across the EU). TO 11 has only been used in the Member States eligible for the Cohesion Fund and in France and Italy. TO 2 (Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT) was also used slightly less frequently (in 24 Member States), was also used in more developed Member States (Belgium, Denmark, Germany and Luxemburg) but it has the second lowest overall budget allocation (3.3%). The same countries that have allocated resources to TO 2 plus Austria have not chosen to use TO 7 (Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures). TO 7 however is important for some countries, in particular the Convergence countries, which is also reflected by the fact that 14.8% of the total budget is allocated to this TO. Poland, Slovakia and Romania have planned high investments under this TO.

The TOs with the highest percentage of overall funding are TO 6 (preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency - 15%), TO 7 (14.8%) and TO 3 (enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs - 13.9%).

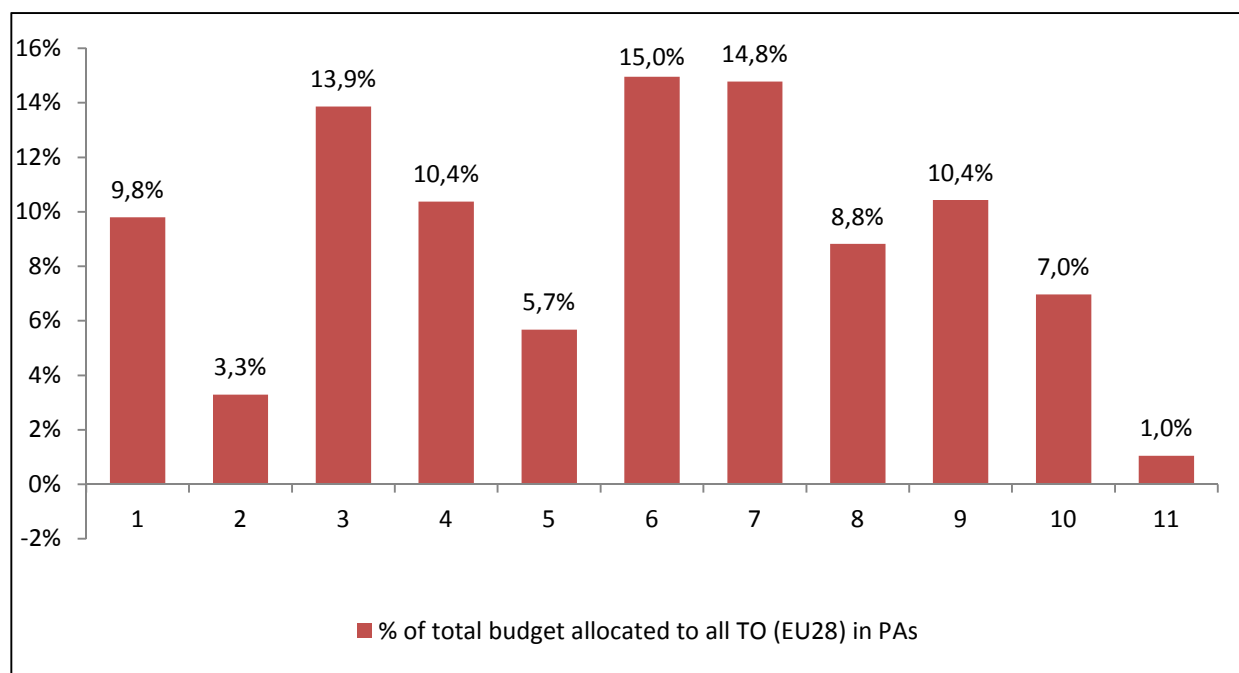
Poland, Romania, France, Spain, United Kingdom, Greece, Hungary and Portugal had the highest absolute investments in TO 6. In fact, Poland has allocated nearly nine million euro and Portugal just over three million euro to TO6. In a number of countries such as Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Finland, Ireland, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom, TO 6 was also the TO with the highest investment in the country. The high concentration in TO 6 in the more developed regions is due to the Member States putting cultural heritage and

environmental issues under this TO. In Croatia, for example, the contribution from the CF is focussed on environmental infrastructure (i.e. TO 6). Combined with TO 7, these two TOs account for 34% of the overall ESIF envelope for Croatia. This allocation reveals the need for a marked catch-up in the field of environmental infrastructure; an issue, that Croatia shares with most of the EU 10+2.

Further findings on the allocations to the TOs:

- TO 3 (Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs) is the objective with the highest budget allocation in Belgium, France, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and Spain and the second highest allocation in Sweden and the United Kingdom. This shows the emphasis given in these countries to supporting business growth.
- TOs 4 (low-carbon economy) and 9 (combating poverty) each represent 10.4% of the overall budget allocation. TO 4 has been given an average budget allocation in most countries with Luxemburg being the only country to prioritise it with the highest budget allocation.
- TO 9 has been given priority in a number of countries, e.g. Germany, where it has the highest budget share across the TOs in the country with EUR 5.025.070.097. In the Netherlands, it is also the TO with the highest allocation with a total of EUR 423.542.343. TO 9 is also given high priority in Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Italy and Slovakia.
- TO 1 (research, technological development and innovation) has been allocated 9.8% of overall funding across the EU and is seen as a priority in Germany, Estonia, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland and Slovenia.
- TO 8 (promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility) has been allocated 8.8% of overall funding and receives a relatively high budget share in Belgium, Cyprus, Hungary, Greece, Spain and Sweden.
- TO 10 (investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning) has been allocated 7% of the overall budget allocation and is not used in the United Kingdom.
- TO 5 (climate change) has been allocated 5.7% of the budget and is not used in Luxemburg.

Table 2: Percentage of total budget allocated to all TO (EU28) in the PAs



Source: Own calculations on the basis of the Partnership Agreements

Looking at the use of ESIF to support the TOs, a number of trends can be distinguished: the ERDF and the EAFRD support a wide range of TOs. The CF is mainly planned to support the TOs 4 to 7, the ESF 8 to 11. TO 11 is mainly to be funded through the ESF. The EMFF supports the TOs 3, 4, 6, 8. Landlocked countries such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia will use the EMFF to support SMEs.

2.2.2 Balance between thematic concentration and meeting the specific needs of the territories

The Regulations stipulate thematic concentration as described in the introductory chapters of this study. At the same time, the OPs are expected to address the Treaty based objectives of the ESIF. The PAs describe – often in great detail – the national challenges drawing on national strategic and programme documents and taking into account the CSR and their translation in the NRP. They describe how the selection of TOs and how the future OPs will contribute to each thematic objective chosen and which results are to be achieved for each of them and how the activities aim to contribute to the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets. The Commission Position Papers are less frequently referred to as a major influence on the process with the CSR being more often cited.

There appear to be no major hurdles to establishing coherence between national needs as defined in national development programmes and the CSR and the requirements of thematic concentration and the Europe 2020 targets. The thematic concentration of the ESIF 2014-2020 is explained based on the observations and analyses in these documents. As stipulated by the CPR (Art. 15), the results of the ex-ante evaluations are also presented and commented and taken into account for this exercise. Wherever possible, the PAs also describe the specific measures to be implemented by the ESIF. These sections of the PAs seem to be thorough and coherent. It also appears to be the case in most countries that the development needs correspond broadly to the objectives of the ESI Funds.

This said, some countries have particular situations on account of economic or territorial specificities. Greece is in a particular position due to the crisis. The Ex-ante Evaluation

testifies coherence with the Europe 2020 Strategy but also points to the consideration of the specific needs of the country and to the decision to address all Thematic Objectives based on the acute needs due to the economic crisis, the Recommendations of the Council, the requirements of the Stability Pact and the Economic Adjustment Programme. It is stated that in the given situation of the country only a “growth approach” based on TO1, 2 and 3 would not be beneficial.

The Greek PA describes the contribution to the “Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality” along three axes:

- the necessary reforms under TO2 and TO11 on public administration and
- TO8, 9 and 10 regarding the Labour Market and Social Inclusion and
- the creation of provisions for the effective Implementation of TO3 (RIS, National Strategy for Higher Education etc.).

Other countries also highlight their specific territorial challenges. In France, the decentralisation resulting from the changes in this period is assessed to have a positive impact on the future bottom-up policy-making in Cohesion Policy. The PA describes the main challenges faced in France and highlights the need for a territorial approach due to the differences witnessed across the country. The territorial approach therefore goes hand in hand with the growing decentralisation. According to the PA, the PA serves as an instrument to create a coherent approach towards reducing the challenges between the European, the national, the regional and the local levels.

The Italian PA also highlights the specific territorial challenges in Italy. It examines the Italian macro-economic context as well as the disparities, development needs and growth potentials at TO level and it analyses the territorial challenges of Italy, making a distinction between inner areas, urban areas, and rural areas.

Some countries describe in detail the coordination between EU and national strategies. In Slovakia, for example, from the regional perspective, the strategic objective of the PA is to ensure the implementation of investment priorities in those areas which have the highest development potential for the given priority. The PA concentrates, in a differentiated manner, the thematic objectives and priority areas of support into individual geographical territorial units stipulated in the national Concept of the Territorial Development of Slovakia (CTDS) planning document. The CTDS takes on board and adjusts, in order to reflect Slovak specificities, the main EU principles of territorial development laid down in the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020. Moreover, the CTDS defines a system of tertiary development centres, settlement core areas and development axes which, based on the principles of a polycentric concept of settlement, creates a compact settlement structure which is organically linked to the settlement systems of the neighbouring countries.

Other countries such as the Netherlands or Luxemburg do not face such territorial diversity. The Netherlands show less regional differences in economic performance, especially compared to other EU countries. Nevertheless, the PA indicates that the specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of every region should get attention in the different programmes. Altogether there is a strong alignment between the thematic concentration, country performance on EU2020 indicators, CSR and development needs for the Netherlands. The same applies to Luxemburg where the size of the country also accounts for the strong alignment between the EU and national strategies.

While the PA is aligned with the Europe 2020 targets in Sweden, this Member State has set ambitious targets for greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency which are not reflected in the ESI Funds financing as the funds are spread relatively evenly amongst the TOs. This is also the case in the United Kingdom, where the PA notes that also significant domestic resources are deployed to reach the targets. The territorial balance is kept through the devolved OPs, which take into account the territorial specificities.

The PAs also take into account EU cross-border or transnational strategies such as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, or the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) or the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian Region (EUSAIR), the EU Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP). ETC programmes in which countries participate are also described.

2.2.3 Impact on programming of the NRP and CSR

The CSR and NRP are taken into account in all the PAs. The NRPs translate the overall EU objectives into national targets and present the Member States' policies and measures to sustain growth and jobs and to reach the Europe 2020 targets.

The CSR are sometimes broader in reach than the priorities of the ESIF. For example, in Sweden, the NRP 2014 recommendations were mainly related to issues not covered by the ESI Funds (fiscal policy, private indebtedness, efficiency in the housing market). Only one CSR recommendation, namely the 'measures to improve labour market participation among young people and vulnerable groups', was directly related to ESF.

The CSR and NRP were generally found to be consistent with the national strategies and the relevant parts were decisive for the choice of TOs and priorities in the OPs.

2.3 Effective and Efficient Implementation

2.3.2 Coordination and synergies between the ESI Funds and with other Union and national funding instruments and with the EIB

Coordination of the ESIF

As mentioned above, in most countries (24), the coordination of the ESIF is in the hands of the sectoral ministries and coordinated through an inter-ministerial committee or it is in the hands of a government body. The everyday coordination of the funds is often supported through the Monitoring Committees (MCs) through cross-representation, i.e. Members of different MCs are present at each others' meetings or responsible for more than one fund (Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, and Latvia). In Luxemburg, a monitoring group by fund has been installed, composed of the representatives of the fund and OP in question, the representatives of the other funds and OPs, as well the European Commission.

In Romania, a coordination mechanism with structures on three levels (strategic committee, thematic inter-institutional, operational), will be set up in order to ensure the coherence of the interventions, complementarities and synergies in the programming and implementation stages. The coordination mechanism will function in parallel with the institutional framework designed for implementation and will bring together experts, operational staff, decision makers from the MAs and IBs, decision makers from other institutions responsible for national policies in Romania and the socio-economic partners.

In the United Kingdom, delivery of the ESI Funds is a devolved responsibility, except for the United Kingdom-wide EMFF programme. The arrangements are described in the table below:

Table 3: Devolved coordination of the ESIF in the United Kingdom

Region	Coordination
England	The ERDF, the ESF and part of the EAFRD will be folded into a single ESI Funds Growth Programme for England, with strategic leadership at local level provided by Local Enterprise Partnerships and partners. Complementarity with Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Cosme, Creative Europe, Life+, Eures and EaSI is discussed. MAs will ensure coordination and alignment.
Scotland	A single programme board oversaw the development of all OPs. All ESI Funds, including the EMFF, will share governance arrangements to ensure that on-going activity and performance is monitored and tracked against the goals set in the Partnership Agreement. Complementarity with Cosme, EaSI, Erasmus+, Life+ and Horizon 2020 is discussed but no details are given.
Wales	There will be one joint Monitoring Committee covering the ESI funds. The Economic Prioritisation Framework, mapping existing investments aligned to opportunities for economic growth enables ESI funds to be focused synergistically on adding value to these investments. Within the MA, there will be specific thematic teams. Complementarity with Horizon 2020 is mentioned but no details are given.
Northern Ireland	The coordinating committee chaired by the Department of Finance and Personnel will be responsible for promoting the strategic coordination and complementarity. Complementarity and coordination with other EU-funded actions is not described.
Gibraltar	The EU Programmes Secretariat will manage all EU funded programmes.

Source: UK Partnership Agreement, Part I, pages 100-104, 191-197, 245-247, 298-302, 337-339, 355-356

Coordination with national instruments

The synergies with national instruments are also outlined in most PAs. In the non-more developed regions, the national funding for specific strategies is significant as the EU-funding makes up a smaller proportion of overall funding. E.g. in the Netherlands, there is a close relationship with national policies (agriculture, national strategy green growth, national environmental policies, top sector policy, programme INkoop Innovatie Urgent, Strategic Energy Technology plan, common fisheries policies, guideline for Maritime strategy, and Delta programme). In Italy, in order to ensure coordination between national or regional programmes and transnational cooperation ones, already in the 2007-13 period, a strategic coordination group had been set up to pursue this aim and it will keep running during the 2014-2020 period. In Portugal, the PA stresses the importance of coordination between ESI Funds and other National and EU Instruments and EIB. It outlines four objectives: Simplification of the Governance Model; result oriented approach, adoption of Common financing rules, and simplification of Beneficiaries' access to funding.

Websites for beneficiaries and applicants have also been created in a number of countries, e.g. Slovenia where a new website will function as a central info point allowing interactive communication and information exchange.

Thematic working groups and networks

A number of countries have installed thematic networks on specific themes or working groups, e.g. for Research and Development, for Urban Initiatives, Environmental Bodies, for Equal Rights Policies, for Social Inclusion, National Rural Network and Spanish Network of Fishing Groups in Spain. In the Netherlands, working groups across funds have been established (discussing topics like ex ante evaluations / monitoring / indicators, financial instruments, Community led Local Development, Communication, Flat rates and Standard unit costs, and synergy between funds / programmes). A working group consisting of representatives of the MA of the four ESI funds has been formed to explore the improvement of the accessibility for applicants with transcending project proposals (going

beyond one fund) by improving the cooperation between back office of each fund. This includes e.g. a common website, appointing contact persons per MA that have sufficient knowledge of the other funds, a yearly meeting of regional networks and funds at national level, involvement of other programmes as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and Life+, and ETC programmes. For 2014-2020 the cross fund working group on communication continues its operation (that was set up in 2007-2013 and expanded its cooperation activities since then). Potential cooperation between funds is carefully investigated according to the PA and it was concluded that this differs per type of funds. The cooperation between ERDF and ESF is most intensive. Also, at regional level investments are made to improve the cooperation between funds (with the help of Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisations RIS3¹⁵). In Sweden, there is a coordination group for the Funds, chaired by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth.

The National Coordination Authority (EAS) under the General Secretariat of Public Investment of the Ministry for Development, Competitiveness, Transport and Networks in Greece also organizes thematic networks. In the initial phase, the following networks are foreseen to be involved:

- Coordination network on Smart Specialisation;
- Coordination network on State Aid and Financial Instruments;
- Coordination network on Evaluation;
- Coordination network on horizontal institutional and administrative issues;
- Coordination network on Information and publicity;
- National Environmental Network (under the Ministry of Environment);
- CLLD, ITI and Urban Development Networks;
- Territorial cooperation Network.

Coordination with other EU Funding Programmes

In addition to coordination between the ESIF, the PAs describe the coordination with other EU funding programmes such as:

- Horizon 2020 (EU Research and Innovation programme ever with nearly EUR 80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020))
- Life and environmental interventions (EU's financial instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects throughout the EU)
- COSME (EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) running from 2014 to 2020 with a planned budget of EUR 2.3 billion)

¹⁵ National/regional research and innovation strategies for smart specialisation (RIS3) are integrated, place-based economic transformation agendas that do five important things.

- They focus policy support and investments on key national/regional priorities, challenges and needs for knowledge-based development, including ICT-related measures;
- They build on each country's/region's strengths, competitive advantages and potential for excellence;
- They support technological as well as practice-based innovation and aim to stimulate private sector investment;
- They get stakeholders fully involved and encourage innovation and experimentation;
- They are evidence-based and include sound monitoring and evaluation systems.

(https://www.researchitaly.it/uploads/4713/RIS3_GUIDE_FINAL.pdf?v=176d16a)

- Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) programme (EU financing instrument to promote a high level of quality and sustainable employment, guaranteeing adequate and decent social protection, combating social exclusion and poverty and improving working conditions. The total budget for 2014-2020 is EUR 919.469.000)
- The new transport infrastructure policy Connecting Europe Facility (CEF) and TEN-T connecting Europe with a budget of EUR 26 billion up to 2020
- European Economic Area (EEA) Financial Instrument in the areas of environment, climate change, renewable energy sources, civil society, human and social development and academic research
- Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) with a budget of over EUR 3.8 billion for the 2014-2020 period)
- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) with a total of EUR 3.137 billion for 2014-2020
- European Globalisation Adjustment Fund (EGF) providing support to people losing their jobs as a result of major structural changes with a maximum annual budget of EUR 150 million for the period 2014-2020
- Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) Pillars 1 and 2
- European Fisheries Policy¹⁶
- Erasmus+ programme to boost skills and employability, as well as modernising Education, Training, and Youth work. The seven year programme 2014-2020 will have a budget of EUR 14.7 billion
- Marie Curie Research Fellowship Programme (MSCA) supporting researchers at all stages of their careers

Coordination with non-EU Funding Programmes

Some countries mention additional specific cooperation agreements with additional non-EU funding instruments such as Latvia with the Norwegian Financial Instrument Programme and the Nordic Council of Ministers Programme „Nordplus“, Latvian - Swiss Cooperation Programme and others, or Croatia with funds from donor countries (non-Member States such as Norway and Switzerland) which might be used as match-funding.

The European Investment Bank (EIB) is only mentioned in the PAs of a small number of countries (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Luxemburg, Poland, Portugal and Romania) and the exact ways of implementation are not described in detail.

¹⁶ In some Member States the EMFF was not yet included in the adopted PA document.

2.3.3 State of play in the fulfilment of the ex ante conditionalities

The CPR stipulates a series of ex ante conditionalities. The ex-ante conditionalities are divided into (a) general ex-ante conditionalities (GExAC) that apply to all ESI Funds:

1. Anti-discrimination
2. Gender
3. Disability
4. Public procurement
5. State aid
6. Environmental legislation relating to Environmental Impact Assessment and Strategic Environmental Assessment
7. Statistical systems and result indicators

and (b) thematic ex-ante conditionalities that are linked to Thematic Objectives and described in Annex XI of the CPR for the ERDF, ESF, and CF and linked to Fund-specific investment priorities¹⁷. Thematic ex-ante conditionalities for the EAFRD and the EMFF are described in their respective Fund-specific regulations.

The deadline for fulfilling the ex ante conditionalities is determined by the Common Provisions Regulation, i.e. by 31 December 2016. Most PAs state that both types of ex ante conditionalities will be fulfilled by the deadline of December 2016. A number of countries (Bulgaria, Estonia and Greece) state this deadline was expected to be respected; Slovakia and Spain even state that they would all be fulfilled by the end of 2014. Only the Czech Republic expresses doubt as the requirements of the Commission seem not to correspond to the institutional arrangements, legislative environment or processes that require interdepartmental coordination in the Czech Republic. Therefore, the fulfilment of selected ex ante conditionalities is awaited in varying time frames. Also for these reasons, some ex ante conditionalities are perceived by the Czech Republic as risky. Romania and Bulgaria also appear to be experiencing delays but do not ultimately see any risks to fulfilment.

General ex ante conditionalities

Table 4 shows the level of fulfilment of the general ex-ante conditionalities for each PA. The majority are already fulfilled. The highest level of fulfilment can be seen in the adjustment of environmental legislation (GExAC 6). The lowest level of fulfilment is in the GExAC statistical system (GExAC 7). This is partly due to the fact that in many Member States the statistical system is developed at OP level during (rather than before) the programming phase. Only those Member States which already had a well-adapted statistical system in the previous programming period considered this ex-ante conditionality as fulfilled before the programming phase¹⁸.

¹⁷ European Union (2013) Regulation (EU) No. 1303/2013, Annex XI.

¹⁸ Draft 1st Interim Report for DG Regio, European Commission: The implementation of the provisions in relation to the ex-ante conditionalities during the programming phase of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds.

Table 4: Level of fulfilment of general ex-ante conditionalities in Member States¹⁹

MS	AT	BE	BG	CY	CZ	DE	DK	EE	ES	FI	FR	EL	HR	HU	IE	IT	LT	LU	LV	MT	NL	PL	PT	RO	SE	SI	SK	UK
1																												
2																												
3																												
4																												
5																												
6																												
7																												

Key:

Fulfilled

Partly fulfilled

Not fulfilled

No information or reference to OP



Source: Metis GmbH 2015, draft 1st Interim Report for DG for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission (not yet approved version of 29.10.2015): The implementation of the provisions in relation to the ex-ante conditionalities during the programming phase of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds.

Thematic ex ante conditionalities

Austria, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and the United Kingdom have fulfilled all the thematic ex ante conditionalities. The other Member States have not fulfilled at least one of the thematic ex ante conditionalities.

Table 5 below provides an overview of the thematic ex-ante conditionalities status in all Member States based on the 28 **Partnership Agreements** which have been screened. 18 Partnership Agreements mark at least one ex-ante conditionality as not fulfilled however only nine Member States show a share of more than 50% of partly or non-fulfilled ex-ante conditionalities, namely Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Malta, Romania and Slovakia.

Austria, Denmark, and Ireland mark all applicable ex-ante conditionalities as 'fulfilled'.

The PAs reported a total of 549 ex-ante conditionalities considered as applicable, of which 47% have been fulfilled, 26% partly fulfilled and 18% not fulfilled. No information has been provided for 9%.

¹⁹ For BE and UK, the assessment of ExAC fulfilment is done at OP level (not in the PA).

Table 5: Fulfilment of thematic ex-ante conditionalities information based on Partnership Agreements²⁰

MS	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	6.1	6.2	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6	9.1	9.2	9.3	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.4	11.1
AT																													
BE																													
BG																													
CY																													
CZ																													
DE																													
DK																													
EE																													
ES																													
FI																													
FR																													
EL																													
HR																													
HU																													
IE																													
IT																													
LT																													
LU																													
LV																													
MT																													
NL																													
PL																													
PT																													
RO																													
SE																													

²⁰ For BE and UK, the assessment of ExAC fulfilment is done at OP level (not in the PA).

MS	1.1	1.2	2.1	2.2	3.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	5.1	6.1	6.2	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6	9.1	9.2	9.3	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.4	11.1
SI																													
SK																													
UK																													

Key:

Fulfilled

Partly fulfilled

Not fulfilled

No information or reference to OP

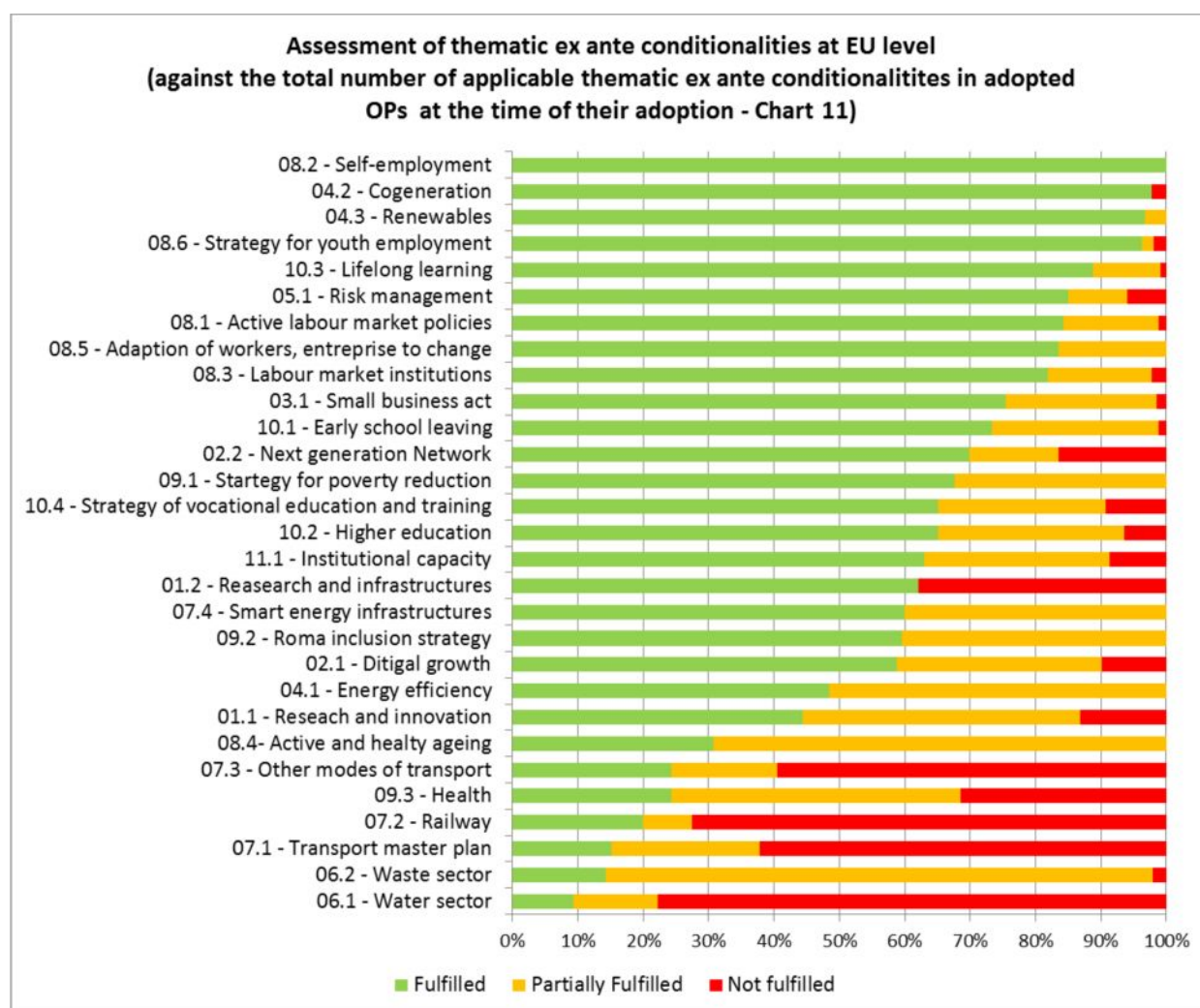
Not applicable



Source: Metis GmbH 2015, draft 1st Interim Report for DG for Regional and Urban Policy, European Commission (not yet approved version of 29.10.2015): The implementation of the provisions in relation to the ex-ante conditionalities during the programming phase of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds.

A Commission non-paper on the Effectiveness and Added Value of Cohesion Policy states that “evaluations and the European Court of Auditors reports had already identified some weaknesses (see chart 11 below), for instance: lack of transport master plans, inappropriate water pricing policy, poor ex ante analysis and forecast of future needs in the design of new water supply infrastructures, inappropriate waste management and prevention programmes, lack of strategy for health, lack of smart specialisation strategies, insufficient measures to ensure energy efficiency (especially in buildings)”²¹.

Figure 1: Assessment of thematic ex ante conditionalities at EU level



Source: European Commission (2015). Effectiveness and Added Value of Cohesion Policy. Non-paper assessing the implementation of the reform in the programming for cohesion policy 2014-2020. Brussels

2.3.4 State of play of e-cohesion measures

Most countries developed functioning IT systems in the previous period. These are being further developed and adapted in the current period to improve interoperability between the systems catering for the different ESI funds and in order to be fully compatible with SFC²². In a number of countries an assessment was carried out of what is still needed and a plan developed. The technical details and what the systems can do are generally described

²¹ Effectiveness and Added Value of Cohesion Policy - Non-paper assessing the implementation of the reform in the programming for cohesion policy 2014-2020

²² SFC2007 is a system for electronic exchange of data concerning shared Fund management between Member States and the European Commission for the period 2007-2013 and 2014-2020

in the PAs. In the Netherlands, the PA does not provide an elaborated assessment of the existing stage of development and clear commitments as regards the steps needed to fulfil the legal requirement to establish systems for electronic exchange with beneficiaries – not only vis-à-vis the Commission, but also with respect to partners and beneficiaries. No concrete plan is provided how to meet the 2016 deadline. In Italy, there is also no specific mention of e-cohesion and no table of deadlines included in the PA. However, the system has been streamlined and simplified compared to 2007-2013 programming period and is able to fulfil the requirements of art. 115 (1 and 2) of the CPR. While tables of deadlines are not included in a number of countries the examination of the PAs shows various approaches as regards deadlines (see chapter 3 and Annex 2).

In France, the existing system has been overhauled and replaced with a system called SYNERGIE, which responds to the expectations of the new regulations as well as the needs of the users. It enables the management of the ERDF and ESF as well as collecting all data needed at PA level. The old platform (PRESAGE) will be used until the final closure of the 2007-2013 OPs and all new data uploaded into the system will be transferred into SYNERGIE. The new features of this new system are described in the relevant section of the PA.

In the United Kingdom, each nation has its own system and its own timetable but all IT systems should be in place by the end of 2015. In Wales, no timetable is given but a robust IT system exists but it is enhanced to reflect the new legislative framework and to support new business processes. In Belgium also, the IT systems of the four regions are different but functioning. These are described in the PA.

In Latvia, the registration and monitoring of projects funded by ESI funds in the 2007-2013 programming period of ESI funds had also been executed using a decentralized IT system module. One of the shortcomings of the decentralized IT system was the non-availability of detailed information in one place for all institutions involved in the management of ESI funds. In the 2014-2020 programming period, one central IT system will be used for registration and monitoring of projects which will be available for all institutions involved in ESI fund management, as well as project applicants/beneficiaries.

2.4 Integrated Approaches

2.4.1 Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links to macro-regional strategies

The Regulations state in Articles 32-35 CPR, Article 9 ETC, the recital 19 as well as the Article 2 EAFRD, Article 3 ESF, Articles 18, 58, 60-64 EMFF and Article 5 ERDF regulations that the PAs should include an outline of the approach to community-led local development (CLLD).

- Outline of the approach to community-led local development (CLLD), including:
- the main challenges that the Member State intends to tackle with the help of the CLLD approach;
- the main objectives and priorities for CLLD in the Member State (including the general objectives that the Member States aims to achieve with CLLD, but also outlining the thematic focus and target groups where such a focus and target groups have been determined. Member States should outline in the Partnership Agreement towards which thematic objectives CLLD will contribute);

- the types of territories (not a list of territories) where CLLD is envisaged to be implemented. A general indication of types of areas is sufficient e.g. urban, rural, cross-border, areas with specific characteristics in terms of population density or settlement pattern, areas with strong fisheries dimension. The types of territories chosen should reflect the strategic choices of the Member States regarding the role, the objectives and the potential thematic focus of CLLD. An example could be if the Member State wishes to address urban-rural linkages through use of CLLD by several Funds. If the Member State wishes to implement CLLD in the entire territory of the Member State this should also be indicated;
- where relevant, a proposal for a derogation for population limits for the areas to be covered by CLLD (in line with Article 32 (6) CPR);
- identification of the ESI Funds that shall be used for CLLD, an approximate planned budget allocation for each Fund, the role of each ESI Fund in different types of territories (particular attention should be paid to areas where multiple ESI Funds could intervene), taking into account that CLLD is obligatory under the EAFRD (Leader);
- whether the Member State will support local development strategies financed from multiple ESI Funds and if not, how the integrated approach will be achieved at the local level;
- coordination of and administrative set-up for CLLD, and the specific role the local action groups (LAGs) will be attributed in its delivery;
- where appropriate, whether the Member State will apply the possibility to designate a lead Fund in the context of integrated multi-fund local development strategies.
- arrangements for preparatory support, (including possible arrangements between Funds to offer a coherent scheme and types of activities foreseen).
- In the case of highly regionalised or federal Member States this will require generalization to the national level. The description should indicate in which regions the CLLD approach will be used and set out main elements pertaining to the points outlined above.
- This section may also contain the elements of operational programmes for the ERDF, the ESF and the Cohesion Fund set out in Article 96 (3) (a) of the CPR.
- NB: In accordance with Article 16 (2) of the CPR, the Commission decision approving the Partnership Agreement shall cover this section on CLLD, where the Member State uses the flexibility set out in Article 96 (8) of the CPR to include information on CLLD in cohesion policy solely in the Partnership Agreement.

Source: Draft Template and Guidelines on the content of the Partnership Agreement, pp 25 ff (http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/pa_guidelines.pdf)

The use of ITIs and CLLDs is described in all the PAs. CLLDs are used in all countries (28), ITIs in most but not all (20). Most countries address the urban dimension (22), most frequently under ITIs.

A large proportion of countries have chosen to use CLLD as a way of continuing the LAGs under the EAFRD (Austria, Belgium (Walloon), Germany, Malta, the Netherlands) or ERDF

(the Czech Republic). Others foresee a combination of ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF (Cyprus), EAFRD and ESF (Germany (Sachsen-Anhalt)) or EAFRD and EMFF (Denmark) or EAFRD, ERDF and ESF (Spain) in an integrated CLLD approach. In Sweden, the CLLD will be funded by all four funds: EAFRD, ERDF, ESF, EMFF. Other Member States use a mono-fund CLLD-approach (i.e. one local development strategy for one fund), e.g. the EMFF for Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) and the EAFRD for LAGs (e.g. Croatia, Ireland, Latvia and Poland). Croatia does not use the ERDF or ESF for CLLD. In Hungary and Romania, the CLLD will be financed by EAFRD in the countryside and ESF & ERDF in the cities. In Spain, CLLD involving Local Action Groups have the option of taking a multi-fund approach, a single fund approach or to combine both. In Italy a multi-fund approach is preferred. The same goes for Lithuania. In Finland, there will be urban CLLD initiatives in areas not covered by Leader or fisheries groups (towns/cities over 15 000 inhabitants). The Netherlands are also considering using CLLD for the four largest cities in order to mobilise local partners for the development of specific local solutions. In the development of the ERDF programme West Netherlands (such as in The Hague), the use of CLLD is being explored with stakeholders.

ITIs are territorial delivery mechanisms that enable the implementation of a territorial strategy in an integrated manner while drawing funds from at least two different priority axes in the same or different programmes. According to the PAs, ITIs are often used exclusively for the urban dimension (e.g. in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Croatia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovenia) and mainly funded through the ERDF, although some countries also use them for rural or mixed areas (e.g. France, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom). Bulgaria, with reference to the National Spatial Development Concept for 2013 - 2025 intends to provide considerable support from ESIF for integrated actions for sustainable urban development in the 2014-2020 period in order to tackle the economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges in urban areas. The proposed approach for support to cities generating growth and jobs pursuant to article 7 of the CPR, situated on the territory of the country in a balanced manner, is aimed at minimizing the negative impact of migration.

Most countries are involved in macro-regional strategies (MRS) and sea basin strategies with the EUSDR and the EUSBSR being the most prominent. Austria is very much involved in the EUSDR Programme along with Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Romania. Although the single actions of the EUSDR do not all overlap with the measures in the ESIF OPs, the priorities of the EUSDR do match the TOs chosen for 2014-2020 which is why synergies were already created by taking the EUSDR into account when preparing the OPs. The national authorities responsible for coordinating the MRS in Austria (in addition the EUSDR, the Alpine Space may gain in relevance) will be in regular contact with the ESIF OP authorities to ensure consistency and synergies. In Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, the complementary character of the EU territorial development programmes to national programmes are described in the PA, with emphasis on the specifics of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. For the period 2014 - 2020 Bulgaria will continue to be involved in achieving the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for "Blue growth". Croatia is particularly interested in the EUSDR Priority Area 1A "Improve mobility and intermodality of inland waterways" coordinated by Austria and Romania. The Hungarian PA mentions the EUSDR. In Slovenia, details are provided in the PA and the strategic orientation related to the EUSDR are concentrated on TO 3, 5, 6 and 7. The Slovak PA mentions the contribution of the EUSDR to the implementation of activities in the area of environmental protection, protection of the natural and cultural heritage, sustainable transport, enhanced institutional cooperation and

a more effective cooperation in the area of education, R&D, as well as support for cross-border cooperation between entrepreneurs. The ETC programme for the Danube Region will geographically focus on the same countries as the EUSDR; Slovakia will play an active role in ensuring sustainable development of the region. This ETC will perform the function of a supplementary source of funding for the Danube Strategy, in particular to ensure better identification, networking and coordination of joint measures and activities.

The EUSBSR has a similarly important place in the PAs in the countries involved (i.e. Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland). E.g. in Estonia, the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region is an important source for coordination and cooperation. It is well defined and linked to the ESI Funds. There are several concrete actions described which will be supported by the ESI Funds to contribute to reaching the objectives of the EUSBSR.

Further MRS mentioned in the PAs are the upcoming European Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR) and the EU Strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP).

The sea basin strategies are equally important in this respect. These seek to provide a more coherent approach among countries with shared seas and to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy with 'blue growth'. Blue Growth is the long term strategy to support sustainable growth in the marine and maritime sectors as a whole. The Spanish PA details the specific Strategy for intervention in Maritime areas an articulation with the Atlantic Strategy adopted in 2011 by the Commission²³. A "Blue ITI" will be implemented in Spain, providing in a single instrument the ESI Funds contributions and the Atlantic Strategy. The PA explains that Blue ITI will apply to all Spanish coastal Atlantic Regions (Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, Basque Country, Canary Islands and Andalucía) and describes its thematic priorities and Funding sources (ERDF, ERDF for Territorial Cooperation, ESF, EMFF). This Strategy will be managed in Spain by the General Directorate for Community Funds in the role of Management Authority for Atlantic Space OP.

2.4.2 Specific geographical areas or target groups

In Germany, Denmark, Ireland, and the Netherlands this section of the PA is not completed. In Luxemburg this section is also not completed since due to its small geographic size, a differentiated territorial approach is superfluous. Most countries, however, describe which geographical areas will be accorded specific attention. In Belgium, for example, there is a table at the onset of the chapter showing all areas in difficulties and describing what those difficulties are (e.g. unemployment, youth unemployment, immigration), which geographic areas they concern, which fund and OP will target these areas and which actions are planned under the specific OP in question. The intervention of the ERDF and the ESF is very balanced between both funds. This is then described in more detail for each Region. In France also, the PA describes the approaches to be taken for each type of territorial area and challenges faced. The ERDF will play the major role for each of the instruments and measures foreseen (whether urban development, ITIs, etc) but the ESF is also integrated within these measures according to the PA. The EAFRD is integrated in some instances while the EMFF is not integrated at all. In addition, the PA describes the coordination of the funds' contribution to territorial development with national and regional policies in place.

²³ Developing a Maritime Strategy for the Atlantic Ocean Area, COM(2011)782 of 21.11.2011

Some countries highlight their unique geographical features such as the sparsely populated areas of Northern and Eastern Finland which need an integrated approach in using ESI Funds and have two multi-fund OPs. The ERDF will focus on removing obstacles for SME growth related to traffic and accessibility, as well as activating new businesses and developing businesses with growth potential. EAFRD funding is being used to develop the inadequate broadband connections, which have an effect on the development and operation of businesses. The provision of services in remote rural areas must be ensured, for instance, through renewing service structures and models with the support of Leader funding. ESF funding is necessary to support active employment policy and improve working conditions. Also in Sweden, an integrated approach will be taken to develop two sparsely populated regions in the north of the country, Upper Norrland and Middle Norrland. It is vital for the development of the regions that work commutes and the access to wider markets are facilitated, which points to the need for investments into important transport routes and broadband access. Targeted business support is also planned in view of achieving these goals. The way in which the integrated approach will be put into practice is not explained in detail. However, it becomes clear that Sweden plans to use TO 7 (promoting sustainable transport, ERDF funding only) only in these two regions.

The only region of the United Kingdom that falls within scope of the EU definition of severe and permanent demographic handicap is the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. These integrated measures will include business infrastructure support and community sustainability measures.

In the Maltese PA, the specific focus lies on the island of Gozo. Under the 2014-2020 programming, Gozo's territorial challenges will be addressed through strategic investments across all of the ESI funds targeting, namely in road and transport infrastructure (in line with the TEN-T guidelines and the priorities identified under the CEF facility). Furthermore, the ESI Funds are envisaged to contribute towards maximising the competitive edge of the island through investment in the environment particularly in the natural and cultural heritage. The objective of these investments is to address Gozo's permanent natural handicaps in particular its double insularity, peripherality and economic dependence on mainland Malta.

In some countries, e.g. Cyprus and Slovenia, the description is much less detailed. In Cyprus, the PA includes a brief reference stating that specific geographical areas in the Cypriot context are mainly the rural and mountain regions, which are characterised by specific demographic drawbacks and development disparities. Such regions are addressed through CLLD and there is no further specific approach described. Estonia distinguishes between the approaches in the urban and rural areas, where efforts focus on evening out the development differences and backwardness of other county centres compared to the urban areas of Tallinn and Tartu. In Slovenia, the gap between the two cohesion regions of Zahodna Slovenija and Vzhodna Slovenija is described. However, integrated approaches are not developed in more detail.

A number of countries (Croatia, Greece, Bulgaria, Latvia, Malta, Slovakia and the United Kingdom) outline their territorial approach to addressing poverty. Croatia carries out so-called poverty mapping in order to precisely define geographical areas most affected by poverty and degradation. The highest geographical concentration of poverty factors (measured by national statistics at the county and local level) influencing the share of people at risk of poverty can be found predominantly in rural areas in the east, centre and the south of the country alongside the Croatian borderline to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia as the areas affected the most by the recent destructive Homeland war (designated

also as the areas of special state concern). Based on the poverty mapping, integrated packages will be proposed.

The Greek PA describes the integrated approach for geographical areas affected by poverty. Their main characteristics are:

- Particularly high unemployment and low employment rates;
- Above average aging population;
- Sparse population (less than 100 people per square kilometre and a population of less than 50,000 inhabitants) and distance from urban centres;
- Persistent poverty;
- Isolation (islands or mainland), which, in combination with one or more of the above aggravates their position.

A methodology is proposed in the PA for the delineation of the areas. Further vulnerable groups have been identified (inactive persons, long term unemployed, homeless, working poor, immigrants, persons with disabilities, people with specific cultural traits, ex-convicts, single parents, low qualified people, sick people etc.).

Bulgaria will implement an integrated approach to support the people at greatest risk of social exclusion. Analysis of the differences highlighted as being at risk of discrimination and/or exclusion the following groups:

- people living in poverty and material deprivation;
- economically inactive and long term unemployed;
- children and youth, including institutionalized children;
- people with disabilities, including placed in specialized institutions;
- elderly people who cannot rely on the support of relatives and friends;
- representatives of vulnerable ethnic communities such as the Roma people.

In Latvia, major differences in demographic and development indicators can be observed in different parts of the country. Rural areas and the eastern part of Latvia (Latgale region) have experienced greatest depopulation and have the highest level of poverty and residents are at greatest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, especially in the risk groups.

Malta is aiming to develop an anti-poverty strategy using the ESF as well as the ERDF for implementing measures under this strategy. The aim is to invest in health, social and education infrastructure, as well as support physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities and from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). The ERDF supported actions are:

- to develop bottom up approaches to community regeneration in which the communities take responsible for the renovation and maintenance of the housing infrastructure,
- to encourage community based approaches in the provision of health and social facilities,
- to provide adequate facilities and resources to the most vulnerable groups
- to support measures to promote a healthy lifestyle.

ESF supported actions are:

- to empower the different target groups to prevent dependency and support - as much as possible - independent living,
- to stimulate parenting competencies development to foster the stability of the families,
- to develop capacity building for NGOs in order to build a network of quality service providers responding to specific needs and locations,
- to provide quality services according to the specific needs of individuals and communities,
- to stimulate interaction between generations (children, youth and elderly) as a factor of stabilisation of the families,
- to support individuals in creating their own sources of income within the development of the communities,
- to offer holistic and integrated assistance (profiling, self-assessment and individual action plans) to families based on cooperation between all relevant actors.

In Slovakia, an integrated approach to address the specific needs of geographical areas the most affected by poverty or target groups most at risk of discrimination or social exclusion will be implemented for the target group of marginalised Roma communities (MRC). An integrated approach to the inclusion of MRC will be achieved with the investment support of four measures (education, employment, housing and healthcare). The aim of parallel interventions of the EU Funds is to achieve greater integration of separated and segregated Roma communities in society, and also in relation to the priorities of the Strategy for the integration of Roma until 2020.

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will tackle poverty and social exclusion through integrated measures. Several target groups have been identified (e.g. long-term unemployed, young people not in education, employment or training, people with disabilities), and alleviating ESF/ERDF actions have been described in each national chapter.

3 THE 28 PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS AT A GLANCE

KEY FINDINGS

- All Member States prepared Partnership Agreements detailing how they intended to use the ESI Funds in the coming period (2014-2020) based on the selection of Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities. The Member States used the ESI Funds and the Thematic Objectives in a comprehensive manner. All 28 Member States used the ESF, the ERDF and the EAFRD. Only Luxembourg did not use the EMFF. The Cohesion Fund was used by all 15 Member States that are eligible.
- For the EMFF it appears that in some Member States there was no specific information included in the PA document adopted by the European Commission.
- The PAs are divided into two parts, one part subject to a Commission decision with a socio-economic and territorial analysis, description of Thematic Objectives, and ex-ante evaluation, horizontal and transversal principles and Objectives for implementation; and one not subject to a Commission decision on the measures for the implementation of the partnership principle. Most countries respected this division and detailed the relevant contents in the two parts.
- The horizontal principle of partnership is taken on board by all countries with the active participation of all layers of government (central, regional and local) and all stakeholders across the board (ministries, economic and social partners, civil society and research institutes and universities) both in the preparation of the PAs and in the future execution (planned).
- These horizontal partnerships tend to be well described and lists of partners are provided. Public consultation in some form was carried out in all Member States with some focusing on the PAs and others on the Operational Programmes.
- Member States were free to establish either mono-fund or multi-fund operational programmes by combining ERDF, ESF and CF. All Member States have mono-fund OPs. 20 used the option for multi-fund OPs.

In the following the study presents summaries of the Partnership Agreements in each EU Member State in alphabetic order. These summaries focus on the strategic choices regarding the thematic objectives, the programme architecture in the countries and the channel of coordination as well as the coordination and e-cohesion tools used for preparing the PA.

Furthermore, it is highlighted what TOs have been chosen for which ESI Fund, if there are multi-fund programmes, how many OPs are in the MS and how the distribution between regional and national programmes was defined. The country fiches include two figures and tables for the coordination section. The templates are shown and explained in the tables below.

The first example shows the 11 thematic objectives and strategic choices made by a Member State in terms of contribution of ESI Funds to the selected TOs.

Table 6: Template - Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Source: Metis GmbH (applies for all figures ‘Overview of strategic choices’ in chapter 3)

The second example below illustrates the programme architecture of the specific country. It shows the type of fund, a distinction between national and regional programmes (green or blue), the number of programmes for each fund and if there are multi-fund programmes.

Table 7: Template - Overview of programme architecture

type of fund	national or regional programme	
	National	Regional
ERDF	1	
ESF		1
CF		1
EAFRD		1
EMFF	1	

Source: Metis GmbH (applies for all figures ‘Overview of programme architecture’ in chapter 3)

For the coordination section the first table shows the channel of coordination of the PA and the second table below shows the coordination and e-cohesion tools used for preparing the PA. They list all the existing channels in the examined documents to show the range of possibilities used across the EU. However, only the bold options apply to this particular country, whereas the light grey options have not been chosen in the process of coordinating the PA.

Table 8: Template - Overview of PA coordination

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

Source: Metis GmbH (applies for all figures 'Overview of PA coordination' in chapter 3)

Table 9: Template - Overview of coordination tools and e-cohesion

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

Source: Metis GmbH (applies for all figures 'Overview of coordination tools and e-cohesion' in chapter 3)

These summaries in chapter three are short versions considering the limited space in the study. There are very comprehensive and detailed tables for each Member State presented in Annex 2 of this paper covering all key features that were taken into account in the analysis.

3.1 Austria

The PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of thematic objectives Austria will be focusing on during the 2014-2020 programming period. In fact, the TOs selected in Austria are TO 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10. These are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, EAFRD and the EMFF. It can be assumed that the ERDF and ESF contributions amount to about percent and 8 percent of the total funding foreseen for those policy areas in Austria. The selection of the TOs and the Investment Priorities has been based mainly on the 2013 country-specific recommendations of the Council, the national reform plans of 2010-2013 and the measures included in those documents.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by four operational programmes, one for each fund. As compared to 2007-2013, a reduction from nine to one ERDF programme, and from two to one ESF programme, has been achieved. The EAFRD and the EMFF contributions will be delivered by one national programme as before. Following the reduction of the number of ERDF programmes, which takes place in the framework of the Austrian ERDF Reform Agenda, the number of managing authorities will diminish by eight, as there will be no regional programmes (one for each Bundesland) any more.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	National	National	National
ERDF	1			
ESF		1		
CF				
EAFRD			1	
EMFF				1

Coordination

In Austria, the PA was coordinated by regional authorities, civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. Additional channels were public consultations and information on the website.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table below shows that in Austria, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap and there is coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Austria, e-cohesion tools are described, but they are not mentioned in relation to the PA preparatory process.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.2 Belgium

The PA describes the results from the ex-ante evaluations carried out for each fund and programme in each Region. The results are described by Region along with descriptions of the strategies and priorities to be set for each fund, OP and region.

All TOs will be covered except for TO2, TO7 and TO11. The ERDF and the EAFRD cover the largest number of TOs; the ESF covers TOs 8, 9 and 10.

The expected results for each TO covered by the ESI Funds, OPs and by region are then explained in the PA. For the EAFRD however, the analysis cannot follow the same structure (following the TOs selected) and therefore describes the expected results by region.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

There will be three ERDF OPs in 2014-2020 (Walloon Region, Flanders, Brussels-Capital Region), four ESF OPs (Brussels-Capital Region, Walloon region, German-speaking community, Flanders), (two youth funding OPs – Youth Employment Initiative (YEI), one for the Brussels-Capital Region and one for the Walloon region), two EAFRD OPs (PDPOIII and OP for Rural Development) and one national EMFF OP.

Overview of programme architecture

	Regional	Regional	Regional	National
ERDF	3			
ESF		6		
CF				
EAFRD			2	
EMFF				1

Coordination

In Belgium, the PA was coordinated by the Government Office / Federal Chancellery, major Ministries (not named specifically), regional authorities, social partners, the civil society / NGOs, as well as Managing Authorities. Additional channels used were a coordination committee as well as public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Belgium, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap. In Belgium, the e-cohesion tools used during the preparation of the PA were online consultation and coordination as well as IT systems. The PA describes the e-cohesion measures implemented and planned separately for each of the 4 regions.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.3 Bulgaria

The PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of thematic objectives Bulgaria will be focusing on the next programming period. In fact, Bulgaria has selected all 11 TOs and they are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. Respectively, the contributions of these funds are the following: the ERDF (36.4%), the ESF (15.5%), the CF (23.3%), the EAFRD (23.9%) and the EMFF (0.9%). The selection of the TOs and the Investment Priorities has been based mainly on the 2014 country-specific recommendations of the Council toward the National Reform Programme 2014-2020 and the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020 and the measures contained within these documents.

Overview strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by seven operational programmes: two national OPs co-financed by ERDF (Operational programme “Regions in Growth”, Operational programme “Innovations and Competitiveness”); two national OPs co-financed by ERDF and CF (OP Environment, Operational programme “Transport and transport infrastructure”); one national OP co-financed by ESF and ERDF (Operational programme “Science and education for smart growth”); two national OPs co-financed by ESF (OP “Good Governance” OP “Human Resources Development”. Moreover, there is a Rural Development Programme (financed by EAFRD) and a Maritime and Fisheries programme (financed by EMFF).

Overview programme architecture

	National	National	National	National	National	National
ERDF	2	2		1		
ESF			2	1		
CF		2				
EAFRD					1	
EMFF						1

Coordination

In Bulgaria, the PA was coordinated by the government office, major ministries (not named specifically), regional authorities, social partners, civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. Additional channels were public consultations and information on the website.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Bulgaria, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes, coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments, as well as coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support. In Bulgaria three electronic systems are described in the PA as part of e-cohesion tools. E-cohesion, online consultation and coordination were used during preparation of the PA.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.4 Croatia

In 2014-2020 Croatia is allocated EUR 8.61 billion for Cohesion Policy (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund - [excluding the transfer of EUR 456.147.292 to the Connecting Europe Facility]) including EUR 66.2 million for the Youth Employment Initiative and EUR 146.1 million for territorial cooperation. Additional EUR 2 billion will be devoted to development of the agricultural sector and rural areas from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The allocation for European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) amounts to some EUR 252.6 million.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by four operational programmes, so two less compared to the 2007-13 period. One national OP co-financed by ERDF and CF (OP Competitiveness and Cohesion), one national OP co-financed by ESF (OP Efficient Human Resources), one Rural Development Programme (co-financed by EAFRD) and one Fisheries programme (co-financed by EMFF).

Overview of programme architecture

	National	National	National	National
ERDF	1			
ESF		1		
CF	1			
EAFRD			1	
EMFF				1

Coordination

In Croatia, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Regional Development, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, social partners, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. Additional channels were public consultations and information on the website.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Croatia, there has been coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes, coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes, and coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support. In Croatia, no e-cohesion tools were mentioned in the PA in relation to its preparation, but the requirements of the CPR and related implementing acts will be respected; Croatia has established and is in the process of upgrading its electronic systems.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.5 Cyprus

The PA was prepared taking into account the Common Strategic Framework, the National Reform Programme, the Council Recommendations, the “Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality”) and the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The PA identifies five so called “Financing Priorities” which also address the thematic coordination among ESI funds, namely:

1. Support for the Restructuring of the Cypriot Economy and Enhancing Competitiveness addressed by TO1, TO2, TO3, TO7, TO11 (ERDF oriented with EAFRD, EMFF elements on TO3 and ESF on TO11);
2. Upgrading Human Resources, Promoting Employment and Social Cohesion addressed by TO8, TO9, TO10 (ESF oriented with EAFRD elements and EMFF on TO8 and TO9)
3. Protection and Efficient Use of Resources addressed by TO4, TO5, TO6 (ERDF/CF oriented with EAFRD, EMFF elements).

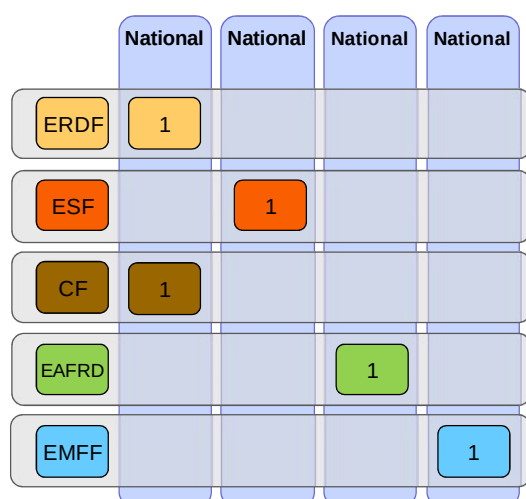
Hence the county has selected all 11 TOs and they are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. Respectively, the contribution of these funds is the following: the ERDF (33.9%), the ESF (15%), the CF (31.2%), the EAFRD (15.3%) and the EMFF (4.6%).

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by two operational programmes, as in 2007-13 period: OP Competitiveness and Sustainable Development co-financed by ERDF and CF, OP Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion co-financed by ESF. Moreover there will be one Rural Development Programme co-financed by the EAFRD and one OP for Maritime and Fisheries supported by the EMFF.

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In Cyprus, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economic Development, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel consisted in public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Cyprus, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Cyprus, no e-cohesion tools were mentioned in relation to the preparation of the PA. Adaptation and upgrading of electronic systems is in progress in Cyprus.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.6 Czech Republic

The Partnership Agreement for the Czech Republic covers all five ESI Funds. The PA outlines the way in which the financial means of these five funds will be used to help the Czech Republic to achieve its smart, sustainable and inclusive growth targets. The chosen thematic objectives fit well to the defined financing priorities at the national level. The ex-ante evaluation confirmed a very good cohesion and coordination of all funds across the different policy areas. Coordination between the ESI Funds, objectives and programmes has been carried out in the Czech Republic as part of the preparation for the various programmes, and will also be assured during their implementation.

The primary objective during the preparation of the programmes was to identify links between the different programmes, including links between the programmes of Objective 1 and Objective 2 in the 2007-2013 programming period, in relation to those links define potential synergies and mutual complementarity of intervention and agree on the manner in which these links will be monitored during the implementation of the programmes. The entire process was coordinated with the preparation of the Partnership Agreement.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be implemented through eight operational programmes: two national operational programmes co-financed by ERDF (Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness; Integrated Regional); two national operational programmes co-financed by ERDF and CF (Transport; Environment); two national operational programmes co-financed by ESF and ERDF (Research, Development and Education; Prague Growth Pole); one national operational programme co-financed by ESF (Employment); one national operational programme co-financed by CF (Technical Assistance). Moreover there is one EAFDR rural development programme and one EMFF fisheries programme.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	National	National	National	National	National	National
ERDF	2	2	2				
ESF			2	1			
CF		2			1		
EAFRD						1	
EMFF							1

Coordination

In the Czech Republic, the PA was coordinated by major ministries (no specific mention in the PA), and a coordination committee. Additional channels were public consultations and information on the website.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in the Czech Republic, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments, and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In the Czech Republic, the e-cohesion tool used and mentioned in relation to the preparation of the PA was a platform set up for coordination. A new unified system is being developed to provide for e-cohesion measures throughout the implementation structure.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.7 Denmark

The Danish PA covers eight thematic objectives. ERDF focuses on TOs 1, 3 and 4. The ESF also focuses on three TOs, namely TO8, 9 and 10. AFRD focuses on six TOs, mainly TO3, 4 and 5. EMFF focus and funding was not included in the PA as the PA was approved before the EMFF total funding and framework was known. The ex ante evaluations of ERDF, ESF and EAFRD judged the OPs to be connected to each other and the main national strategies, consistent with the identified needs and the PA. The ex ante evaluation of EMFF OP was not available at the time of drafting the PA.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

There will be one ERDF OP, one ESF OP, one RDP and one EMFF OP in Denmark. In 2014-2020 Denmark is allocated around EUR 0.21 billion for ERDF and EUR 0.21 billion for ESF. Additional EUR 0.62 billion (50% of the funding) will be devoted to EAFRD operations. The allocation for EMFF amounts to EUR 0.21 billion. The ESI Funds finance eight thematic objectives, out of which "Promoting climate change adaptation" receives 21% of the funding, "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" gets 17%, and "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 11% of the total funding for ERDF, ESF and EAFRD

Overview programme architecture

	National	National	National	National
ERDF	1			
ESF		1		
CF				
EAFRD			1	
EMFF				1

Coordination

In Denmark, the PA was coordinated by major ministries, without any additional channels named in the PA.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Denmark, there has been cooperation between national and regional bodies and coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap. In Denmark, no e-cohesion tools were mentioned in the PA in relation to the strategic planning process, but the PA describes several electronic systems in place and planned actions to adapt them.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.8 Estonia

The Estonia Partnership Agreement for the use of European Structural and Investment Funds for 2014-2020 focuses on the key issues that help to guarantee sustainable economic, social and territorial development, human resources development, contribute to the shift towards a more knowledge-based economy and favourable living environment, including good connection options, clean nature and efficient use of resources. While fostering economic growth and employment, the PA aims to ensure the long-term sustainability of public finances considering the ageing population and diverse natural environment. It covers all 11 thematic objectives.

Overview strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

In the programming period 2014-2020 Estonia has one multi-fund operational programme for ERDF, CF and ESF. This is different to the programming period 2007 - 2013 where for each of the three funds one operational programme existed. The multi-funded operational programme covers the majority of the ESI-Fund budget (81%). Furthermore Estonia has one Rural Development Programme (EAFRD) and one Fisheries programme (EMFF). The three programmes are centrally managed and cover all 11 thematic objectives. The elaboration of the Partnership Agreement was coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with all other ministries and the Government Office.

Overview programme architecture

	National	National	National
ERDF	1		
ESF	1		
CF	1		
EAFRD		1	
EMFF			1

Coordination

In Estonia, the PA was coordinated by the government office, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. No additional channels were used.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table is empty since no coordination or e-cohesion tools were mentioned in relation to the PA preparatory process. (The PA describes the functions of the planned e-cohesion tool and the fact that the functionalities that facilitate electronic data exchange with beneficiaries will be gradually introduced.)

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.9 Finland

The ESI Funds finance nine thematic objectives, out of which "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives 43% of the funding. "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 17%, and "Strengthening research, technological development and innovation" 11% of the total ESI funding.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

There are two multi-fund operational programmes, co-financed by ERDF and ESF (OP Mainland Finland and OP Åland Islands). There are two RDPs (Mainland Finland RDP and Åland Islands RDP) and one Maritime and Fisheries Fund programme. In 2014-2020 Finland is allocated around EUR 0.79 billion for ERDF and EUR 0.51 billion for ESF. Additional EUR 2.38 billion (63% of the funding) will be devoted to EAFRD operations. The allocation for EMFF amounts to EUR 74.4 million.

Overview programme architecture

	Regional	Regional	National
ERDF	2		
ESF	2		
CF			
EAFRD		2	
EMFF			1

Coordination

In Finland, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Social Affairs, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. No additional channels are mentioned in the PA.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Finland, there has been coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Finland, no e-cohesion tools are mentioned in relation to the preparation of the PA, but it is described that there will be fully electronic administrative processes for all ESI Funds.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.10 France

The French PA describes the results from the ex-ante evaluations carried out for each fund and programme in each Region. The results are described by Region along with descriptions of the strategies and priorities to be set for each fund, OP and region. The expected results for each TO covered in the funds, OPs and by region are then explained. For the EAFRD however, the analysis cannot follow the same structure (following the TOs selected) and therefore describes the expected results by region.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

For the programming period 2014-20, EU funds will co-finance a total number of 75 programmes, distributed as follows:

- one national EAFRD framework with 2 national programmes co-financed by EAFRD, and 27 rural development programmes co-financed by EAFRD
- 32 regionalised programmes co-financed by ERDF and ESF,
- two regionalised programmes co-financed by ERDF,
- two regionalised programmes co-financed by ESF,
- five multiregional programmes co-financed by ERDF,
- one national technical assistance programme co-financed by ERDF and ESF,
- one national programme for Employment and Inclusion co-financed by the ESF,
- one national European Youth Employment initiative programme co-finance by the ESF,
- one national programme for the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	Regional	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National
ERDF	1	32	7					
ESF	1	32		2	2			
CF								
EAFRD						3	27	
EMFF								1

Coordination

In France, the PA mentions that it was coordinated by major ministries (not names specifically in the PA), regional authorities, and Managing Authorities. Additional channels were public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in France, there has been coordination between national and regional bodies, coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap and coordination of ESIF support with the national instruments. In France, the PA does not mention any e-cohesion tools in relation to strategic planning, but a new system has been developed for 2014-2020 based on an ex-ante evaluation, which responds to the expectations of the new regulations.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.11 Germany

The preparation of the PA of Germany underwent a similar procedure to that in the programming period 2007-2013 with the exception of the multi-annual programme. The PA covers 4 ESI Funds as Germany is not a beneficiary country under the Cohesion Fund. For the 4 ESI Funds all TOs but TO 2, 7 and 11 are addressed. At the national level and between Member States and with the EC the responsible body for coordination is the Ministry for economic affairs and energy. According to the PA the main element of a positive coordination is the cooperation with the Länder. The ministry will accompany the activities of the Länder based on the legal requirements and overtakes the financial control at the end of the programming period. Different to the last period the partners of the Länder will be involved throughout the whole programming period. For the ESF a special Länder committee has been founded. In the monitoring committees for each fund representatives from the other ESI-Funds are involved in order to exclude double funding. In some Länder there are joint monitoring committees for all ESI-Funds. Coordination is also assured via the regional specific participation process.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

In Germany the implementation of the ESI Funds/programmes under the ESI Funds is by and large performed by the Länder as part of multiannual funding programmes. A total of 48 funding programmes are put in place, focussing on specific regional and sectoral circumstances. For the ERDF and the ESF, there are 15 operational programmes in the Länder and one multi-fund programme – a joint ERDF/ESF programme for Lower Saxony. There is also one national programme under the ESF. When it comes to the EAFRD, there are 14 development programmes for rural areas. The EMFF consists of a single national programme.

Overview of programme architecture

	Regional	Regional	Regional	National	Regional	National
ERDF	15		1			
ESF		15	1	1		
CF						
EAFRD					14	
EMFF						1

Coordination

In Germany, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Social affairs, regional authorities, social partners, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Germany, the PA mentions cooperation between national and regional bodies. In Germany, no e-cohesion tools were mentioned in relation to the preparation of the PA. The existing electronic system will continue to be improved in the programming period 2014-2020. The coordination of e-cohesion has to be seen in the light of a federal system; for taking e-cohesion forward a national wide working groups has been established.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.12 Greece²⁴

The Partnership Agreement should pave the way for Greece's return to recovery and growth, and its transformation into a productive economy. It sets out how EUR 15.52 billion in total Cohesion Policy funding in current prices (2014) and EUR 4.2 billion for rural development to be invested in the country's real economy. Hence the country has selected all 11 TOs and they are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. Respectively, the contributions of these funds are the following: the ERDF (42%), the ESF (19%), the CF (17%), the EAFRD (22%) while the EMFF share is not set yet.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

In the 2014-2020 programming period, there will be seven national sectoral OPs and 13 regional OPs. These are:

- OP “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation” (ERDF/ESF) with EUR 3.6 Billion;
- OP “Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development” (ERDF/CF) with EUR 4.3 Billion;
- OP “Human Resources Development - Education and Lifelong Learning” (ESF) with EUR 1.9 Billion;
- OP “Public Sector Reform” (ERDF/ESF) with EUR 0.4 Billion;
- OP “Technical Assistance” (ERDF/ESF/CF) with EUR 0.3 Billion;
- RDP “Rural Development” (EAFRD) with EUR 4.2 Billion;
- OP “Fisheries and Sea” (EMFF);
- 13 Regional OPs (ERDF/ESF) with budgets ranging from EUR 0.1 to 0.9 Billion.

²⁴ EMFF focus and funding was not included in the PA as the PA was approved before the EMFF total funding and framework was known

Overview of programme architecture

	National	National	National	National	Regional	National	National
ERDF	1	2		1	13		
ESF	1	2	1		13		
CF	1			1			
EAFRD						1	
EMFF							1

Coordination

In Greece, the PA does not mention by which authorities or channels it was coordinated.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Greece, there has been cooperation between national regional bodies, coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments, and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Greece, no e-cohesion tools are mentioned with regard to the preparation of the PA; nevertheless, the roadmap to upgrade the existing electronic system is described in detail in the PA.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.13 Hungary

The Hungarian PA covers all eleven thematic objectives, which are funded by the ESI Funds in a relatively even manner. ERDF funds eight thematic objectives, mainly TO1 and 3. ESF funds go to four thematic objectives, in particular TO8. EAFRD finances eight objectives, especially TO3 and 4. Cohesion Fund financing goes to four thematic objectives, most importantly TO7. EMFF funds three thematic priorities. Out of the thematic objectives, TO4 and 8 receive 14% each of the total ESI financing, TO7 13% and TO3 12%. The contribution of each Fund to each chosen thematic objective is described clearly.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered through seven operational programmes, meaning a simplified programme architecture compared to the 2007-13 period (15 OPs): two national OPs co-financed by ERDF and ESF (Economic Development and Innovation OP, Human Resources Development OP), two national OPs co-financed by ERDF and CF (Integrated Transport OP, Environment and Energy Efficiency OP); one national OP co-financed by ESF and CF (Public Administration and Services OP); two territorial OPs co-financed by ERDF and ESF; one covering all less developed regions and the other the more developed region of Central Hungary Moreover there is one Rural Development Programme (financed by EAFRD) and one Fisheries programme (financed by EMFF).

Overview of programme architecture

	National	Regional	National	National	National	National
ERDF	2	2	2			
ESF	2	2		1		
CF			2	1		
EAFRD					1	
EMFF						1

Coordination

In Hungary, the PA was coordinated by the government office, regional authorities, social partners, and the civil society/ NGOs. Additional channels were public consultations and information on the website.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Hungary, there has been coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Hungary, no e-cohesion tools were mentioned in relation to the PA preparatory process. The existing electronic applications fulfil the legislative requirements and interoperability of systems has been addressed.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.14 Ireland

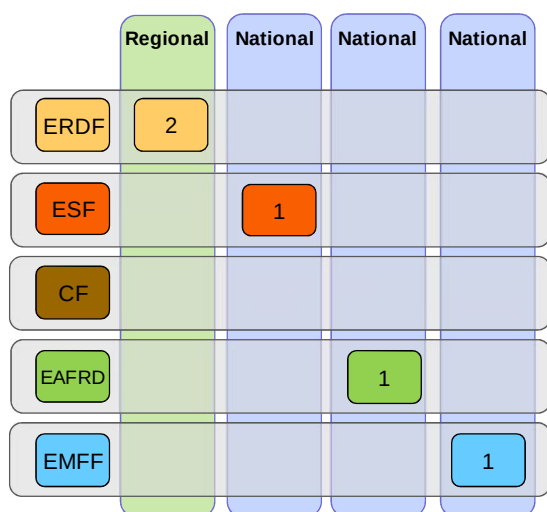
The Irish PA covers ten thematic objectives, which are funded by the four ESI Funds in a concentrated manner. EAFRD funds eight thematic objectives, with two-thirds of funds going to climate change and environment. ERDF funds five thematic objectives, mainly research, low-carbon economy and ICT. ESF funds go to three thematic objectives, and half of the ESF funds go to employment. EMFF funds three thematic priorities. The ex ante evaluation of the EMFF is not included in the PA as it was not finished before adoption of the PA. The coordination of funds is not described in a tangible and comprehensive manner.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

The programme architecture is similar to the 2007-13 period. There is one national ESF OP, which includes a specific allocation of the Youth Employment Initiative and two regional ERDF OPs, namely Border, Midland and Western Regional OP and the Southern and Eastern Regional OP). In addition, there will be one RDP and one EMFF OP. Ireland receives around EUR 1.19 billion for Cohesion Policy (ERDF and ESF) including EUR 68.1 million for the Youth Employment Initiative and EUR 168.9 million for European territorial cooperation. The EAFRD allocation totals EUR 2.19 billion (i.e. 65% of total funding), whereas the allocation for EMFF amounts to some EUR 147.6 million. Out of the ten thematic objectives, "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives the largest share of funding (25%). Environment plays a large role in the Irish PA, since "Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management" receives 21% and "Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors" gets 13% of the total ESI Funds' financing.

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In Ireland, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Finance, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel mentioned consists in public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Irish PA does not describe coordination or e-cohesion tools used for its preparation. The existing system is subject to improvement to fulfil the 2014-20 regulatory requirements.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.15 Italy

The PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of the thematic objectives. In Italy, all 11 TOs are selected and will be implemented through ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF resources. The allocation of resources and selection of the TOs have been based on the recommendation at Community level (done by the conferenza stato regioni²⁵) embedded in the ex-ante evaluation. Distinctions in the allocation have been made according to the type of regions: i.e. more developed, transition, less developed.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by a combination of national and regional mono-fund and multi-fund operational programmes: 11 national programmes co-financed by ERDF and/or ESF: OP "Research and innovation", OP "Active policies for employment", OP "Inclusion", OP "Education", OP Businesses & Competitiveness, OP "Networks & mobility", OP "YEI", OP "Metropolitan cities", OP "Culture", OP "Legality" and OP "Governance".

Regional programmes for the 21 regions and autonomous provinces, mostly separate for the two funds ERDF and ESF, with the exception of the regions Calabria, Molise and Puglia which will each have a multi-fund programme, giving a total of 39 regional programmes. Moreover there will be 23 rural development programmes, co-financed by EAFRD, of which 21 at regional level and two at national level, and one Maritime and Fisheries programme co-financed by EMFF.

²⁵ The Permanent Conference for relations between the state, the regions and the autonomous provinces of Trento and Bolzano operates within the national community to foster cooperation between the activities of the State and the Regions and Autonomous Provinces, constituting the "seat privileged" of political negotiations between the central government and the system of regional autonomy.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	Regional	Regional	Regional	National	Regional	National
ERDF	11	18		3			
ESF	11		18	3			
CF							
EAFRD					2	21	
EMFF							1

Coordination

In Italy, the PA was coordinated by major ministries (not specifically mentioned in the PA), social partners, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel used consisted in public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Italy, there has been cooperation between national and regional bodies, coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes and coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments. In Italy, the e-cohesion tools mentioned are online consultation and coordination and a platform specifically set up for coordination. The electronic system has been simplified compared to 2007-2014 programming period.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.16 Latvia

The Partnership Agreement of Latvia covers five ESI Funds from which Latvia will secure investment financing. All TOs are covered in Latvia. The ERDF covers all TOs except TO8 and 11 and it will be used to support investments in research and innovation, information and communication technologies in order to support development and structural adjustment of economies for purposes of increasing competitiveness of SMEs.

The CF will cover TO 4, 6 and 7 and will be used to promote integration into common market of the EU and to promote application of environmental standards and construction of major transportation infrastructure. The ESF will focus on TOs 8, 9, 10 and 11 and will be used to support improvement of employment prospects, strengthening of social integration, decreasing poverty, promoting education opportunities and lifelong learning and developing active, comprehensive and sustainable social integration.

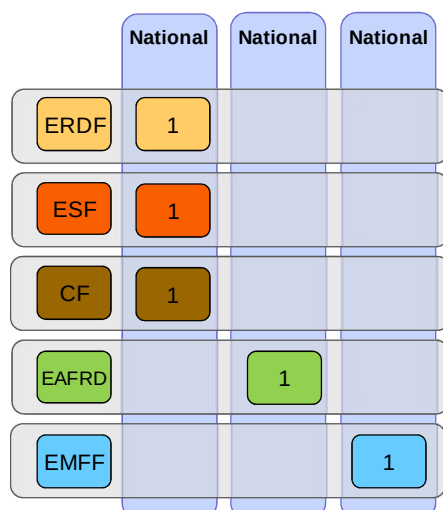
The EAFRD will cover all TOs except 2, 7 and 11 and will be used to promote agricultural competitiveness, to ensure sustainable management of natural resources and actions in the area of climate policy, as well to achieve a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities, including by creating and supporting employment. The EMFF will focus on TOs 3, 4, 6 and 8 will support fisheries that are competitive, economically viable and sustainable from the social and environmental point of view, as well as facilitating balanced and inclusive territorial development of fishery regions.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

In the 2014-2020 programming period investments through five ESI funds will be implemented through three Operational Programmes at the national level. The OP “Growth and employment” will be financed through the ERDF, CF, ESF, YEI. The Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 will be supported by the EAFRD and the Action Programme for the Development of Fisheries in 2014-2020” the EMFF.

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In Latvia, the PA was coordinated by the government office, major ministries including the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel mentioned is public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Latvia, there has been cooperation between national and regional bodies, coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments, and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Latvia, the e-cohesion tools mentioned are online consultation and coordination and a platform specifically set up for coordination. In the 2014-2020 programming period one central IT system will be used for registration and monitoring of projects which will be available to all institutions involved in fund management, as well as to project applicants/beneficiaries.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.17 Lithuania

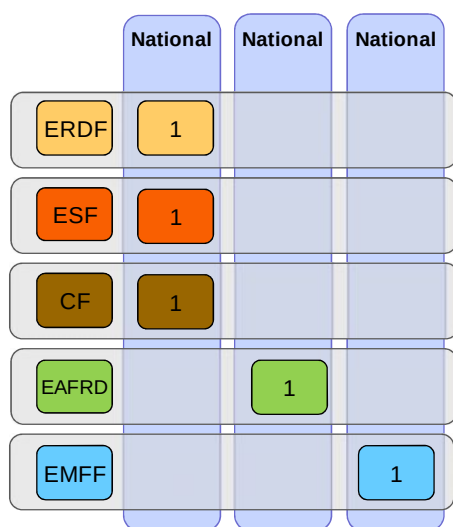
The PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of thematic objectives Lithuania will be focusing on the next programming period. Lithuania selected all 11 TOs and this is well justified in the PA. These TOs are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. These funds are the cornerstone of Lithuania's medium and long-term development strategy. The OP for Lithuania (covering ERDF, ESF and CF) has an allocation of EUR 6.7 billion, the RDP (covering EAFRD) has an allocation of EUR 1.6 billion, EMFF operational programme (covering EMFF) has an allocation of EUR 63 million. These funds will be combined to achieve the following goals: shift to a low carbon economy, upgrading of infrastructure, improved innovativeness and RDI investments, reduction of unemployment, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, improvement of human capital, increase of competitiveness of agri-food sector and sustainable management of resources. The selection of the TOs and the Investment Priorities (IPs) has been based mainly on the experience of the 2007-2013 period, the national and regional strategic documents, the comparison of the main social and economic indicators of the EU and Lithuania, the 2013 country-specific recommendations of the Council.

Overview of strategic choices

	1 RTDI	2 ICT	3 SME	4 CO2	5 CLIMA	6 ENV	7 TRANS	8 EMPL	9 POV	10 LLL	11 GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by one multi-fund operational programme for the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund and the ESF, covering all the thematic objectives under cohesion policy. In addition, there is one rural development programme (financed by the EAFRD) and one fisheries programme (financed by the EMFF).

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In Lithuania, the PA was coordinated by major ministries (not named specifically in the PA), regional authorities, social partners, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel mentioned are public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Lithuania, there has been cooperation between national and regional bodies and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Lithuania, the e-cohesion tools mentioned in the PA are online consultation and coordination and a platform set up specifically for coordination. Improvement of the existing information systems is planned and it will be based on the current system and the best practices acquired in the 2007-2013 programming period.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.18 Luxembourg

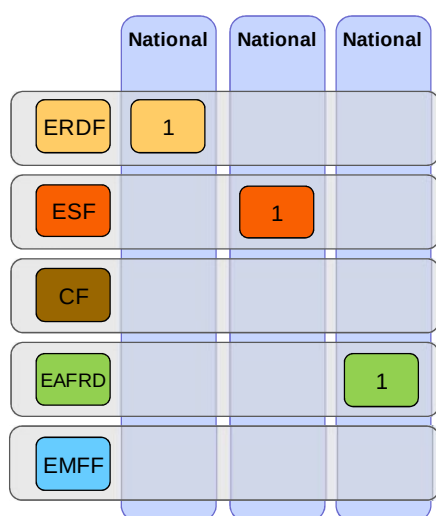
The challenges faced in the different areas (economic, political, societal, climate and energy) are described at the onset of the PA. The choice of the TO is then explained in relation to those challenges as well as the lessons learned from the 2007-2013 period (e.g. focus on research to decrease the disparities between urban and rural areas). In the ERDF, the two most successful projects carried out in 2007-2013 are carried on in 2014-2020 given their positive impact on research and innovation (Priority 1) and energy as well as urban development (Priority 3) but not on SME development. The positive effects described in detail in the PA have led to carrying on with these projects as they greatly contribute towards achieving the Europe2020 objectives. In order to efficiently use the ESIF to contribute to Europe 2020, the ERDF in Luxembourg will focus only on those two sectors and achieve targeted and successful results. In the EAFRD some changes will be carried out to ensure a more successful implementation in 2014-2020 (planned shifts for an increased focus on SME competitiveness and agricultural exploitation since the framework foreseen for these measures in 2007-2013 was surpassed). With regards to the ESF, the MA has asked a reallocation of the resources foreseen initially so as to focus more on human capital and reintegration of young people while maintaining the measures for older people.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

For the programming period 2014-20, ESI Funds will co-finance a total number of three programmes, distributed as follows: one national programme for Rural Development co-financed by the EAFRD, one national programme for Employment and Inclusion co-financed by the ERDF, one national programme for Employment and Inclusion co-financed by the ESF

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In Luxembourg, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Development, regional authorities, Managing Authorities as well as a coordination committee. The PA does not mention any additional channels used for its preparation.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Luxembourg, there has been coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes and coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support. In Luxembourg, e-cohesion was mentioned with regards to online consultation and coordination. Online platforms are being created to ensure compliance with the 2014-20 e-cohesion related regulatory requirements.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.19 Malta

The PA of Malta shows that the total ESIF budget amounts 828 million Euros. The ERDF, ESF and CF together cover 86% of the total ESI-Funds budget. In fact, 64% are to be used as ERDF focusing on the TOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10. 13% are allocated to the ESF in view of contributing to the TOs 8, 9, 10 and 11. 26% are CF resources which are to be targeted at TOs 6 and 7. 12 % are EAFRD resources planned to target TOs 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10, and 1% is reserved to the EMFF for TOs 3,4,6 and 8. All ESI-Funds contribute to the technical assistance budget.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Malta has five operational programmes in the programming period 2014-2020 with a total budget of 828 million Euros. Operational Programme I financed by ERDF and CF addresses the competitiveness needs of Malta as outlined in Thematic Objectives 1 to 4, 6-7, 9 and 10. Operational Programme II financed by ESF addresses human capital and the need for a more inclusive society (TO 8, 11). Operational Programme II financed by ERDF addresses solely the Stimulate Private Sector Investment for economic growth (TO 3). Furthermore Malta has one EAFRD and one EMFF programme. Malta has chosen to finance investment under all 11 thematic objectives defined in the Regulations.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	National	National	National	National
ERDF	1		1		
ESF		1	1		
CF			1		
EAFRD				1	
EMFF					1

Coordination

In Malta, the PA was coordinated by the government office, major ministries including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee. No additional channels are mentioned in the PA.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Malta, the PA does not mention any coordination or e-cohesion tools used for its preparation.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.20 Netherlands

In the Dutch PA, in total EUR 507 million is allocated to ERDF of which:

- EUR 332.47 million to thematic objective 1,
- EUR 121.34 million to thematic objective 4,
- EUR 11.66 million to thematic objective 8,
- EUR 21.56 million to thematic objective 9, and
- EUR 20.29 million for the technical assistance.

EUR 507 million is allocated to ESF of which

- EUR 126 million is allocated to thematic objective 8,
- EUR 361.03 million to thematic objective 9, and
- EUR 20.29 million to technical assistance.

The EAFRD covers 607 million Euro of which

- EUR 22.08 million to thematic objective 1,
- EUR 162.33 million to thematic objective 3,
- EUR 176.17 million to thematic objective 5 (just as for thematic objectives 6),
- EUR 40.96 million to thematic objective 9,
- EUR 7.44 million to thematic objective 10, and
- EUR 22.17 million for technical assistance.

In total EUR 102 million Euro is allocated to EMFF of which

- EUR 21.88 million is allocated to thematic objective 3,
- EUR 73.56 million to thematic objective 6, and
- EUR 6.09 million on technical assistance.

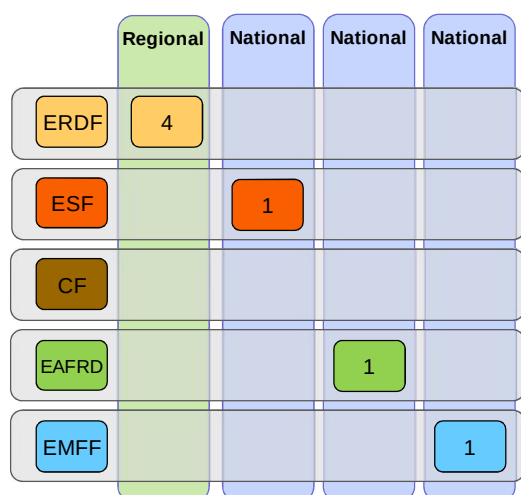
EU budget is equally spread amongst the different funds (with the exception for EMFF) making a total of EUR 1.742 billion. Most of the budget is allocated to thematic objectives 9, 1 and 6, while thematic objective 10 receives a minor part of EU budget.

Overview of strategic choices

	1 RTDI	2 ICT	3 SME	4 CO2	5 CLIMA	6 ENV	7 TRANS	8 EMPL	9 POV	10 LLL	11 GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be implemented through five operational programmes, as was the case in the 2007-2013 programming period. These are four regional operational programmes co-financed by ERDF (North, West, South and East) and one national operational programme co-financed by ESF. Moreover there will be 1 EAFRD rural development programme and 1 EMFF co-financed programme.

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In the Netherlands, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Development, the Ministry of Social Affairs, regional authorities, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee. No additional channels are mentioned in the PA.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in the Netherlands, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In the Netherlands, the e-cohesion tools mentioned relate to online consultation and coordination. The PA describes the measures for electronic data exchange and foreseen improvements, it does not however provide detailed assessment of the state of play of system development and clear commitments as regards the steps needed to fulfil the legal requirement to establish systems for electronic exchange with beneficiaries.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.21 Poland

In 2014-2020, Operational Programmes are planned to be implemented at national level. At regional level, just like in the 2007-2013 programming period, 16 Regional Operational Programmes will be implemented following the structure adopted in the 2007-2013 programming period given that it is well fit to the goals adopted in the PA. The programmes moreover take an integrated thematic and territorial approach and correspond to the multi-level governance mechanisms for regional development policy which correspond to the approach set out in the strategic documents in Poland, applicable to the 2014-2020 period. A stronger decentralisation in the management of OPs translates into increasing the responsibilities of the self-governments of the voivodeships with regards to implementing regional development policy. This again calls for more financial commitment from the regional and local governments in the implementation of ROPs and a better cooperation with partners at voivodeship level. Every OP will directly contribute towards realizing the objectives set in the PA and achieving the results planned, particularly those contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy and ensuring ring-fencing. Since around 66% of the ESIF are concentrated on the ROPs, regional leaders particularly focus on concentrating the funds on the objectives related to increasing employment levels and combating poverty.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by 23 operational programmes, so one more compared to 2007-13 period. There are three national OPs co-financed by ERDF (OP Smart Growth, OP Digital Poland, OP Development of Eastern Poland, one national OP co-financed by ERDF and CF (OP Infrastructure and Environment), one national OP co-financed by CF (OP Technical Assistance), one national OP Knowledge, Education and Development co-financed by ESF, 16 regional multi-fund OPs co-financed by ERDF and ESF and one national OP financed by the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). A larger share of allocation will be managed by regions (ca 55% of ERDF and 66% of ESF compared to 25% of ERDF in 2007-13). Moreover one OP for Development of Rural Areas and one OP for maritime areas will be supported from EAFRD and EMFF.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	National	National	National	National	National	Regional
ERDF	3	1					16
ESF			1				16
CF		1		1			
EAFRD					1		
EMFF						1	

Coordination

In Poland, the PA was coordinated by major ministries (not named specifically) including the Ministry of Regional Development, regional authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel mentioned in the PA is public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Poland, there has been cooperation between national and regional bodies, coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes and coordination of ESIF support with national instruments. In Poland, the e-cohesion tools mentioned relate to online consultation and coordination, IT-systems and a platform set up specifically for coordination.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.22 Portugal

Based upon National Reforms Program, Portugal has developed a list of priorities in line with Europe 2020 Strategy. It will tackle employment, qualifications, environment and energy, I&D and put strong emphasis on fighting against poverty and social exclusion. The programming process in Portugal also takes into consideration the important inter-regional disparities existing in the Country. The Portuguese PA provides a description of its intervention logic in different Policy Areas, based up on a selection of TOs. The 11 TOs retained by Portugal for 2014-2020 have been divided in main areas: Competitiveness and Internationalisation (TO 1, TO 2, TO 3, TO 7, TO 11) Social Inclusion and Employment (TO8; TO 9); Human Capital: TO 10 and sustainability: (TO 4, TO 5 and TO 6). Portugal will use ERDF, ESF, CF EAFRD and EMFF funding to implement these TOs. ERDF contribution will amount for 40% of the total funding of these Policies and ESF amounts for about 28 %. EAFRD will contribute with 16 % and CF with 11%. Existing Management of Control systems for ESI funds are considered adequate by PA, but improvements will be introduced (e-Cohesion functionalities and adaptation to the new legal framework).

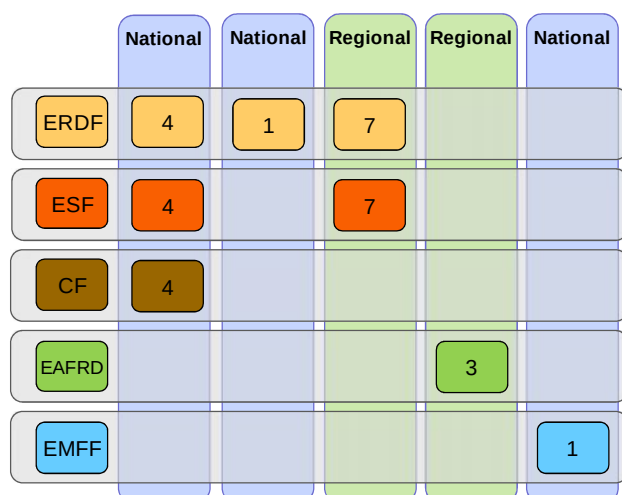
Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered through 12 operational programmes, four of them thematic programmes: 'Competitiveness & Internationalization' (co-financed by ERDF, ESF and Cohesion Fund); 'Human Capital' and 'Social Inclusion & Employment' (co-financed by ESF); Sustainable Development & Efficient Use of Natural Resources (co-financed by the Cohesion Fund);

Five programmes are mainland regional ones: Norte; Centro; Alentejo; Lisboa; and Algarve (co-financed by ERDF and ESF); two are for outermost regions: the Azores; and Madeira (co-financed by ERDF and ESF). There is one technical assistance OP (co-financed by ERDF). There are also three Rural Development Programmes – mainland Portugal; Azores; and Madeira - (co-financed by EAFRD) and one countrywide programme for Fisheries and the Sea (co-financed by EMFF).

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In Portugal, the PA was coordinated by the government office, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Regional Development, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel mentioned is public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Portugal, there has been coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB. In Portugal, no e-cohesion tools are mentioned in relation to the preparation of the PA, but a specific information system will be developed for the 2014-2020 programmes, as part of e-cohesion tools used during implementation.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.23 Romania

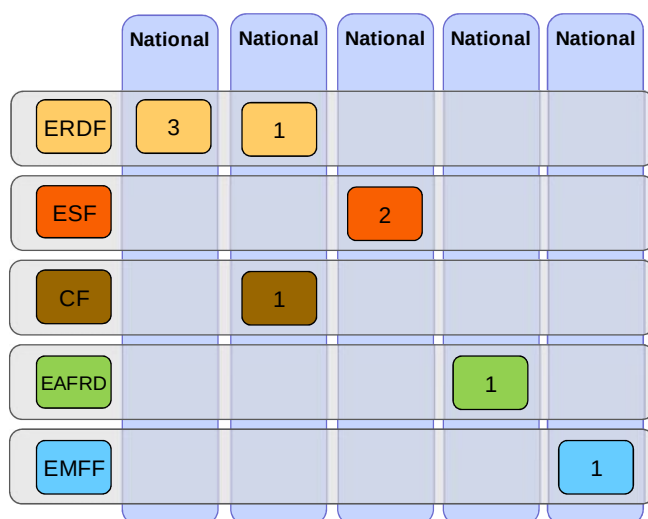
As per the analysis of development needs, Romania still displays "continuing and, in some cases, widening disparities with the EU across a broad in spectrum of issues". As a consequence, during the 2014-20 period, Romania will make investments using ESI Funds under all 11 Thematic Objectives, drawing resources under ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. The need for funding greatly exceeds the allocation of resources, so it is estimated that even in the best-case scenario of complete absorption for funds allocated, only a fraction of the challenges could be met during 2014-2020. The argumentation for the selection of all thematic objectives, together with the decisions behind the high level distribution of resources and the coordination among the different policy areas is presented in the PA in detail. Econometric modelling simulations were also used for projections of different allocation scenarios under the thematic objectives. The chosen option was to show preference of directing the bulk of available financial resources towards those thematic objectives that are more oriented towards infrastructure and maintaining ESF allocation at the minimum level imposed by the legislative framework. The obligations to international funding institutions like the IMF require a strong focus on transport and water projects were also taken into consideration. On the other hand, the reason behind the policy choices on the distribution of ESF allocation among TO 8, 9 and 10 was related to potential of growth generation. Distance to national targets in relation to Europe 2020 strategy, national strategic documents and country specific recommendations has been also considered when allocation of funds has been proposed for specific thematic objectives, as well as the lessons learned from the previous programming period, in terms of absorption capacity and demand from beneficiaries.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Drawing on the lessons learned from the previous programming period and taking into consideration the funds available and the policy areas envisaged by the interventions, the ESI Funds will be implemented in Romania through eight operational programmes at national level. Romania opted not to have regional OPs for the 2014-2020 period. The OPs are as follows: OP Competitiveness (ERDF), OP Human Capital (ESF), OP Large Infrastructure (ERDF and CF), Regional OP (ERDF), OP Administrative Capacity (ESF), OP Technical Assistance (ERDF), National Programme for Rural Development (EAFRD) and OP Fisheries and Marine Affairs (EMFF).

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In Romania, the PA mentions that it was coordinated by the regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, as well as a coordination committee. Additional channels were public consultations and information on the website.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Romania, there has been cooperation between national and regional bodies, coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Romania, no e-cohesion tools are mentioned in the PA in relation to its preparation. The existing electronic systems do not fully correspond to the 2014-20 e-cohesion requirements. Four systems for data exchange will be developed at national level.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.24 Slovakia

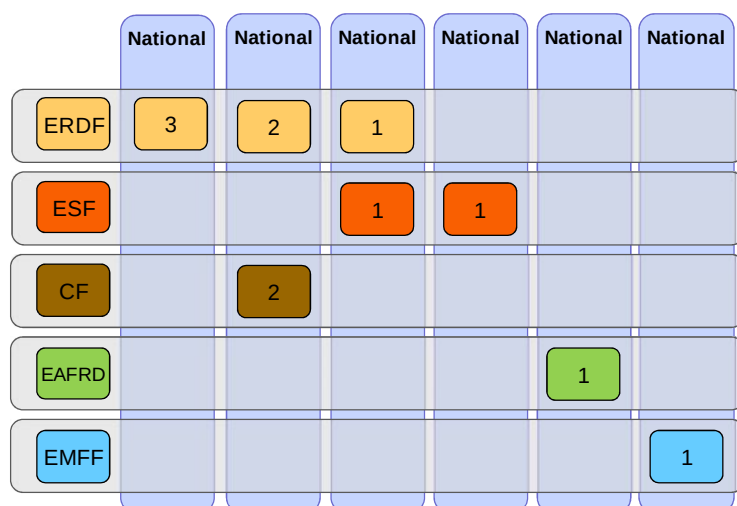
The PA covers all five ESI Funds. The coordination of individual EU Member States and integration of structural policies is ensured through the Europe 2020 strategy, which the National Reform Programme of the Slovak Republic elaborates on. Their common intersection features five priority areas representing the pillars for the quality of life, sustainable growth and employment; the building of these pillars in the 2014 – 2020 programming period represents the main challenge for Slovakia. Slovakia has chosen to finance investment under all 11 thematic objectives defined in the Regulations. The programming phase was used not only for the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement and operational programmes, but also for an assessment of potential overlaps and synergies between funding instruments.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion policy will be delivered by seven OPs, so four less compared to 2007-13 period: Three national OPs co-financed by ERDF (OP Research and Innovation, Integrated Regional OP, OP Technical Assistance), two national OPs co-financed by ERDF and CF (OP Integrated Infrastructure, OP Quality of Environment); one national OP co-financed by ESF and ERDF (OP Human Resources); one national OP co-financed by ESF (OP Effective Public Administration). Moreover there is one Rural Development Programme (financed by EAFRD) and 1 Fisheries programme (financed by EMFF).

Overview of programme architecture



Coordination

In the Slovak Republic, the PA was coordinated by the government office, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities and working groups. The additional channel mentioned in the PA is public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in the Slovak Republic, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of the ESIF programmes with the national instruments, and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In the Slovak Republic the e-cohesion tools mentioned in the PA are online consultation and coordination. The principles of e-Cohesion policy is planned to be implemented by creating centralised information systems, interlinked and integrated with other public administration systems.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.25 Slovenia

In 2014-2020 Slovenia is allocated around EUR 1.39 billion ERDF, EUR 717 million ESF and EUR 895 million CF. The allocation for the EAFRD OP amounts to EUR 838 million and for the EMFF OP to EUR 8.2 million. The ESI Funds, including the CF, address 11 thematic objectives. The strongest concentrations of funds can be found in TO1) Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (13%), in TO3) Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs in the agricultural sector, the fishery and aquaculture sector (20%); and in TO6) Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (16%).

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Slovenia has three operational programmes. The cohesion policy programme is a multi-fund programme co-financed by ERDF, ESF and CF. The other two are mono-fund programmes, one RDP co-financed by EAFRD and one EMFF OP.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	National	National
ERDF	1		
ESF	1		
CF	1		
EAFRD		1	
EMFF			1

Coordination

In Slovenia, the PA was coordinated by the government office, the Ministry of Agriculture, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel mentioned in the PA is public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Slovenia, there has been cooperation between national and regional bodies, coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap, coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments and coordination of ESIF support with other EU programmes. In Slovenia, the e-cohesion tools mentioned in the PA relate to online consultation and coordination and IT-systems. Assessment of existing systems has found that there is room for simplification and improvement.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.26 Spain

The Spanish PA describes the Thematic Objectives developed according to the Strategy 2020 in a dedicated section. The Objectives described and pursued by Spain, are in accordance with the Recommendations of European Council, with the National Programme of Reforms for 2013, 2013, 2014. They additionally take into account the Recommendations of the Commission Position Paper. For the next Programming Period, Spain selected the all 10 TOs but TO 11 which was not programmed in the Spanish PA and will be covered by Funds allocated to Technical Assistance. The ERDF covers all TOs and the EAFRD covers 9 out 11 TOs. The ESF covers TOs 8, 9 and 10.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

Cohesion Policy will be delivered through 45 operational programmes: three national OPs co-financed by the ERDF (SME Initiative; Smart Growth; Sustainable Growth); 19 regional ERDF OPs (one for each region); four national OPs co-financed by the ESF (Employment, Training and Education; Youth Employment; Social Inclusion; Technical Assistance); 19 regional ESF OPs (one for each region). Moreover, there are one national and 17 regional rural development programmes (co-financed by the EAFRD), besides a national framework to ensure coherence, and one fisheries programme (co-financed by the EMFF).

Overview of programme architecture

	National	Regional	National	Regional	National	Regional	National
ERDF	3	19					
ESF			4	19			
CF							
EAFRD					1	17	
EMFF							1

Coordination

In Spain, the PA was coordinated by the government office, major ministries including the Ministry of Regional Development, regional authorities, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel mentioned in the PA is public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Spain the PA does not mention any coordination or e-cohesion tools used for its preparation. The existing data exchange system will need to be updated.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.27 Sweden

In 2014-2020 Sweden is allocated around EUR 0.94 billion for ERDF and EUR 0.74 billion for ESF. Additional EUR 1.76 billion (49% of the funding) will be devoted to EAFRD operations. The allocation for EMFF amounts to EUR 119.5 million. The ESI Funds finance ten thematic objectives, out of which "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives 16% of the funding. "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 14%, and "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" 14% of the total ESI funding.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

The ERDF will be implemented through one national and eight regional operational programmes. There will be one RDP, one EMFF programme and one national OP for ESF and the extra allocation from the YEI. The ESF, EAFRD and EMFF programmes will have so-called 'subordinated regional action plans'. In addition, there will be one multi-fund programme for Community Lead Local Development (CLLD) which will be supported from ERDF and ESF.

Overview of programme architecture

	National	Regional	National	National	National
ERDF	1	8			
ESF			1		
CF					
EAFRD				1	
EMFF					1

Coordination

In Sweden, the PA was coordinated by the Ministry of Regional Development, regional authorities, social partners, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel used was public consultations.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in Sweden, there has been coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap. In Sweden, the PA does not mention any e-cohesion tools with regard to its preparation. Existing systems will be further developed to improve functionalities.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion/online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

3.28 United Kingdom

In 2014-2020 the United Kingdom is allocated approximately EUR 5.8 billion of EAFRD and EUR 4.9 billion of ESF funding, including EUR 206 million for the Youth Employment Initiative and EUR 866 million for European Territorial Cooperation. An additional EUR 5.18 billion will be devoted to EAFRD. The EMFF funding amounts to some EUR 243 million. The ESI Funds finance ten thematic objectives, out of which "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives 26% of the funding. "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 15%, and "Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning" 13% of the total ESI funding.

Overview of strategic choices

	1RTDI	2ICT	3SME	4CO2	5CLIMA	6ENV	7TRANS	8EMPL	9POV	10LLL	11GOV
ERDF											
ESF											
CF											
EAFRD											
EMFF											

ESI Funds will finance 17 OPs in the United Kingdom. There will be one UK-level EMFF programme, four RDPs (England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland). There will be six ERDF OPs and six ESF OPs (West Wales and the Valleys, East Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, England, Gibraltar).

Overview of programme architecture

	Regional	Regional	Regional	National
ERDF	6			
ESF		6		
CF				
EAFRD			4	
EMFF				1

Coordination

In the UK, the PA mentions that it was coordinated by regional authorities, the civil society/ NGOs, Managing Authorities, working groups, as well as a coordination committee. An additional channel used was information on the website.

PA coordinated by			
Government Office / Federal Chancellery	Major Ministries (not named specifically)	Ministry of Finance	Ministry of Agriculture
Ministry of Economic development	Ministry of Regional development	Ministry of Social affairs	Ministry of Education
Regional Authorities	Social Partners	Civil Society / NGOs	Managing Authorities
Working Groups	Coordination Committee	Public Consultation	Information on website

The second table shows that in the UK, the PA does not mention any coordination tools; however it mentions that online consultation and coordination were carried out. IT systems are not centralised in the UK, improvements are underway in light of the 2014-20 e-cohesion requirements.

Coordination tools		E-cohesion
Cooperation between national and regional bodies	Coordination of the support among ESIF programmes ensuring that there is no overlap	E-cohesion / online consultation and coordination
Coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments	Coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes	IT-systems
Coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support		Platform set up for coordination

4 CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions present main findings of the comprehensive analysis of the 28 Partnership Agreements and they refer to elements and concepts that were endorsed by the European Parliament during negotiations on the legislative framework. This concluding chapter first aims summing up the main findings regarding the operational programmes architecture and the thematic concentration in the different Member States. Furthermore it highlights the conclusions for the key features of the cross-cutting analysis.

Operational Programme landscape

Some Member States made fundamental changes to their OP structure in view of increasing the synergies and the effectiveness of the funds. This includes both a move towards centralisation and a reduction of the number of OPs, or a regionalisation and/or the introduction of multi-fund OPs by combining ERDF, ESF and CF.

Almost half the Member States have exclusively national OPs. One reason consists in the small size of the countries in question (e.g. Estonia, Luxemburg and Malta). Another important reason is the existing governance structure (unitary, federal and federate state systems) which correlates with Cohesion Policy implementation and has an influence on the extent to which the national and regional systems adapt in view of implementing ESIF OPs²⁶. In fact, those countries considered 'unitary' (i.e. centrally governed) generally have national OPs (e.g. Bulgaria, Croatia and the Czech Republic).

For 2014-2020, some Member States have decided to undergo a process of centralisation accompanied by a reduction of the number of OPs, which however does not necessarily imply a reduction in the administrative burden. This is the case in Austria, Estonia, Hungary and Slovakia where the number of OPs has been significantly reduced and partly centralised. In the federal state of Austria for instance, compared to the 2007-2013 programming period, the number of OPs has been reduced from nine to one ERDF programme, and from two to one ESF programme. The number of MAs will therefore diminish by eight, as there will no longer be regional OPs (one for each Bundesland). This administrative restructuring is however likely to result in more administrative burden and a higher workload in the medium term.

Another trend goes in the opposite direction towards further regionalisation. Wherever the OP structure is regionalised this can be due to the existing federal (highly decentralised with autonomous regions/federal states) or federate (strong central government but regions have a certain degree of autonomy) structures. In fact, federal countries such as Belgium and Germany have mainly regional OPs with the exception of a national ESF programme in Germany. Federate countries such as France, Finland or the Netherlands have a mixed national and regional OP landscape.

It is striking that a large majority of 20 out of 28 Member States have chosen to introduce multi-fund OPs in the 2014-2020 programming period. In Hungary for instance, this has reduced the number of OPs by half (from 15 OPs in 2007-2013 to 7 OPs in 2014-2020). Only Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Spain and the

²⁶ See for instance: Ex post evaluation of cohesion policy programmes 2000-2006 co-financed by the ERDF (Objective 1 and 2); WP 11: Management and Implementation Systems for Cohesion Policy. Final Report to the European Commission (DG Regio) and Böhme, K. (2010), Regional governance in the context of globalisation: reviewing governance mechanisms & administrative costs. Administrative work load and costs for Member State public authorities of the implementation of ERDF and Cohesion Fund. SWECO INTERNATIONAL, 16.06.2010, Stockholm

United Kingdom decided not to combine the ESIF in their OPs. The key argument for refraining from the introduction of multi-fund OPs lies in the expected increase of administrative burden and the fear of too much local influence in territorial development. In general, Member States with a significant amount of financial allocation are comparably more likely to use multi-fund OPs (e.g. Hungary, the Czech Republic, France, Portugal, Poland).

Thematic concentration

The thematic concentration has proven to be very effective in aligning the OPs with the Europe 2020 goals. A comparison shows that the TOs 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9 and 10 have been addressed by all Member States, while the TOs 2, 7 and 11 have been omitted by a few Member States (e.g. Luxemburg has neither chosen any of the three aforementioned TOs nor TO 5). Some Member States in fact plan substantial shifts of funding towards research and innovation. Due to the fact that large companies are less favoured in the new programming period, TO 1 seems to be the field for supporting large companies. Besides, the new field of low carbon TO 4, which implies at least 20 % of the funding in more developed regions, offers new possibilities for Member States to target new types of beneficiaries²⁷, including public bodies, private commercial organisations and private non-commercial organisations.

ERDF and EAFRD: Generally, many out of the 11 TOs have been chosen in the ERDF and the EAFRD (and, although to a lesser extent, the EMFF) in a lot of countries. In fact, the ERDF has been used to address all TOs in the Czech Republic, Greece and Spain, and in seven other Member States the ERDF was used for 10 TOs out of 11. In the latter case, the ERDF was used to address all TOs except for TO 11 (Lithuania, France, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia). There are exceptions however, particularly in Luxemburg, Denmark and Finland where the ERDF addresses only 2 to 3 TOs.

CF: All together 15 out of 28 Member States use the CF. Ten of those Member States focus the CF on four TOs, namely the TOs 4 to 7. The remaining five Member States having CF programmes focus on two to three TOs out of 4, 5, 6 or 7.

EMFF: Over half the Member States have concentrated the EMFF on the four TOs 3, 4, 6 and 8. The thematic concentration visibly translates the geographic and economic importance given to maritime and fishery policy: While Greece – with its undeniably important maritime and fisheries policy – is the only Member States that concentrated the EMFF on six TOs (namely the TOs 1, 2 and 5 in addition to 3, 4 and 6), the landlocked country Austria focuses the EMFF only on TO 3. Luxemburg will not make use of the EMFF at all.

ESF: Pursuant to the increased importance given to demographics and social issues in the strategic framework of the ESIF, the large majority of Member States uses the ESF to address the TOs 8 to 11 (in 17 Member States the ESF addresses all of those 4 TOs). Wherever capacity building is not seen as a necessary priority (i.e. in 9 'old' Member States) the ESF merely addresses the TOs 8 to 10. Interestingly, in the Netherlands the ESF focuses only on the TOs 8 and 9 and not on Education and Life-Long-Learning (TO10).

²⁷ Bachtler J. Mendez C. Kah S. (2013). Preparing for 2014-20: Programming, concentration and performance. Executive Summary. IQ-Net Thematic Paper 32(2) EPRC. 8 July 2013

The PAs as strategic documents

The PAs do appear to fulfil their role as strategic documents in that they describe in one clearly structured document which Thematic Objectives have been chosen by the Member States and how the five ESI funds will contribute to these and how these will be articulated with national and other EU funding mechanisms. Partnership and coordination mechanisms including multi-level governance are described as well as integrated approaches.

The Member States use the ESI Funds and the Thematic Objectives in a comprehensive manner. All 28 Member States have programmes for the ESF, the ERDF and the EAFRD. All but one Member State have a EMFF programme, only Luxembourg is not using the maritime and fisheries fund.

The division between the two parts of the PA with the first part focusing on the essential elements that are to be adopted by the Commission decision and the second on non-essential elements that are not subject to adoption by the Commission was generally respected although in approximately a third of countries it was not entirely clear. It was the case that the second part of the PA containing the elements that are not subject to adoption by the Commission, were sometimes less detailed than the section with the essential elements.

Alignment between the Europe 2020 Strategy and the Treaty-based objectives of the policy

There appear to be no problems establishing coherence between national needs as defined in national development programmes and NRP and the requirements of thematic concentration and the Europe 2020 targets. The CSR and NRP were generally found to be consistent with the national strategies and the relevant parts were decisive for the choice of TOs and priorities in the OPs whereby the CSRs are sometimes broader in reach than the priorities of the ESIF.

The results of the ex-ante evaluations are also taken into account. The PAs also describe the specific measures to be implemented by the ESIF under the OPs. These sections of the PAs seem to be thorough and coherent. It also appears to be the case in most countries that the development needs correspond broadly to the objectives of ESI Funds.

The need for coordination between the thematic concentration and the territory specific development needs is particularly apparent in some countries such as Greece which face particular challenges. This appears to have been achieved, at least on paper, in the PA.

Transparency of the process and the partnership arrangements

The implementation of the principles of partnership and public consultation seems to have met in most Member States with the active participation of a broad range of ministries and the economic and social partners as well as of civil society in the consultation process. In all countries the main ministries, often in the form of inter-ministerial committees, are represented as well as the Managing Authorities of the ESIF.

Civil society institutions and NGOs as well as experts and research institutes were also involved in the consultation process. The majority of the PAs describe the partnership arrangements in detail providing lists of the participants in working groups and committees.

The regional level is also well represented with the majority of Member States clearly describing the involvement of the regional level in multi-level governance.

Public consultation on the PA or on the individual OPs or both appears to have been held in most Member States (19 out of 28). Even 24 out of 28 Member States either established a coordination committee or an interministerial committee for the PAs. Furthermore the PAs are in many countries published on the government websites.

Integrated approach

The PAs contain detailed descriptions of how CLLDs and ITIs will be supported through the OPs. CLLDs will be used in all 28 EU Member States and ITIs in over two thirds. Most countries address the urban dimension, most frequently under ITIs. The CLLDs are mainly used to support the former LEADER Action Groups but also to support integrated action in non-LEADER areas. For example, in Finland, CLLD are used in urban areas not covered by LAGS or FLAGS (Fisheries Local Action Groups). This means towns and cities with over 15,000 inhabitants. In the Netherlands, using CLLD is also being considered for the four largest cities in order to mobilise local partners for the development of specific local solutions. The funding for CLLD is varied. Some countries favour a mono-fund approach (Austria, Belgium (Walloon), the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Croatia, Malta, Latvia, the Netherlands and Poland), others a multi-fund approach combining various funds (Cyprus, Denmark, IT, Lithuania). Some leave it open (Spain).

The ITIs are often used exclusively for implementing the urban dimension (e.g. in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Croatia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia etc.) and mainly funded through the ERDF. A few also involve rural areas (e.g. in France, Greece, Portugal, Romania, Sweden and the United Kingdom). There are a number of countries including Austria, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Ireland and IT that are not using ITIs.

Synergies between ESIF and macro-regional and sea basin strategies

Most countries are involved in macro-regional strategies or sea basin strategies with the exception of Luxemburg, Malta and the Netherlands. Most prominent among the macro-regional strategies are the EU strategy for the Danube Region involving Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovenia, Slovakia, and Romania and the first EU strategy, the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region involving Sweden, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland. The strategies are important for the countries involved and tend to be well described and linked to the ESI Funds. Further recently founded MRS are the European Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Region with the EU Member States Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and Greece as well as the EU Strategy for the Alpine region comprising Austria, France, Germany, Italy and Slovenia.

Also important are the sea basin strategies. These seek to provide a more coherent approach among countries with shared seas and to contribute to the Europe 2020 strategy with 'blue growth'. The Spanish PA details the specific Strategy for intervention in Maritime areas an articulation with the Atlantic Strategy adopted since 2011 by the Commission. A "Blue IT"-sea basin strategy will be implemented in Spain, providing in a single instrument the ESI Funds contributions and the Atlantic Strategy.

Ex-ante Conditionalities

The majority of the general ex-ante conditionalities for each PA in the 28 Member States is already fulfilled. The highest level of fulfilment can be seen in the adjustment of environmental legislation (GExAC 6). The lowest level of fulfilment is observed in relation to GExAC 7 (statistical systems). This is partly due to the fact that in many Member States the statistical system is developed at OP level during (rather than before) the programming

phase. Only those Member States which already had a well-adapted statistical system in the previous programming period considered this ex-ante conditionality as fulfilled before the programming phase.

Austria, Poland, Portugal, Sweden, and the United Kingdom have fulfilled all the thematic ex ante conditionalities. The other Member States mark at least one ex-ante conditionality as not fulfilled however only nine Member States show a share of more than 50% of partly or non-fulfilled ex-ante conditionalities, namely Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Croatia, Hungary, Malta, Romania and Slovakia.

All 28 PAs reported a total of 549 ex-ante conditionalities considered as applicable, of which 47% have been fulfilled, 26% partly fulfilled and 18% not fulfilled. No information has been provided for 9%.

Specific provisions related to demographic challenges

A number of countries focus strongly on a territorial approach to addressing poverty. This includes 'poverty mapping' in Croatia which involves a detailed analysis of economic indicators related to poverty in order to arrive at a detailed map of where pockets of poverty exist in the country. Based on poverty mapping, integrated packages will be developed. Similarly, in other countries, methods are described in the PAs to clearly delineate the geographical areas hardest hit by poverty including a clear definition of the target groups (e.g. the inactive, long term unemployed, homeless, working poor, immigrants, people with disabilities, people with specific cultural traits, ex-convicts, single parents, low qualified people, sick people etc. in Greece or the long-term unemployed, young people NEET, disabled people in the United Kingdom). Some countries focus their efforts on particular population groups, e.g. the Roma in Slovakia who are particularly at risk of poverty.

Simplification measures for administrations and beneficiaries including e-cohesion

The inclusion of provisions related to administrative capacity is another novelty of the 2014-2020 period. In view of simplifying the implementation process, Member States have the possibility to combine the ERDF, ESF and CF in multi-fund programmes and thereby reduce the administrative steps, introduce JAPs to reduce management and control costs, or use the CLLD instrument to further the bottom-up approach. In the delivery system, rules on eligibility and durability of different EU funding instruments are increasingly being harmonized, and flat rates and unit costs are implemented at national and regional level. Nevertheless some countries did not see simplification in using multi-fund programmes following the key argument of expecting an increase of administrative burden (See 'Operational Programme landscape' in this concluding chapter).

Another simplification consists in the increased use of e-cohesion systems enabling the beneficiaries to submit proposals by way of electronic data exchange (decrease in the administrative burden for beneficiaries and a reduction of costs for the administrations). Most countries developed functioning and centralised IT systems in the previous period (2007-2013) which are being further developed in the current period to improve interoperability between the systems catering for the different ESI funds and in order to be fully compatible with the System for Fund Management in the European Union²⁸. For

²⁸ <http://ec.europa.eu/sfc/en/2014/home>

instance, there are plans in Slovenia to launch a new website will function as a central info point allowing interactive communication and information exchange.

Only in a few countries the PA is not specific on the subject of e-cohesion and the IT systems. There are also a few countries (Belgium, Lithuania and United Kingdom) favouring decentralised systems which have the disadvantage of not always having all data stored in one place. While timetables of completion of systems are not included in a number of PAs, there is no risk that these will not be up and running in time.

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ANNEX 1: FINANCIAL ALLOCATION FOR EACH THEMATIC OBJECTIVE IN EACH MS

TO	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
AT	233.610.484	26.691.499	800.120.410	206.543.226	1.289.820.131	1.297.694.815	0	124.797.978	528.358.953	253.587.144	0	4.761.224.640
BE	279.700.862	0	452.510.718	267.300.127	99.406.229	290.749.045	0	376.530.099	406.404.719	329.385.291	0	2.501.987.090
BG	528.008.372	24.639.624	1.009.438.837	1.183.401.563	449.960.779	2.236.597.556	1.387.979.734	627.510.692	1.240.232.145	503.720.581	251.473.110	9.442.962.993
CY	72.142.000	73.815.000	116.214.877	94.885.000	23.072.500	184.290.000	99.250.000	81.050.000	55.545.000	26.252.000	5.055.000	831.571.377
CZ	2.506.619.003	1.025.806.133	1.341.873.416	2.247.233.537	1.350.884.023	2.714.292.139	6.242.761.018	1.348.503.060	2.658.056.235	1.330.071.646	207.102.198	22.973.202.408
DE	4.043.915.695	377.439.920	3.919.792.084	2.903.634.351	2.094.763.395	2.414.932.417	0	2.421.829.786	5.025.070.097	2.456.928.170	0	25.658.305.915
DK	104.091.747	0	135.431.111	54.552.400	256.648.547	214.065.842	0	77.759.850	77.921.096	77.770.666	0	998.241.259
EE	665.841.830	84.574.468	647.911.878	312.193.191	173.144.043	384.483.105	475.904.255	462.137.920	469.211.881	423.467.763	119.344.779	4.218.215.113
IE	186.992.153	75.000.000	283.881.587	433.500.000	704.800.000	838.370.392	0	307.325.622	350.807.784	160.698.574	0	3.341.376.112
EL	1.286.693.708	826.739.457	2.420.967.803	1.614.846.359	776.602.898	3.714.794.842	3.202.735.448	1.926.199.580	1.303.336.730	1.304.175.574	281.126.070	18.658.218.468
ES	4.653.741.999	2.050.280.164	5.988.547.113	4.241.887.267	1.825.827.488	4.398.195.749	2.465.539.406	4.195.708.141	3.273.313.236	2.344.816.775	484.139.101	35.921.996.439
FI	398.107.362	12.600.000	645.718.245	218.729.147	7.577.822	1.611.440.806	0	347.014.603	248.023.934	198.986.886	0	3.688.198.805
FR	1.846.574.013	1.111.218.072	4.716.473.699	2.077.012.357	3.483.322.233	4.550.597.338	424.488.765	2.216.040.322	3.237.560.354	2.066.964.026	15.710.560	25.745.961.739
HR	681.292.165	307.952.676	1.916.891.020	756.898.701	500.611.618	2.308.798.011	1.310.205.755	614.510.174	971.286.653	729.914.791	191.276.944	10.289.638.508
IT	3.794.700	2.103.400	7.897.900	3.948.900	2.358.600	4.451.700	2.473.500	4.368.700	4.091.000	4.195.300	1.004.000	40.687.700
LV	482.557.471	192.783.829	650.752.589	531.907.453	285.579.369	724.850.969	1.159.771.858	284.610.743	486.702.294	532.541.701	18.063.357	5.350.121.633
LT	703.147.766	247.803.804	1.221.468.523	1.117.770.443	305.670.621	943.309.948	1.153.781.322	774.996.852	693.547.466	683.785.956	150.359.184	7.995.641.885
LU	9.166.129	0	29.889.950	39.148.129	0	32.960.035	0	10.830.359	10.695.814	4.011.244	0	136.701.660
HU	2.234.470.075	689.265.295	2.944.954.200	2.808.263.293	1.014.748.354	3.392.440.948	3.331.808.225	3.514.377.912	2.377.317.798	1.719.549.459	684.855.782	24.712.051.341
MT	70.863.232	30.748.320	88.999.900	54.521.593	14.957.491	250.999.482	104.613.498	24.062.500	84.073.670	70.900.878	8.800.000	803.540.564
NL	354.551.268	0	184.206.849	121.339.440	176.165.000	249.720.000	0	137.659.647	423.542.343	7.440.000	0	1.654.624.547
PL	9.989.297.133	3.082.161.211	9.401.046.231	9.189.911.741	1.383.020.997	8.818.183.241	23.796.020.786	5.515.044.273	6.411.611.388	4.018.313.658	188.979.120	81.793.589.779
PT	2.328.812.052	294.924.687	6.009.690.228	1.992.302.627	1.190.284.309	3.057.907.836	845.113.500	1.903.671.997	2.569.594.076	4.327.255.652	249.696.283	24.769.253.247
RO	1.066.927.655	531.914.894	3.116.885.497	3.897.186.096	2.014.946.099	4.971.125.541	6.132.463.679	2.228.599.960	3.408.091.244	1.654.073.699	797.021.277	29.819.235.641
SI	485.865.161	76.018.277	774.881.652	281.632.003	289.345.102	614.726.151	262.760.300	370.826.602	262.195.733	239.020.050	62.073.980	3.719.345.011
SK	62.073.980	825.683.592	914.635.480	1.119.171.222	995.298.991	1.858.443.897	3.495.128.621	1.189.558.794	1.407.671.723	736.744.582	267.311.313	12.871.722.195
SE	334.897.890	252.299.070	500.094.015	197.475.855	500.585.202	583.510.576	76.434.084	420.551.962	341.366.804	256.156.366	0	3.463.371.824
UK	1.581.678.698	266.878.698	2.403.748.075	1.427.264.291	364.269.315	4.138.909.135	163.870.716	1.990.029.181	1.292.505.571	0	0	13.629.153.680
Totals TO	37.195.434.603	12.489.342.090	52.644.923.886	39.394.460.312	21.573.671.156	56.800.841.516	56.133.104.470	33.496.107.309	39.618.135.741	26.460.728.432	3.983.392.058	379.790.141.572
% of total allocated to all TO	9,8%	3,3%	13,9%	10,4%	5,7%	15,0%	14,8%	8,8%	10,4%	7,0%	1,0%	

Source: Partnership Agreements of the EU 28

ANNEX 2: SUMMARIES OF THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS (LONG VERSION)

1. Austria

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	ESI Funds in PA: From page 77 onwards, the PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of thematic objectives Austria will be focusing on the next programming period. In fact, the TOs selected in Austria are TO 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, and 10. These are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, EAFRD and the EMFF. It can be assumed that the ERDF and ESF contributions amount to about 5% and 8% of the total funding foreseen for those policy areas in Austria. The selection of the TOs and the Investment Priorities (IPs) has been based mainly on the 2013 country-specific recommendations of the Council, the national reform plans of 2010-2013 and the measures contained within those documents. Coordination: In chapter 4 of the PA, the measures planned for ensuring that the PA and the OPs are implemented successfully are described. One of them is e-cohesion which has already been applied in the 2007-2013 programming period in the ETC OPs. In fact, those ETC OPs led by Austria share a compatible e-cohesion system. In the ESF some measures have also been implemented through IT systems in 2007-2013 that can be classified as corresponding to the e-cohesion characteristics. In the setting up of the ERDF programmes there can be stated progress ensuring that the implementation of measures and policies follow the regulations. When introducing the necessary monitoring systems, particular attention will be paid to Article 125 (2) d and e of the CPR.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	In the 2014-2020 programming period, there will be one ERDF OP, one ESF OP, one EAFRD OP and one EMFF OP. In contrast to the 2007-2013 programming period, the number of ERDF OPs has been reduced from nine (eight for Regional Competitiveness and Employment regions - one per region - and one for a Convergence region) to one single OP resulting from the merger of different regional ERDF programmes into one programme coordinated centrally by a new Managing Authority (situated in the ÖROK). In the ESF, the number of Managing Authorities has been reduced from two to one.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The first part of the PA includes the majority of topics and issues concerning thematic concentration, the Europe 2020 priorities, territorial analyses, OP architecture and ex-ante evaluations, the TOs chosen and the way the ESIF will be used to achieve them. It also includes the horizontal topics as well as details about how the TOs will be achieved through the use of ESIF (including measures to improve the quality of implementation). On the other hand, the second part includes analyses on the territorial development instruments (ITI, CLLD, MRS...) and details about the implementation of the partnership principle and MLG. In general, it can be argued that the more analytical but also the politically sensitive issues are tackled in Part 1 compared to Part 2.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The process coordinating the interaction between the different funds and the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement has been coordinated by ÖROK, the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning. The project has been named "STRAT.AT 2020" meant as a continuation of "STRAT.ATplus", the Austrian NSRF of the programming period 2007-2013. For the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement different working bodies were set up : The STRAT.AT 2020 Steering Group is composed of high rank public officials performed strategic steering tasks for the overall process and was linking the project group, the Subcommittee on Regional Economy (coordination board for EU regional policy and its implementation in Austria) and the political bodies of ÖROK. The STRAT.AT 2020 Project Group was responsible for the core process of defining the common themes and strands for the national objectives of the cohesion policy and the policy for the development of rural areas/ rural development and to lay the ground. The Project Group was made up of the responsible bodies from the programming authorities; these are the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, the representatives of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, the bodies of the Länder (Austrian regions) responsible for ERDF, and the Federal Chancellery responsible for the overall coordination. STRAT.AT 2020 Focus Groups were set up by the Steering Group for the purpose of carrying out preparatory work to clarify and deepen certain issues and themes. The themes of the respective Focus Groups and their composition were therefore individually agreed. The Focus Groups reported to the Project Group that decides on the further use of the results for STRAT.AT 2020. 15 Thematic Focus Groups were carried out. The STRAT.AT 2020 Forums were open to all actors involved in the programming (programme implementation partners, economic and social partners, Association of Towns and Associations of Municipalities, intermediaries, NGOs, experts/academia). The forums were designed to provide information on the interim results and feedback as well as to deepen the exchange among the actors from all programming areas. Four STRAT.AT 2020 forums have been planned for the process including a results event as a starting event for the new ESIF period. During the STRAT.AT 2020 process, there were two online hearing procedures in Summer 2012 and in Summer 2013 (online consultation). In the implementation process of the PA, a structure similar to the STRAT.AT 2020 groups²⁹ is planned to be put in place to ensure the partnership principle is applied. Annex 1 of the PA includes a list of all actors and institutions involved in the preparation and implementation of the PA.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
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²⁹ Including a Steering, a Project and a Focus group as well as relevant forums

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA describes how Austria is planning to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives in the 2014-2020 programming period. The main challenges Austria is facing on its path are related to the innovation, labour market and education, reduction of CO2 emissions, and resource efficiency. The PA describes the main challenges within each of these areas in Austria, the results from the ex-ante evaluations as well as the activities and measures carried out to alleviate these problems from pp. 18-73. The PA describes in detail how the TOs chosen are to be achieved through implementing the ESI Fund programmes. Wherever possible, specific measures are also described within the funds. All the points' addresses in the question are tackled in the PA. The balance is ensured through a clear separation of each of the issues within the document. The thematic concentration has been based on the priorities and analyses in the NRP and the territorial needs tackled in the territorial analyses in the PA.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation

What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	In contrast to the 2007-2013 programming period, the number of ERDF OPs has been reduced from nine (eight for Regional Competitiveness and Employment regions - one per region - and one for a Convergence region) to one single OP resulting from the merger of different regional ERDF programmes into one programme coordinated centrally by a new Managing Authority (situated in the ÖROK). In the ESF, the number of Managing Authorities has been reduced from two to one. The general coordination of the ESIF is within the responsibility of the Federal Chancellery (BKA). In view of ensuring that the coordination also involves the Länder, the Austrian Conference on Spatial Planning (ÖROK) has been given a major coordinating role. The Länder, other responsible bodies at Länder level such as Implementing Bodies are however responsible for the integration of the measures to be carried out within each of the ESIF OPs into national and regional development policies. The coordinating body created for the purposes of preparing the PA 2014-2020 (Strat.at2020) will also be kept as a supporting coordination body in the implementation phase. Its exact role and responsibilities are yet to be defined (strategic role, coordination of reporting to the EC, monitoring of the ERDF and ESF OPs...). In AT, except for measures carried out under the EAFRD, the measures supported within the ERDF and ESF OPs only represent a small part of the policies carried out within those thematic fields. This shows the importance of well integrating the ESIF measures into national or regional policy-making. This lies within the responsibility of the Implementing Bodies at Länder level (e.g. Employment Service Offices at Länder level). The PA then also describes the arrangements foreseen for the coordination in Horizon 2020, ERASMUS+, COSME, FEAD, AMIF, LIFE (all mainly coordinated by the thematically relevant federal ministries); the EIB instruments are currently not being used in AT and there are no future plans of doing so - mainly because of the lack of any information about them at Länder level; as a result, there is no coordination mechanism foreseen.	Section 2.1
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State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The ex-ante conditionalities that are definitely applicable according to the PA are: • Anti-discrimination: “The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds “ • Equality between men and women: “The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds” • People with disabilities: “The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC” • Public procurement: “The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI funds” • State aid: “The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI funds” • Environmental arrangements: “The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA” • Statistic systems and result indicators: “The existence of a statistical basis necessary to undertake evaluations to assess the effectiveness and impact of the programmes. The existence of a system of result indicators necessary to select actions, which most effectively contribute to desired results, to monitor progress towards results and to undertake impact evaluation.” The tables 16 to 24 describe Austria's self-assessment of the fulfilment of the general ex-ante conditionalities above as well as in which fund, TO and IP the ex-ante conditionality is applied. Annex 2 of the PA describes the assessment for the individual ex-ante conditionalities within the general ones listed above. All ex-ante conditionalities, the seven general ex-ante conditionalities and the relevant thematic ex-ante conditionalities have been fulfilled according to the self-assessment in the PA.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	In chapter 4 of the PA, the measures planned for ensuring that the PA and the OPs are implemented successfully are described. One of them is e-cohesion which has already been applied in the 2007-2013 programming period in the ETC OPs. In fact, those ETC OPs led by Austria share a compatible e-cohesion system. In the ESF some measures have also been implemented through IT systems in 2007-2013 that can be classified as corresponding to the e-cohesion characteristics. In the ERDF there is also progress being done towards ensuring that the implementation of measures and policies follow the regulations. When introducing the necessary monitoring systems, particular attention will be paid to Article 125 (2) d and e of the CPR.	Section 4

Integrated approaches

What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	ITI The PA describes that the territorial approach is to be applied in a way to ensure continuity with the past and current institutional arrangements, even wherever sub-regional development initiatives are to be adapted or complemented. Every region needs to adapt the thematic focus of the ITIs to its future vision. Principles that are to be applied for the whole of Austria are to be reached among the partners, such as for instance with regards to the principles of territorial exclusion of quality criteria for local development initiatives. However, based on the current state of the discussions it seems that Austria will not be making use of the ITI instrument. CLLD In the OP for rural development, the EAFRD funding is planned to be used for LEADER measures which will be translated into CLLD measures in the future. Local Action Groups will be introduced at local level. The strategies for rural development cannot contradict those strategies decided at national level. A few ERDF-ETC OPs consider the option of using CLLD measures (pilot CLLD measures are to be implemented in Tirol and in the ETC OP Austria-Italy). The CLLD measures are to be implemented in a way that is compatible with LEADER-strategies. EUSDR Austria is strongly involved in the implementation of the EUSDR (2 Priority Area Coordinators; large network of partners through the Federal Chancellery's coordination) and there is largely agreement about the importance of the strategy for the implementation of the ESIF, not only in the context of the new Danube OP. Although the single actions of the EUSDR are not all overlapping with the measures in the ESIF OPs, the priorities of the EUSDR do match the TOs chosen for 2014-2020 which is why synergies are already created by taking the EUSDR into account when preparing the OPs. The national authorities responsible for coordinating the MRS in Austria (in addition the EUSDR the Alpine Space may gain in relevance) will be in regular contact with the ESIF OP authorities to ensure consistency and synergies.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	There are specific structures in place which focus on the policy development within a territorial integrated approach (e.g. ÖREK).	Section 3, 3.1.5

2. Belgium

General reflections		Part of the PA to be analysed
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The PA describes the results from the ex-ante evaluations carried out for each fund and programme in each Region. The results are described by Region along with descriptions of the strategies and priorities to be set for each fund, OP and region. The expected results for each TO covered in the funds, OPs and by region are then explained. For the EAFRD however, the analysis cannot follow the same structure (following the TOs selected) and therefore describes the expected results by region.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	• TO1 is covered by the ERDF and EAFRD; • TO3 by ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF; • TO4 by ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF; • TO5 by the ERDF and EAFRD, • TO6 by the EAFRD, ERDF and EMFF; • TO8 by ESF, EAFRD and EMFF, • TO9 by ESF, ERDF and EAFRD and TO10 by ESF, ERDF and EAFRD. • TO2, 7 and 11 are not covered. The tables in the relevant section of the PA show the financial allocations foreseen by TO, Fund, and by Region. There will be 3 ERDF OPs in 2014-2020 (Walloon Region, Flanders, Brussels-Capital Region), 4 ESF OPs (Brussels-Capital Region, Walloon region, German-speaking community, Flanders), (2 youth funding OPs, 1 for the Brussels-Capital Region and one for the Walloon region), 2 EAFRD OPs (PDPOIII and OP for Rural Development) and 1 EMFF OP.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The two parts are difficult to discern and no particular difference can be noticed.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The PA first describes how the partnership principle was applied in general, in the preparation process. In preparation of the PA, several meetings were held bringing together the representatives of the various institutional bodies of the federal entities between 2012 and 2013, first in the Brussels, -Capital Region, then in the Walloon Region. The Brussels Capital Region coordinated the meetings until the 30/06/2013 and the Walloon Region starting from the 1/7/2013. The PA describes chronologically the meetings (of administrative and political nature) that were held, bringing together the MAs. At the same time, the MAs held numerous meetings in the process of developing the OPs. These meetings brought together the MAs, social and economic partners as well as relevant representatives from public, regional and local entities, as well as the civil society considered relevant for the ESIF. These entities will be maintained for the implementation period of 2014-2020 to ensure a smooth coordination and an integrated approach. The PA then includes a detailed description of the processes of applying the partnership principle for each Region. It includes details about the consultation meetings held, the public consultations carried out as well as the results from these methods.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA offers a description of the disparities, the challenges and needs, as well as the growth opportunities between the various Belgian regions. It takes into account the NRP and the CSF, the Position Paper, the specific country recommendations and the disparities with the Europe 2020 Strategy. The thematic concentration of the ESIF 2014-2020 is then explained based on these observations and analyses. In fact, for each thematic policy area described by Region, after offering an analysis of the challenges and needs in the region, the PA provides an analysis on how and why the TOs chosen can contribute to improving in these particular fields.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The PA describes the coordination mechanisms in place for each fund and OP by Region. It argues that in a context where no multi-fund programmes are planned to be carried out, the coordination and the creation of synergies is seen as key for the 2014-2020 period. Other than the fact that there is a Department responsible for the Coordination of Structural Funds, present i.e. at the meetings on selecting ERDF and ESF projects, chaired by the Minister-President, and for the EAFRD an Interministerial Conference on Agricultural Policy with a permanent working group, it is difficult to discern how the OPs and ESIF are coordinated between the Regions. In fact, the coordination and management mechanisms for each Region are described in detail, but a separate section on national coordination mechanisms would have been helpful.	Section 2.1

State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	There are no general EAC specified. Because of the far-reaching federalisation in Belgium, the regions have the EAC-related powers. Therefore the authorities opted to specify the EAC in the Operational Programmes.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	A securised system has been developed in the past which allows for a central collection of the data and information and a close monitoring of the existing projects. Again, the PA describes the e-cohesion measures implemented and planned separately for each of the 4 Regions. In the Walloon Region, this includes a web-platform which had already been used in 2007-2013 and which is planned to be improved in 2014-2020 (adapting the platform to the regulatory changes and the changes in the terminology to be used such as TO and IPs). In the Flemish region, a similar system has already been used for ESF and EFRO and will be improved with 'only encoding once' as a leading principle. For e-procurement, the Flemish authorities are implementing the Federal e-procurement applications. In the Brussels-Capital Region a platform has been created which allows citizens, the civil society and other interested actors to access information. Currently, the MA is working on improving the implementation of the e-cohesion principles and the coordination between the data of the ERDF and ESF OPs. The PA offers a detailed description of the changes planned. The German Community has a very simple but functioning e-system which allows for the exchange of data and information between the authorities and the beneficiaries. The exchange with the Commission is ensuring through the SFC2014 system.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	Again, these arrangements are described separately for each Region. In the Walloon Region, only the EAFRD will be used through Leader for territorial development. The modalities are described in detail in the relevant section. In the Flemish region, CLLD will also exclusively be implemented through LEADER. This is motive by the complementary of a fund-specific approach and the more efficient allocation of means. For the Brussels-Capital Region, only a general sentence is included in the PA mentioning the plan to put in place a mechanism for better integrating citizens in urban dynamics. There is no description in relation to the German Speaking Community. With regards to ITIs, only Flanders is mentioned. There are three ITI's in Flanders (Limburg, Kempen and West-Vlaanderen), with the option to add others during the programming period. The ITI's build on existing strategic plans for the regions to use EFRO and ESF means as a catalyst. With regards to the urban dimension, a table is included showing the resources allocated for urban development under each fund; in addition, a description is offered by region, whereby in the Walloon Region a 5% soil is respected, and in the Brussels Capital Region there is mention of the focus on sustainable urban development in the ERDF OP, where innovation plays a major role. For Flanders, a specific priority 'durable urban development', which has more than 5% of EFRO means, is provided to integrate several thematic objectives (5, 6 and 9). There is no description included for the German Speaking Community. There is no mention of MRS.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	There is a table at the onset of the chapter showing all areas in difficulties and describing what those difficulties are (e.g. unemployment, youth unemployment, immigration), which geographic areas they concern, which fund and OP will target these areas and which actions are planned under the specific OP in question The intervention of the ERDF and the ESF is very balanced between both funds. This is then described in more detail for each Region.	Section 3, 3.1.5
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3. Bulgaria

General reflections	Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	ESI Funds in PA: From page 104 onwards, the PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of thematic objectives (TOs) Bulgaria will be focusing on the next programming period. In fact, Bulgaria has selected all 11 TOs and they are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. Respectively, the contributions of these funds is the following: the ERDF (36.4%), the ESF (15.5%), the CF (23.3%), the EAFRD (23.9%) and the EMFF (0.9%). The selection of the TOs and the Investment Priorities (IPs) has been based mainly on the 2014 country-specific recommendations of the Council toward the National Reform Programme 2014-2020 and the National Development Programme: Bulgaria 2020 and the measures contained within these documents. Coordination: Information on areas where different programmes co-financed by ESIF are complementary to each other is presented in Annex 2 of the PA. The information is structured by OP interventions relevant to the thematic objectives and PA priorities. The table presents how the necessary synergy of investments is ensured in a way to achieve complex and focused impact on main identified country needs and priorities defined. The principles of complementarity and coordination of the EU support are implemented at 4 levels: coordination of the support among programmes, funded by ESIF and lack of overlapping among investments' objectives; coordination of the ESIF support with the national instruments; coordination of the ESIF support with other EU programmes; coordination of the ESIF support with the EIB support. Described are the mechanism to apply these principles as well as the appointed key actors, responsibilities and obligations at the different stages of programming, implementation, monitoring and control of operational programs.
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	In the 2014-2020 programming period, there will be: 2 ERDF OPs (Regions in Growth, Competitiveness), 2 ESF OPs (Human Resource Development, Good Governance), 1 ESF&ERDF OP (Science and Education for Smart Growth), 2 ERDF&CF OPs (Environment, Transport), 1 EAFRD OP (Rural Development) and 1 EMFF OP (Maritime and Fisheries). The number and the type of the programmes is similar to those for the former period, except: OP Technical Assistance and OP Administrative capacity 2007-2013 are incorporated in 1 new OP Good Governance 2014-2020 The 7th OP in the new period is OP Science and Education for Smart Growth, managed by the new MA established in the Ministry of Education and Science Also, there is a difference in the management of HRD OP as there will be no intermediary bodies in the new period (in the former period there were 3 – the Employment Agency, the Agency for Social Assistance and the Ministry of Education and Science).

How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The first part of the PA includes the majority of topics and issues concerning thematic concentration, the Europe 2020 priorities, territorial analyses, OP architecture and ex-ante evaluations. It also describes the TOs chosen and the way the ESIF will be used to serve them. It also includes the horizontal topics as well as details about how the TOs will be achieved through the use of ESIF. On the other hand, the second part includes analyses on the territorial development instruments (ITI, CLLD, etc.). In general, it can be summarized that the more analytical but also the politically sensitive issues are tackled in Part 1 compared to Part 2 of the PA.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The main programming stages, the key participants in the process and their respective responsibilities are regulated by an act of the Council of Ministers envisaging the establishment of an inter-ministerial working group for the preparation of the strategic and the programming documents of the Republic of Bulgaria for the management of Funds under the CSF of the EU for the programming period 2014 – 2020. The working group includes representatives of: • Central administration (the authorities responsible for the EU funds management in the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods; the governmental agencies responsible for the national policies related to the thematic objectives); • National Statistical Institute; Commission for Protection against Discrimination; the National Council for Cooperation on Ethnic and Integration Issues; • Wide range of representatives of different groups of partners the six Regional Development Councils of the NUTS II regions; all nationally representative organizations of employers and employees (BCCI, BIA, BICA, CEIBG, CITUB, PODKREPA LC); representatives of the nationally representative organizations of and for people with disabilities (National Association of the Employers of Disabled People, National Union of Worker Producers' Cooperatives, Bulgarian Association for Persons with Intellectual Disabilities, etc.); NAMRB; the academic society (TU, Sofia University, University for National and World Economy, etc.); non-governmental organizations (European Institute Foundation, Open Society Institute, National Patients' Organization, etc.). All key decisions related to the programming process and the separate sections of the Partnership Agreement are subject to discussions and approval by a working group. Members of this working group are the chairs of the working groups that are responsible for the development of the OPs in order to ensure synergy and consistency between the documents – PA and OPs. Moreover, with a view to ensuring a wider involvement of the civil society in the programming process, public consultations are held at the different stages of preparation of the Partnership Agreement and the programmes for the 2014-2020 period. Another opportunity for active participation of the civil society in the process is provided by means of publishing the entire information related to the work of the working group for the preparation of the PA on the Single information web-portal for the SCF (www.eufunds.bg).	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA describes how Bulgaria is planning to achieve the Europe 2020 objectives in the 2014-2020 programming period. As all of the TOs are to be addressed by Bulgaria, they are therefore related to: technology development and innovations; ICT; SME competitiveness; low carbon economy; adaptation to climate change; environment preservation; sustainable transportation; sustainable employment and mobility; social inclusion; LLL; capacity building. The PA describes the main challenges within each of these areas in Bulgaria, the results from the ex-ante evaluations as well as the activities and measures carried out to alleviate these problems from pp. 9-63. The PA describes in detail how the TOs chosen are to be achieved through implementing the ESI Fund programmes. Specific measures are also described within the funds. The thematic concentration has been based on the priorities and analyses in the National Strategy for Regional Development 2012-2022, National Spatial Development Concept and the territorial needs tackled in the territorial analyses in the PA.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Information on areas where different programmes co-financed by ESIF are complementary to each other is presented in Annex 2 of the PA. The information is structured by OP interventions relevant to the thematic objectives and PA priorities. The table presents how the necessary synergy of investments is ensured in a way to achieve complex and focused impact on main identified country needs and priorities defined. The role and functions of every participant in the process are specified below: Responsible Deputy Prime Minister / minister with EU funds' coordination and management functions - coordinates activities related to programming, management, monitoring and control of the programmes. Council for Coordination of the EU Funds Management – its members are the ministers responsible for policies subject to support from ESI Funds. Representatives of the units competent on horizontal issues also participate in the Council's meetings. Monitoring Committee of the Partnership Agreement - monitors the implementation of the engagements included in the PA, including the application of the effective coordination and complementarity of the ESI Funds support by the different funds. Monitoring Committees of respective Programmes - their members ensure that the complementarity and coordination principle is met at the implementation stage – achievement of the targets, priorities and the implementation of specific measures set in the different Programmes. Central Coordination Unit - ensures the overall process of coordination at operational level including: the development of necessary legislation, methodologies and guidelines; support of the work of the CCEUFM and the MC of the Partnership Agreement; coordination mechanism for information and publicity; overall monitoring of the Programmes' implementation; organization of Working groups and meetings. Managing Authorities - at operation and project level complementarity and coordination is ensured by the Managing Authorities and the Paying Agency for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development.	Section 2.1

National mechanism for coordinating the activities under the EU Danube Strategy - the coordination of the programming process as well as the implementation of the Partnership Agreement and the Programmes with the EU Strategy for the Danube Region is achieved through the National mechanism for coordinating the participation of Bulgaria in the EU Danube Strategy which was established with a CM decision from 2012.

Other mechanisms - additional mechanisms for coordination and complementarity of the Programmes are ensured through Working groups, expert networks and discussions regarding preparation and implementation of the different Programmes and operations, based on the partnership principle and including representatives of socio-economic partners and stakeholders.

Coordination and complementarity with other EU programmes and instruments are ensured at the level of preparation of different Operational programmes and PA:

Environment: Complementarity of the ESI Funds support on NATURA 2000 is envisaged with support from other financial sources, e.g. LIFE Programme, INTERREG, Seventh Framework Programme, the EEA Financial Mechanism etc.

Science, education and innovations: There are wide range of opportunities under priority 1 "Excellent Science" of the Framework programme Horizon 2020 for complementing and upgrading interventions co-financed by Operational programme "Science and education for smart growth"

Development of SMEs and innovations: Complementarity and coordination will be ensured between Operational Programme "Innovation and Competitiveness" and the measures under Framework programmes "Horizon 2020" and the programme for competitiveness of enterprises and SMEs (COSME)

Judiciary: The programme for Bulgarian-Swiss Cooperation and the Norway mechanism will support structural and legislative changes in the field of juvenile justice and etc.

Some of the main areas where ESI Funds will complement the national funds are mainly related to conducting policies in the field of science, innovations, education, healthcare, social services, as well as those associated with environmental protection, mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

Thus in the period 2014-2020, the ESI Funds will support the activities in the following areas:

- Fundamental science research and development (Bulgarian Science Fund);
- Innovations (National Innovation Fund);
- Entrepreneurship (Schemes, providing seed capital for start-ups)
- Modernization of health, social and educational infrastructure (capital expenditures)
- Programmes and projects of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, encouraging equality or targeting unemployed and/or concrete vulnerable groups: Policy on gender equality – Programme "Gender equality"; National Programme "A new opportunity for employment"; National Programme "From social support to ensuring employment"; National programme "Activating non-active persons"; National programme for employment and training disabled people; Programme "Career start"; National programme " Assistants to disabled people"; National programme "Credit without interest for disabled people"; National programme "Support for retirement"; National programme "Melpomena"; encouraging measures for unemployed people and employers according to Employment Encouragement Act with multi-annual action. The respective units responsible for the specific policies are developing an analysis for complementarity among OPHRD 2014-2020

	and instruments, funded by national funds; - Programmes and projects in the field of education, which need further support to ensure sustainability - Strategy to reduce early school leaving and Project for support the integrated training and education of children and pupils with special educational needs; - Provision of state budget financial resources aimed at funding activities from the National Programme for Disaster Protection, included in the annual plan for its implementation, as well as resources for contingency costs for rescue and emergency disaster works, urgent recovery works and provision of support to individuals for restoration of residential buildings affected by disasters, etc. Bulgaria intends to upgrade its experience and cooperation with the EIB and to extend the scope of the financial instrument to be applied in the 2014-2020 period. The use of financial instruments is foreseen for investments related to SME development, energy efficiency and urban development. The financial resources provided from Operational programme "Environment" as a grant can also be combined in an appropriate way with loans and guarantees from EIB. This provides also a possibility to use the experience of external EIB experts on finance and management for the successful realization of the projects by the beneficiaries or for managing the financial engineering instruments, such as JEREMIE and JESSICA.	
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Provided that in the 2014-2020 period Bulgaria will programme ESI Funds under all 11 thematic objectives, all general and thematic ex-ante conditionalities of these funds are applicable. A summary of the ex-ante conditionalities implementation at national level is presented in Annex 3 of the PA. An Action plan on implementation of all applicable general ex-ante conditionalities at national level, not fulfilled, including the respective deadlines and responsible institutions is presented in Annex 4. An Action plan on implementation of all applicable thematic ex-ante conditionalities at national level, not fulfilled up to the moment, including the respective deadlines and responsible institutions is presented in Annex 5. Regarding the implementation presented in details in the annexes referred, a conclusion can be drawn that by 31.12.2016 no ex-ante conditionality will remain non-fulfilled. Conditionalities that will be implemented last are: • 2 general ex-ante conditionalities: 4 and 7 • 8 thematic ex-ante conditionalities 3.1., 5.1., 5.2., 6.1., 7.1., 7.2., 7.3. and 9.3. The present implementation status in general (not related to the adopted PA) shows that significant number of conditionalities remain unfulfilled even though most of them were expected to be completed in 2014.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	In chapter 4 of the PA are described the 3 electronic systems that aim to ensure that the PA and OPs are implemented successfully: UMIS, IACS and Axter Popeye System: UMIS (Unified Management Information System) During the 2007-2013 programming period, the management of all operational programmes financed by the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund in Bulgaria used a single Unified Management Information System - UMIS. The system will be the main instrument for implementation of e-cohesion in Bulgaria. The system will allow for the electronic reporting and electronic communication in project implementation, which is one of the key instruments for reduction of the administrative burden	Section 4

UMIS is implemented entirely as a web based application. All bodies taking part in the implementation of the OPs funded by ERDF, CF and ESF (Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies, Certifying Authority, Audit Authority and beneficiaries) use the same information system. The interoperability between them is assured by the common data and the procedures in place in the system that all involved parties need to follow. The existing functionalities provide a significant reduction in the administrative burden and costs to beneficiaries, but in order to fulfil the requirements for E-Cohesion additional functionalities will have to be introduced.

IACS (Integrated Administration and Control System)

Implementing the function of Paying agency, in State Fund "Agriculture" and IACS has been developed, comprising the following independent systems:

system for registration of applicants and applications for support - maintained by the Paying Agency;

identification system for agricultural parcels - maintained by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food;

system for identification and registration of animals - maintained by the Bulgarian Agency for Food Safety;

integrated control system - maintained by the Paying Agency.

Currently, a designed interface is created for electronic data exchange between the UMIS, IACS for the Rural Development Programme and the System used for OP Development of Fisheries Sector - Axter Popeye (which will continue to be used during programming period 2014 – 2020). The interface between UMIS and IACS covers daily data transmission through xml files from the IACS and their storage in UMIS. Thus there is detailed information about the candidates, projects, and contracts under OP Development of Fisheries Sector. It is envisaged to improve the information system by developing additional modules for management and control, which would simplify procedures and reduce the administrative burden. The existing web-based IACS applications for publicity and information to the beneficiaries under the RDP will be further developed and improved.

Axter Popeye System

The AXTER POPEYE System is designed to manage European projects for the needs of the Executive Agency for Fisheries and Aquaculture. In order to improve service delivery to citizens and businesses by speeding up the process of administering and reviewing project proposals and in order to provide information electronically, there is an upcoming launch of activities related to the creation of a public information portal serving applicants in Rural Development Programme. Improvement of the system is envisaged by developing additional modules for management and control, including the implementation and monitoring of Local development strategies. There will be an option for data processing and exchange with the IACS system.

With the aim of unifying the working processes, the elaboration of modules and maintenance of a software system for processing and monitoring projects under the Maritime and Fisheries Programme for 2014 – 2020, which will be compatible with UMIS 2020, is planned.

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	Community led local development For the period 2007 - 2013 Bulgaria for the first time implemented the LEADER approach effectively as a tool for decentralized management and integrated local development in rural areas. As a result, 35 local initiative groups were established, covering 57 rural municipalities in the country. Furthermore, for the first time there is support for the local development by the European Fisheries Fund. 6 groups were established, covering the territories of 17 municipalities. The main challenges met by the implementation of CLLD in the programming period 2014-2020 concerns the need to create employment and to use the local potential to achieve growth and to improve quality of life and incomes of local people. In the new programming period, the application of CLLD aims to achieve better thematic concentration, support on interventions that have the greatest added value in terms of addressing the economic and social disparities in the development of the territories. The main priorities will be related to TOs 1, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10. Implementing the CCLD approach will include: • Preparatory support; • Implementation of operations under the community-led local development strategy; • Preparation and implementation of the local action group's cooperation activities. Integrated territorial investments Currently it is not envisaged to implement the Integrated territorial investments approach as per Regulation 1303/2013. There will be specific targeted support for the Severozapaden (North-western) region (the territorial approach for targeted support to the Severozapaden region under the 2014 – 2020 OPs will be based on a strategy for targeted support to the region; the focus will be on the use of the local potential while taking into account the main challenges and problems in the region but there is nothing more specific included into the PA). Sustainable urban development Referring to the National Spatial Development Concept for 2013 - 2025 Bulgaria, intends to provide considerable support from ESIF for integrated actions for sustainable urban development in the 2014-2020 period in order to tackle the economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges in urban areas. The proposed approach for support to cities generating growth and jobs in pursuance of art. 7 of Regulation 1301/2013, situated on the territory of the country in a balanced manner, is aimed at minimizing the negative impact of migration. Main priority areas for cooperation Bulgaria will continue to actively develop the territorial cooperation under the three components of European territorial cooperation, namely: the bilateral cross-border cooperation (5 programmes with all neighbouring countries - 2 on ERDF and 3 on IPA) transnational cooperation programmes – “Danube” and “Balkan – Mediterranean”, the interregional cooperation and joint border cooperation programme „Black Sea” under ENPI. All these programmes will be of complementary character to national programmes, with emphasis on the	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	specifics of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. For the period 2014 - 2020 Bulgaria will continue to be involved in achieving the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region and the EU Strategy for "Blue growth".	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	Using ESIF Bulgaria will implement an integrated approach to support the people at greatest risk of social exclusion. Analysis of the differences highlighted as being at risk of discrimination and/or exclusion the following groups: - people living in poverty and material deprivation; - economically inactive and long term unemployed; - children and youth, including institutionalized children; - people with disabilities, including placed in specialized institutions; - elderly people who cannot rely on the support of relatives and friends; - representatives of vulnerable ethnic communities such as the Roma people. Table 15 on p 156 presents information about the contribution of the ESIF to address the specific needs of the groups at highest risk of discrimination and social exclusion – identified needs, major groups of interventions to be supported and OPs.	Section 3, 3.1.5

4. Croatia

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The central government body in charge of Regional Development and EU Funds is The Coordination Body (founded by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds (MRDEUF)). The institutional framework for the management of ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and EMFF, is defined by the Act referred to in Chapter 2.1, establishing: (a) the Management and Control systems at the level of each ESIF programme, (b) the coordinating Body performing horizontal and coordinating functions for all ESI Funds, and (c) an Independent Audit Body. For the “OP Competitiveness and Cohesion” and “OP Efficient Human Resources” financed by the ERDF, Cohesion Fund and ESF, two MAs are established: the MRDEUF for the ERDF/Cohesion Fund programme (Competitiveness and Cohesion) and the Ministry of Labour and Pension System (MLPS) for the ESF programme (OP Efficient Human Resources). As for the Rural Development Programme financed by the EAFRD, the Managing Authority will be the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). Regarding the Operational Programme for Fisheries financed by the EMFF, the 2007-2013 Management and Control structure remains. MoA is designated as the Managing Authority and as the Certifying Authority (different Directorates). More detailed information can be found at 2.5.1, p435 of the PA	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	Programmes architecture: Cohesion policy will be delivered by 4 operational programmes (OPs): • Competitiveness and Cohesion -national OP co-financed by ERDF and CF (85% financed by ESI, ref. „Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014 - 2020 2014HR16M1OP001 – 1.2“, Table 18a, p.337) • Efficient Human Resources - national OP co-financed by ESF (85% financed by ESI, ref. “Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014 - 20202014HR05M9OP001– 1.3“,Table 18.a, p189) • Rural Development Programme – OP co-financed by EAFRD (85% financed by ESI, ref., • Fisheries Programme – OP co-financed by EMFF (ca 60% financed by ESI, ref. “OP Fisheries-DRAFT”, 8.2, p119; Financial allocation: In 2014-2020 Croatia is allocated around EUR 8.61 billion for Cohesion Policy (ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund - [excluding the transfer of EUR 456.147.292 to the Connecting Europe Facility]) including EUR 66.2 million for the Youth Employment Initiative and EUR 146.1million for territorial cooperation. Additional EUR 2 billion will be devoted to development of the agricultural sector and rural areas from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The allocation for European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) amounts to some EUR 252.6 million.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement – Table 1 and 2 on p.4)

How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	In the PA there is no clear division between the part not being subject to EC decision and the essential parts.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	Programming period: Representatives of social partners have been included and actively participated in work of Technical Work Groups (TWGs) dealing with environment, transport, employment, social policy, education and public administration. It is planned to continue the cooperation with relevant institutions and NGOs, which were already engaged in the programming process. In this manner, the continuity and ownership of programming and implementation will be ensured. Public consultation: A series of public consultation events and online discussions was organized in 2013 and 2014 (a summarised list of attendees is provided in Annex 5, p65 ; more detailed description of events can be found on p112 of the PA and at MRDEUF web pages ; Public consultation conference held on 6/7 June 2013 in Zagreb - Possibility of commenting on identified areas of intervention was enabled via MRDEUF's Web page resulting in a great public engagement - A two-day workshop with expert groups held in September 2013 - Consultations with the Croatian Parliament were held on 25 March and 15 October 2014; - A three-day Partnership consultation event held in December 2013 with participation from all the TWGs including the Ministry of Agriculture - At regional level a series of informational events called "Regional Days of EU Funds" was organized in 2013 and 2014 Implementation period : It is stated in the PA that the Monitoring Committees (MCs) of each programme, will include representatives of the civil society organisations, social partners, economic partners and the private sector, local and regional level authorities, including urban authorities, and academic community representatives in accordance with the Art. 5 of the CPR. The thematic sub-committees of the National Coordinating Committee (NCC) may include representatives of partners, as appropriate according to theme.	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	When taking a look at the actual spending plans for ESI Funds the following key points can be mentioned (to be understood as the ranking of ESI contribution): - as expected a dominant weight of the upgrade of infrastructure in the key sectors TO 6 (waste and water management) and TO 7 (transport and energy networks) – the contribution from CF is focused on environmental infrastructure (i.e. TO 6), - in total these two TOs account for 34% of the overall ESIF envelope for CR - Ranking third in terms of EU contribution is TO 3 dedicated to the competitiveness of SMEs - Ranking fourth is TO 9 – social inclusion One has to state that the general outline reveals the need for a marked catch-up in the field of (environmental infrastructure) which CR shares with most of EU 12. In other fields the general breakdown according to TOs shows significant allocations to TO 1 (RDTI) and TO 4 (Low carbon economy) which must be seen as quite progressive approach given the difficulties many Member States (MS) have faced with similar programmes in the period 2007-2013. The comparatively strong weight of TOs 1 and 4 is for sure an acknowledgement of the key elements of Europe 2020. With a view to overarching national policy frameworks the Croatian Government adopted in November 2014 The Strategy of the Government Programmes for the period 2015- 2017, the content of which was significantly influenced by two key documents of the European semester - National Reform Programme and the Convergence Programme. The Strategy of the Government programmes includes methods of fulfilling key reform measures in the field of public finances, financial sector, labour market and competitiveness. The main strategic goal defined by the Strategy is: Growth and employment in a competitive market economy operating in a European welfare state of the 21st century. This strategic goal is achieved by fulfilling 12 general objectives defined in the strategy. Economic competitiveness, macro-economic stability and regional development are among these 12 key pillars. Neither the PA nor the national reform programmes do prioritise certain policy aspects but in a tentative assessment of the broad-brush picture the dominant issues of developing, expanding and modernising high-grade environmental and transport infrastructure as well as the attempt to develop and strengthen a competitive economy clearly dominates the first ESIF period for Croatia (CR). Approaches based on specific needs of territories do not have a similar weight in the overarching strategy documents. Given the broad needs in many policy sectors the issue of thematic concentration is certainly less important for Croatia compared to other Member States where Cohesion Policy has been implemented for longer periods and basic infrastructure development is definitely not an issue of EU Cohesion Policy. The PA for CR includes all 11 Thematic Objectives though – as has been mentioned above - with a marked concentration on certain aspects.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Following the completion of the programming exercise, it is intended that the Coordination Committee, who's role in the programming of ESI Funds for 2014-2020 has been described in Chapter 1.5, is used as a permanent coordination mechanism in the form of the National Coordination Committee (NCC) ensuring the overall coordination and monitoring of implementation of ESI Funds (mainstream operational programmes under the ERDF, ESF, Cohesion Fund, EMFF and EAFRD and cooperation programmes under the IPA and ERDF) and other Union and relevant national funding instruments, including European Territorial Cooperation programmes. NCC supported by the thematic sub-committees and technical secretariat is intended to progressively substitute other currently existing coordination and monitoring platforms, (2.1.2., p124). Croatia intends to apply for a EIB loan in order to facilitate the implementation of ESI Funds in period 2014-2020. There are also funds from donor countries (non-member states such as Norway and Switzerland) which might be used as match-funding.	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Out of 6 applicable general ex ante conditionalities only one (GExAC 6) - "The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA") is fulfilled. GExAC 1-5 are either partially or not fulfilled. GExAC 1 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds. GExAC 2 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds. GExAC 3 - The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCPRD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC. GExAC 4 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI Funds. GExAC 5 - The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI Funds. From a practical perspective it is evident that the key challenge is the sound, correct and efficient application of procurement law: this is the key requirement which has to be met at the start of the major ESIF programmes. Non-compliance with this obligation poses a serious risk throughout programme implementation - for the beneficiaries as well as for the programme authorities. Details of applicable general EAC at national level for which national bodies are responsible and which are completely or partially unfulfilled, indication of the bodies responsible for their fulfilment, the actions to be taken at national level to fulfil these ex-ante conditionalities, and the timeframe for the implementation of such actions are given in (ii)Table, p387 of the PA.	Section 2.3

Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	Related to the management of the ERDF, ESF and CF programmes in 2007-2013 period, Republic of Croatia has established a single MIS – SCF MIS, which will be used in 2014-2020 period as well. In terms of the system itself, current version of SCF MIS is intended to be upgraded to the new requirements of the CPR and is intended to be used as the single MIS for ERDF, ESF and CF programmes in 2014-2020 period. Upgrading process is divided across three phases: As the first phase of the upgrade, it was intended to perform thorough evaluation of the functioning of the current SCF MIS as well as to prepare overall analysis of the required upgrades of the system in line with all requirements of the CPR and respective implementing acts. This phase was supposed to be completed by December 2014; During the second phase, system modules will be developed, primarily to ensure processing of wider scope of data. This phase was intended to start in January 2015; In the third phase, SCF MIS will be extended with a Beneficiary portal (BP), the development of which will start in June 2015. BP will enable electronic exchange of information and documents between applicants/beneficiaries and MSC bodies as well as automatic exchange of documents between SCF MIS - BP and different databases of state institutions (such as state treasury, tax register, state aid register, company register etc.). Funding under EAFRD and EMFF, including key information on each beneficiary and project, will be recorded and maintained electronically in the Paying Agency for Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development (PAAFRD). The Electronic Information System is already set up in PAAFRD, but further customisation is needed in order to ensure proper monitoring and evaluation system. AGRINET is a web-based application for electronic and on-line submission of requests (for support/payment/changes of projects) by applicant/beneficiary under EAFRD and EMFF interventions. The application has automatic crosschecks of information provided by the beneficiaries, with available records maintained by PAAFRD and/or other public institution. There is a clear intention of including all e-Governance solutions by the time of their availability. AGRINET is currently being updated to be compliant with the 2014-2020 requirements. The PA states that the SCF-MIS system is to be linked (phase3 of the upgrade) to systems used for recording the data on EAFRD and EMFF funded projects as well as ensuring electronic exchange of data with European Commission ARACHNE system. The requirements of the CPR and related implementing acts will be respected. During the upgrade process alternative technical solutions for detecting irregularities and double financing are being explored such as exchange of electronic data related to all ESI beneficiaries and supported operations between MCS bodies. No Acts on e-government/e-cohesion are mentioned. No table of deadlines included.	Section 4
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Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	CLLD The process of territorial development involving local stakeholders in Croatia started in 2013 by implementation of LEADER in rural areas through establishment of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) under the Pre-accession Programme for Rural Development (IPARD). This experience indicates that the involvement of local citizens and stakeholders in policy-making is still very new and the capacity level of human resources at the local level is low. The coverage of the rural area with LAGs funded under IPARD is insufficient as the selected 42 LAGs cover about 69% of the national territory and 34% of the total population. The CLLD mechanism will be continued in Croatia in the 2014-2020 period through the LEADER approach supported by EAFRD (under the RDP), as well as through establishment of FLAGS supported by EMFF. In order to set up CLLD in fisheries areas, the EMFF MA will use existing model of management and delivery from rural LAGs adapted to fisheries sector. Croatia will use a mono-fund CLLD-approach (i.e. one local development strategy for one fund, the EMFF or the EAFRD) but it will not be an obstacle to connect the local development initiatives in fisheries planning with local development initiatives in rural development, thus utilizing their previous experience in the LEADER approach. At present, it is not intended to implement CLLD through ERDF and ESF. The indicative financial allocation for implementation of CLLD through EAFRD is set at 3% of total budget for Rural Development Programme 2014–2020. The indicative financial allocation for implementation of CLLD through EMFF is set at 7,5% of total budget for OP Fisheries 2014 -2020. ITI The sustainable urban development concept will be implemented in Croatia exclusively through the ITI mechanism. Possibility to apply for ITI mechanism implementation in initial stage will be offered only to 7 largest urban centres with the highest population concentration and capacities to implement projects under this mechanism: urban agglomerations of Zagreb, Osijek, Rijeka and Split with more than 100,000 inhabitants and cities of Zadar, Slavonski Brod and Pula, with more than 50,000 inhabitants in central settlements. The final decision on ITIs to be implemented in Croatia will be based on competition between urban centres leading to selection of approx. 4 individual ITIs. Indicative allocation for integrated actions for sustainable urban development under ERDF amounts to 6.32 % of total allocation for the Fund. Also ESF will contribute to SUD with EUR 42 million and the Cohesion Fund with EUR 50 million. Macro-regional strategies: Croatia is part of two macro-regional strategies, European Strategy for Danube Region (EUSDR) and the emerging European Strategy for Adriatic and Ionian Region (EUSAIR). EUSDR: The opportunities defined for sustainable and coherent development of the Danube Region, as well	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	as Croatian priorities in the context of EUSDR, were analysed and taken into account when selecting the Thematic Objectives and defining the Investment priorities. Croatia is especially interested to ensure coordination and complementarity between ESI Funds and actions implemented in the context of EUSDR within the Priority Area 1A "To improve mobility and intermodality of inland waterways" which is coordinated by Austria and Romania. Table 27 in PA Annex shows areas of complementarity between ESI Funds and EUSDR. EUSAIR: The Croatian priorities in the context of EUSAIR which activities should be coordinated together with ESI Funds are integrated in all pillars of the strategy according to the conclusion of the National Committee and subsequently the Government. Croatia identifies all EUSAIR pillars as important and relevant for economic growth and job creation in the country. Therefore, it will equally participate in all of them. Table 28 in the PA Annex shows areas of complementarity between ESI Funds and EUSAIR.	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The highest geographical concentration of poverty factors (measured by national statistics at the county and local level) influencing the share of people at risk of poverty can be found predominantly in rural areas in the east, central and the south of the country alongside the Croatian borderline to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia as the areas affected the most by the recent destructive Homeland war (designated also as the areas of special state concern). Poverty mapping will be done to precisely define geographical areas most affected by poverty and degradation, though currently available statistical data, analysis of regional development index and public evidence-bases provide clear indication of the areas with geographical concentration of poverty and social exclusion at county and municipality level. Based on poverty mapping results integrated packages will be proposed. In the short-term, in parallel with the completion of poverty mapping and strategic and policy-related work, calculated by use of socio-economic data available at the municipality level regarding unemployment, demographics, level of education, portion of population on social welfare with one town that meet criteria of significant Roma population. The integrated regeneration pilot project will incorporate a programme of projects funded by the Croatian state (central and local), co-financed with ESIF funding and supported by the private sector. The regeneration programme in small towns (referring to the pilot projects as described) will be implemented by combining ERDF and ESF measures without the use of EAFRD and EMFF measures. Poverty mapping will be contracted by the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds through open procurement procedure. (ref. „Operational Programme Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014 - 2020 2014HR16M1OP001 – 1.2“, p299/bottom) In both documents, i.e. the PA and the OP Competitiveness and Cohesion it is not clearly stated neither when the exercise of poverty mapping will be completed nor the intended financial allocation for it.	Section 3, 3.1.5

5. Cyprus

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	ESI Funds in PA: The PA describes in section 1.3.1 the overall framework consisting of the Common Strategic Framework, the National Reform Programme, the Council Recommendations, the “Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality”³⁰) and the Europe 2020 Strategy. The PA identifies five so called “Financing Priorities” which also address the thematic coordination among ESI funds, namely: Support for the Restructuring of the Cypriot Economy and Enhancing Competitiveness addressed by TO1, TO2, TO3, TO7, TO11 (ERDF oriented with EAFRD, EMFF elements on TO3 and ESF on TO11); Upgrading Human Resources, Promoting Employment and Social Cohesion addressed by TO8, TO9, TO10 (ESF oriented with EAFRD elements and EMFF on TO8 and TO9) Protection and Efficient Use of Resources addressed by TO4, TO5, TO6 (ERDF/CF oriented with EAFRD, EMFF elements). Hence the county has selected all 11 TOs and they are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. Respectively, the contributions of these funds is the following: the ERDF (33,9%), the ESF (15%), the CF (31,2%), the EAFRD (15,3%) and the EMFF (4,6%). In the chapter 1.3 “Thematic Objectives and Results per Fund” (p.94-129) the priority “thematic units” are defined, including their aims and sectoral foci. For each of them a delineation of results among ESI Fund is provided at the end of each TO Section, allowing the immediate recognition of the synergies of the Funds. These sections are repetitive to Table 5 “Expected Results per Thematic Objective and Fund” provided in the pages 81-88.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	In the 2014-2020 programming period, there will be seven national sectoral OPs and 13 regional OPs. These are: • OP Competitiveness and Sustainable Development (ERDF 292,3 Million EUR + CF 269,5 Million EUR); • OP Employment, Human Resources and Social Cohesion (ESF 129,4 Million EUR + YEI 11,5 Million EUR); • RDP Rural Development (EAFRD 132,2 Million EUR); • OP “Sea” (EMFF 39,7 Million EUR).	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)

³⁰ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:62013TO0289>

How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The first part of the PA includes the analytical part. This is very thorough, identifying main needs on a selection of topics which is similar but not identical to the TO categories. It is further defining territorial structures and specificities of them in a chapter "Territorial Development". It summarizes the status quo and the obstacles related to the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets. It is augmented by the summary of the Ex-Ante Evaluation. It also summarises on the conclusions out of the needs analysis and the two main dimensions for interventions (addressing structural weaknesses and challenging the crisis impact) in Ch.1.1.5 p.58f and defines the main challenges related to these two "dimensions". In 1.1.6, p.62ff it outlines the 3 thematic financing priorities (see pt.1) and describes the relation of these priorities to the 11 Thematic Objectives and the expected results for each of them. These aspects are further formulated in the content of the OPs and the budget allocations. It is supplemented by the description of the horizontal principles and some technical details. This part is of high quality and addresses the most important development aspects and dilemmas of the country. The second part is more technical and analyses the coordination structures and the territorial development instruments (ITI, CLLD, etc.) and the provisions for an efficient implementation.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	In Chapter 1.5.1 the PA presents the core Working Group of the PA development consisting of the General Directorate European Projects, Coordination and Development (former Office of Planning), as the National Planning Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, as responsible for the EAFRD and EMFF OPs. Due to the small size of the country this is a coherent and well integrated group. The stakeholders have been involved along three categories, namely: State authorities, local self government organisations; Economic and Social Partners; NGOs and foundations. The list contained in Annex 1 is extensive and comprehensive. Since February 2012 a number of events was organised and early in 2013 the draft PA was circulated among the stakeholders. The final draft was presented in April 2014 and the last contributions were integrated in the version submitted to the EC. Special attention was given to the RIS3 with extensive involvement of the private business sectors via field research. Also provisions for the inclusion of the stakeholders in the Annual Progress Reports are listed. Another opportunity for active participation of the civil society in the process is provided by means of publishing the entire information related to the work of the working groups for the preparation of the PA on the Single information web-portal for the SCF www.structuralfunds.org.cy.	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The contribution of the PA to the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets is provided thoroughly and with able consideration. The PA provides a synopsis of the main reasons for the deviation of the Cypriot performance to the Europe 2020 target values in section.1.1.2, p.8f. The Ex-ante Evaluation (section1.2.3, p.79f) testifies the coherence to the Europe 2020 giving emphasis on the R&D and the CO2 targets and the challenges in achieving them. Regarding early school leavers and tertiary education achievements Cyprus is already above EU average, while targets on employment and poverty have been affected by the crisis. The PA is claiming to have incorporated the Recommendations of the Council and the requirements of the “Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality” in its Europe 2020 alignment.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation

What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Information on Coordination is provided in Ch.1.5.1 and Ch.2.1. The “General Directorate European Projects, Coordination and Development” (former Office of Planning), acts as the National Planning Authority and is responsible for the Coordination. The coordination will be enhanced by the operation of the common multi indicator system and common indicators where possible. Two further collective bodies, also active in the programming and consultation phase, are constituted: • The Coordination Committee for Planning and Strategic Monitoring consisting of the General Director of the National Planning Authority and her counterparts from the line ministries; • The Consulting Committee for Planning and Strategic Monitoring consisting of representatives of the stakeholders consulted in the programming phase (See pt. 4). These Committees are entitled to set-up sub-committees for specific actions requiring the involvement of several authorities, e.g. on integrated urban development. Coordination is further enhanced by the fact that concerning ERDF/CF and ESF the programmes are multi-fund OPs and the three financing priorities are thematically focused but funds-overarching. This is especially the case for interventions on NATURA 2000, Climate Change Management, and Water Resources Management combining ERDF/CF and EAFRD resources or interventions in vocational training by the ESF assisted by ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF. Further coordination topics refer to the CAP 1st pillar and EAFRD Union Priorities 4 and 5 of the 2nd pillar on “greening”. Finally and due to the small size of the country the National Planning Authority is also responsible for most other European programmes such as CEF, HORIZON 2020, ERASMUS+, Leonardo DaVinci etc.. The sole exception is LIFE managed by the Environment Department.	Section 2.1
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State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Based on the self-assessment conducted by the national planning authorities, the situation is: • Out of the GExAC fulfilled are GExAC 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Not fulfilled are GExAC 6 and 7. The latter is addressed in the course of the set-up of the management system for the period 2014-2020. • 11 thematic EAC are fulfilled. Not fulfilled are 1.1, 1.2, 2.2, 3.1, 5.1, 6.1a, 6.2, 8.6, 9.1, 10.3 and 10.4. EAC 3.1 cannot be fulfilled at the time being due to the conditions imposed by the “Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality”; EAFRD specific conditionalities are fulfilled and are integrated in the RDP while information on the EMFF is not available.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	The Integrated Information System (OPS) used in the former periods has been adapted. The OPS is fully compatible with the SFC2007 of the EC and is consisting of the following modules: • Programming; • Introduction and modification of projects • Monitoring; • Control and verification; • Money flows and • Reporting. The system is online accessible and supported by a helpdesk. Some problems have been reported by non-public users and by the fact that the Audit Authority is using their own system; hence delays and errors are possible. Upgrades solving those problems are planned, while the full electronic submission and full interoperability with other public databases e.g. the Financial Information and Management Accounting System (FIMAS) is also considered in compliance to the e-cohesion and audit trails requirements. A scoping study has been conducted and was due for the end of 2014 for the definition of the system requirements, the workflows and the specification of fundamental software elements. The second step is expected for September 2015 including the provisions for project progress monitoring, indicator monitoring, target achievements reporting, AIR generation and the preparation of annual accounts as well as the communication with the SFC2014.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	The PA underlines the importance of area based integrated approaches; attention was paid to this topic also in the Territorial Analysis. However due to the small size of the country it is difficult to define functional regions; instead disparities exist at a very local scale. However there are basic trend differences between urban and rural areas (rural areas becoming rapidly more attractive for the first time after 2011) and coastal/inland areas. Due to the small size of the island and the conflicting uses and interests, Integrated Spatial Development approaches are necessary; examples given refer to i) declining rural areas, ii) deprived inner-urban areas, iii) coastal areas relevant for fishery and aquacultures etc. The need for local mobilisation and consultation as well as multi level governance is underlined. For the four larger urban areas Integrated Urban Development interventions are foreseen (under a dedicated	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	Priority Axis of the Competitiveness and Sustainable Development OP with 20% of the ERDF) while CLLD will be applied in rural areas and fishery areas. For CLLD and ITIs the relevant TOs are 3, 6, 8, 9 and to a lesser extent TO1. A combination of ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF is foreseen. Regarding Integrated Urban Development interventions the aim is the delivery of cultural, social, economic and environmental infrastructure and mechanisms to enhance the effort of historical centers for integration on a steady growth path and help to restart the economy. Interventions will focus primarily: • The revitalization of degraded urban environment • Improving urban mobility • Promoting entrepreneurship with focus on SMEs • Protection of natural resources and promotion of cultural resources and the creation of cultural and social infrastructure The thematic objectives that can help address these challenges through integrated strategies in the context of Sustainable Urban Development are 3,6, 7 and 9. Regarding territorial cooperation Cyprus has a key geographical position in the South Mediterranean and has a very important place in the development of EU relations with the rest of the Mediterranean in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership and a key position in the development of the "sea highway" of South-Eastern Europe. Cyprus participates in the new Inter Balkan-Mediterranean program and is committed to co-develop the Macro Regional Strategy for the Mediterranean. Priority areas are research, technological development and innovation, low carbon economy, SME competitiveness, climate change and risk prevention, environmental protection, transport, blue economy and integrated maritime policy. Last but not least, utilisation of the opportunities offered by the IPA II, ENI, and EEA are mentioned.	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The PA contains a brief reference, stating that specific geographical areas in the Cypriot context are mainly the rural and mountain regions, which are characterised by specific demographic drawbacks and development disparities. Such regions are addressed through CLLD and there is no further specific approach. Considering the special target groups, it is stated that certain "social tension" pockets are existent but hard to outline. Such regions are addressed through Integrated Urban Development and there is no further specific approach.	Section 3, 3.1.5

6. Czech Republic

General reflections	Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas? The PA for the Czech Republic covers the five ESI Funds. The PA outlines the way in which the financial means of these five funds will be used to help the Czech Republic to achieve its smart, sustainable and inclusive growth targets. The chosen thematic objectives fit well to the defined financing priorities at the national level. The ex-ante evaluation for the 2007-13 period at the end confirmed a very good cohesion and coordination of all funds across the different policy areas. Coordination between the ESI funds, objectives and programmes has been carried out in the Czech Republic as part of the preparation for the various programmes, and will also be assured during their implementation. The primary objective during the preparation of the programmes was to identify links between the different programmes, including links between the programmes in relation to those links which define potential synergies and mutual complementarity of intervention and agree on the manner in which these links will be monitored during the implementation of the programmes. The entire process was coordinated with the preparation of the Partnership Agreement (PA). Key platforms were particularly the Working Party set up to prepare the PA as well as the working group for developing the several OPs where the MAs were included. The PA focuses on following financing priorities: - Promoting efficient and effective employment services that will contribute to increase the employment rate, particularly of vulnerable groups. - Supporting high-quality education system (lifelong learning) to produce qualified and adaptable labour force. - Enhancing research & innovation system based on high-quality research, interconnected with the application sphere and targeted at commercialisation of results. - Supporting actions leading to an increase in private sector research & development investments, helping SMEs to be competitive in a global market and contributing to the shift towards a low-carbon economy. - Investing in sustainable infrastructure facilitating business competitiveness and adequate territorial serviceability. - Promoting a transparent and effective public administration with less administrative and regulatory burdens capable of responding to emergencies. - Fostering social inclusion of vulnerable groups and combating poverty. - Promoting landscape protection and climate change adaptation policies.	1.2 and 1.3

Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	Cohesion policy will be implemented through 8 operational programmes: - 2 national operational programmes co-financed by ERDF (Enterprise and Innovation for Competitiveness; Integrated Regional); - 2 national operational programmes co-financed by ERDF and CF (Transport; Environment); - 2 national operational programmes co-financed by ESF and ERDF (Research, Development and Education; Prague Growth Pole); - 1 national operational programme co-financed by ESF (Employment); - 1 national operational programme co-financed by CF (Technical Assistance) Moreover there is 1 EAFDR rural development programme and 1 EMFF fisheries programme.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The PA for the Czech Republic does not include an explicit reference to distinct national policy mechanisms, there is no clear division in the PA.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	Platforms designed for discussing the implementation of the programming period 2007-13 (in particular the Coordination Committees of the National Strategic Reference Framework) as well as the Ministerial Coordination Group for the EU were used in order to steer the discussion on establishing the principles for the programming period 14-20 and defining the requirements on the content and the implementation system of ESI Funds. The individual sections of the Agreement were prepared so as to include supporting materials received from the individual partners. A number of partners from different spheres submitted their comments in the interdepartmental objections procedure at all stages of the preparation, in defining the draft national development priorities, completion of thematic scopes, setting the structure of programmes, up to the different stages of the preparation of the Partnership Agreement. Submission of the document for comments to all ministries and other institutions was a compulsory part of preparation of materials before they are submitted to the Czech government. Although the commenting points were firmly established by the Rules of Procedure of the Czech Government, documents relating to the preparation of the Agreement are discussed by the Working group for the preparation of the Partnership Agreement. Comments submitted by all partners have been duly settled and the method of their settlement was sent to the partners, and, if necessary, also discussed personally in order to find consensus. Many suggestions also came at the meetings of different platforms and were subsequently reflected in the processed documents, or bilaterally communicated with the submitter. The contributions of partners focused mainly on the analytical basis of the Agreement - from problem analysis, national development priorities, thematic scopes, through to the analytical part of the Agreement. Remark: The partnership principle was successfully applied not only during the preparation of the material focus of the interventions using the ESI Funds during the 2014-2020 programming period, but also during the definition of the systems to be used for managing the Agreement and the individual programmes. MoRD, in	Section 1B, 1.5.1

	close collaboration with all partners, has prepared the document "Recommendations for Simplifying the Administrative Burden for Applicants and Beneficiaries in using the EU Funds during the 2014-2020 Programming Period," whose preparation involved not only the experts and employees who are involved in the implementation of the European Funds, but also the general public by means of an electronic questionnaire, the conclusions of which were discussed with a broad range of partners at a conference in January 2012. Implementation Phase: Several platforms that will play a role during the implementation phase of the 2014-2020 programming periods at the national level. The partners will also have the opportunity to influence the process of implementation of the programmes through the monitoring committees. To ensure the partnership, a Standing Conference shall be established at national and regional level within the implementation of the territorial dimension.	
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The analysis of disparities, development needs and the growth potential has been prepared for challenge areas, with identified national and regional problems, development needs and priorities that clearly predetermine the use of ESI Funds in 2014-2010 in the Czech Republic. National development priorities (NDP) were used as a starting point for the analysis and identification of needs for 2014–2020. These were determined by the Czech Republic as a base for the entire programming process for 2014–2020. They are as follows: - Increasing the competitiveness of the economy, which includes: The development of business, entrepreneurship and the utilisation of innovations; Functioning labour market; Development of education and Support for promoting innovation and research and development. - Development of the core infrastructure. - Improving the quality and efficiency of public administration. - Promoting social inclusion, the fight against poverty and the healthcare system. - Integrated territorial development. Remark: The challenge areas were determined in accordance with the NDP, however a separate challenge area of the environment was selected. When the NDP were being defined, a great emphasis was put on compliance with the Europe 2020 strategy objectives which were defined in the document Strategy 2020, in the integrated guidelines and the particular EU flagship initiatives. Key importance was assigned to documents for implementing the Europe 2020 strategy at the national level, namely the regularly updated National Reform Programme of the Czech Republic and the Country-Specific Recommendations of the Council on the NRP for individual years. In terms of the position of the Czech Republic it can be stated that there is compliance between the Partnership Agreement and the problem areas discussed therein, and the financing priorities of the EC from position papers. The PA describes in detail how the TOs chosen are to be achieved through implementing the ESI Fund programmes. Wherever possible, specific measures are described within the funds.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	<u>Links between ESI programmes:</u> Thematic objectives are fulfilled by several ESI Funds programmes, within which there will be complementary and synergic links. Such links are coordinated according to set instruments selected for the given segment. Apart from the fact that it is necessary to prevent duplicity among the involved MAs when setting up implemented interventions, mutual coordination will also bring added value for the thematic objective. A crucial role is played by interventions that strengthen one another in their effects and impacts and that may be identified within one TO. These concern, for example, fulfilment of TO 1 in businesses' innovation activities, implementing the results of research and development as innovations. Furthermore it tackles TO 3 - promotion of entrepreneurship, especially that of SMEs, including agricultural and aqua cultural enterprises. A further example is fulfilment of TO 4 in improving the energy performance of buildings, production and technology processes through the 5 operational programmes by sectors. Important synergies and complementarities can be seen in TO 10 with regard to education, covering not only furthering the quality of education but also employability, inclusive education or increasing the qualifications of employees in three OPs and one RDP. TO 11 with regard to increasing the efficiency of public administration and modernisation and computerisation of public administration (eGovernment) through OP Employment and Integrated Regional OP (IROP) can serve as additional examples. In addition to synergic and complementary links between programmes under individual thematic objectives, there are close links defined between programmes of different thematic objectives. Functional interventions, which are a precondition for fulfilling the objectives of both the Partnership Agreement and the Europe 2020 Strategy, aim at two main synergetic objectives – competitiveness and inclusive society, while respecting protection of the environment and close linkage to rural development. <u>Links ESI - Union programmes/instruments:</u> <u>Horizon 2020:</u> Expected activities are aimed at protecting intellectual property rights, enhancing enterprises' awareness of measures and projects to help protect industrial property, supporting the innovation and marketing of products and services, enhancing the services of supporting infrastructure and implementing business plans of new and developed SMEs. A partial link is also in the field of energy-efficient and low-carbon economy and in the area of new networks for high-speed internet, new ICT solutions and providing sophisticated shared services. The Technological Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences (TC CAS) acts as the national information centre for European research, including the network of national contact persons for Horizon 2020.	Section 2.1

LIFE:

Individual procedures at the national level are elaborated on the basis of the approval of Regulation No 1293/2013³¹. The types of projects set out in Article 2 (1293/2013) will not be directly supported in the individual programmes but can be complementary.

One of the general objectives is to contribute to the shift towards a resource-efficient, low-carbon and climate-resilient economy.

The National Contact Point for the LIFE programme in the Czech Republic is the Ministry of the Environment (MEnv).

COSME:

Interventions here include especially the implementation of business plans of new and developed SMEs, development of SME internalization as well as support for SMEs in the area of intellectual property protection. The focus is especially on stimulating entrepreneurship and improving enterprises' access to finance.

An important coordination body for COSME is the Technological Centre of the Czech Academy of Sciences (TC CAS).

CEF:

In the area of transport infrastructure under CEF, support is targeted mainly at interventions into important cross-border connections on the TEN-T network in the form of construction and modernisation of railway tracks. ERDF support for the modernization and development of (high-voltage) transmission grids will be used to supplement CEF funding. It includes five projects for above-ground lines at 400 kV voltage level and the relevant switching stations.

All projects will be approved and coordinated at the Ministry of Transport.

Erasmus+ :

Mutual complementarity concerns especially the development of universities and human resources for research and development and the equal access to quality pre-school, primary and secondary education.

YEI:

There is a strong link between YEI interventions and the remaining investment priorities supporting employment and workforce adaptability.

EaSI:

The Programme for Employment and Social Innovation is managed directly by the European Commission and the entity responsible for implementation in the Czech Republic is the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.

FEAD:

MLSA has prepared a separate operational programme for using FEAD. This programme is only used to fund activities aimed at providing food and satisfying basic needs to the most deprived, that cannot be funded from the ESF.

³¹ Regulation (EU) No 1293/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the establishment of a Programme for the Environment and Climate Action (LIFE) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 614/2007

	<u>Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF):</u> A link can be seen with social inclusion and combating poverty. <u>Internal Security Fund (ISF):</u> A marginal link can be seen with employment priority efficient public administration, namely with projects that will be aimed at the Czech Police. <u>Central Europe:</u> The programme's complementary link is perceived in activities aimed at strengthening the financial possibilities of SMEs, where beneficiaries can also include applicants from cultural and creative sectors. Overview Table 2.1 of the PA. <u>Links ESI - national programs:</u> Links of ESI Funds programmes to national programmes can be identified in the area of energy savings, in research and development (programmes of Technological Agency of the Czech Republic and of MEYS), in entrepreneurship (programmes of MIT and of the Czech-Moravian Guarantee and Development Bank), education (MEYS programmes), transport, labour market, tourism etc. <u>Links ESI – EIB instruments:</u> A link appears to the EIB financial instruments implemented under COSME and Horizon 2020 programmes.	
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	For the purposes of the PA, the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities is based on individual programs of ESI Funds. Overview of applicable ex ante conditionalities, i.e. fully fulfilled, partially fulfilled and unfulfilled, including proposed measures and schedule for their fulfilment is given in Annex 5.1 to the Partnership Agreement. Apart from EAC 8.4 Active healthy ageing, and some specific EACs for EMFF, the Czech Republic applies all thematic and general ex ante conditionalities. The overview of EAC fulfilment, set out in the Annex, may be further specified in the individual ESI Funds programmes. The programs contain also a justification for the inapplicability of selected ex ante conditionalities, identification of risks or other context related to the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities. In relation to partially fulfilled or unfulfilled ex ante conditionalities sponsors, co-sponsors in cooperation with managing authorities and other entities, create action plans for the partially fulfilled or unfulfilled ex ante conditionalities based on the EC templates. They are used for a more detailed argumentation and reasoning related to the unfulfilled ex ante conditionalities, including detailed measures declaring future fulfilment, schedule and entities responsible for the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities. These action plans are updated on an ongoing basis according to the state of fulfilment; the ultimate fulfilment will be based on an agreement between the relevant stakeholders of ex ante conditionalities, managing authorities, MoRD and the European Commission. The latest deadline for fulfilment ex ante conditionalities is determined by the Common Provisions Regulation. Remark: For the thematic objectives 4, 5, 6, 7 it only states that the allocation for them has been evaluated as adequate, without further justification. Furthermore, there is a significant number of EACs that are self-assessed as not fulfilled or partially fulfilled. Challenges: The requirements of the Commission seem not to correspond to the institutional arrangements,	Section 2.3

	legislative environment or processes that require interdepartmental coordination in the Czech Republic. Therefore, the fulfilment of selected ex ante conditionalities is awaited in varying time frames. Also for these reasons, some ex ante conditionalities are perceived by the Czech Republic as risky.	
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)). (Include table of deadlines)	A new unified uniform monitoring system MS2014+ is being developed to ensure the needs throughout the implementation structure, it will contain: - web portal for applicants/beneficiaries to obtain information about the current announced calls (it allows them to submit applications); - a portal for the administration of programmes/projects (MSSF2014+) that will record, process and store data about all operations - back office to store data on all operations in a structured and non-structured format in an electronic form and to communicate with external systems (including the Structural Funds common database). - uniform management system for users - Service Desk - monitoring and evaluation mechanisms helpful for the selection and verification of the submitted grant applications MS2014+ will ensure mutual communication between the implementation structure entities involved in the preparation, administration, evaluation and verification of the provided funds, and communication with applicants and beneficiaries of ESI Funds. The interoperability between the relevant authorities will be fully electronic. This includes also e-government elements (e.g. national registers). Remark: For programmes co-financed from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime Fisheries Fund, only the data needed for the monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the Partnership Agreement will be stored in MS2014+ and not all e-Cohesion policy features will be applied to them. The data on all operations necessary for the monitoring, evaluation, financial control, audit and other needs of these programmes will be primarily recorded, processed and stored in the information system of the State Agricultural Intervention Fund.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	CLLD: Realized not only through the Common Agricultural Policy, but also through other operational programs under the ERDF and ESF. The CLLD integrated instrument will be used, apart from the Rural Development Programme, also in OP Employment, OP Environment and in the Integrated Regional Operational Programme. At least 5 % will be allocated from the EAFRD in the Rural Development Programme. From the ERDF, indicatively 4.95% will be used for CLLD and indicatively 2.17% from the ESF. The main fund for reimbursing the operational and animation costs of LAGs will be ERDF. It is expected that up to 170 LAGs will be supported (depending on the result of LAG standardisation and on assessment of the CLLD strategies) with an average allocation for the CLLD strategy at CZK 120 million (EUR 4.8 million). Coordination among the funds in the case of CLLD will be carried out by the National Permanent Conference (NPC). Integrated CLLD instruments will be used in rural areas, specifically in the LAG territories consisting of municipalities with less than 25,000 inhabitants, where the maximum area covered by the LAG's activities cannot exceed 100,000 inhabitants and	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	cannot be less than 10,000 inhabitants. CLLD will be used primarily for the implementation of thematic objective 9 Promoting social inclusion and combating poverty, in integration with thematic objectives 1 Strengthening research, technological development and innovation, 3 Improving the competitiveness of small and medium-sized enterprises, 6 Protecting the environment and promoting efficient use of resources, 7 Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures, 8 Promoting employment and supporting labour mobility, and 10 Investing in education, skills and lifelong learning. More than five thematic objectives will be implemented under one CLLD Strategy. The target group consists of rural residents, the general objective is to improve the quality of rural life. ITI: Integrated territorial investments will be used in the Czech Republic in the largest metropolitan areas of national importance (areas with concentrations above 300 thousand Inhabitants) as the largest cities in the Czech Republic (Prague, Brno, Ostrava, Pilsen), including their functional hinterland. Due to the population concentration and partly common problems, the Ústí nad Labem-Chomutov, Olomouc and Hradec Králové-Pardubice agglomerations are also added to these centres. By the implementation of the ITI, the Czech Republic will also fulfil the urban dimension characterized by proportional representation of economic, social and environmental components, which is in line with Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation for the sustainable urban development. The integrated strategies under ITI will be supported from ERDF through four OPs. It is expected that the Cohesion Fund and the ESF could also be involved. Coordination among the funds in case of ITI will be carried out by the NPC. Urban dimension: In the Czech Republic, sustainable urban development is determined by three dimensions – economic prosperity, favourable environment and social cohesion. The main principles for the definition of urban areas to meet the sustainable urban development are: Cities represent natural environment for research and innovation and the related business; Infrastructure and accessibility of services; Social inclusion; Environment; Strategic planning and development of urban-rural relations; Macro-regional strategies: Out of the existing macro-regional strategies, the Czech Republic participates in the EU Strategy for the Danube Region. The Czech Republic sees a significant added value in the possibility to identify common objectives at the macro-regional level, because thanks to that possibility the Czech Republic can address those of its own needs which can be better satisfied at the macro-regional level and in this respect it is essential to ensure the functional connection between the Danube Strategy and the preparation and implementation of the programme.	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The aim of the support for the specific geographical areas is to decrease and mitigate unfavourable regional socio-economic disparities. In addition to activities that support creating jobs, the most important measures that require an integrated approach primarily include: development of an active labour market policy; support for (inclusive) education; support for better quality and flexibility in the provision of social services; support for small and medium-sized enterprises. Problems in identified areas and for the given target groups will be tackled using a combination of appropriate	Section 3, 3.1.5

	integrated instruments and coherence/complementarity (when coordinating the calls) between the activities of relevant programs financed by the ESF, ERDF (e.g. the issue of employment, social and health services, education, business development and the availability of housing for the target group) and marginally from the EAFRD (targeted interventions to create jobs in areas of high unemployment, the LEADER method – local development). Examples may include strategic plans for social inclusion, on the basis of which the Agency for Social Inclusion is already working. This approach will continue to be supported and local plans of social inclusion which address housing, employment, social services, education and health in an integrated way will be a precondition for support. Functionally defined territories for the socially excluded locations and for the prevention of their formation include mainly micro-regions, municipalities, associations of municipalities, regional centres and their hinterlands (at the level of MEPS), etc.	
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8. Denmark

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The Danish PA covers 8 thematic objectives. ERDF focuses on 3 objectives (research, SMEs, carbon neutrality), ESF on 3 (employment, social inclusion, LLL) and EAFRD on 6 (mainly climate, environment, SMEs). EMFF focus and funding was not included in the PA as the PA was approved before the EMFF total funding and framework was known. The ex ante evaluations of ERDF, ESF and EAFRD judged the OPs to be connected to each other and the main national strategies, consistent with the identified needs and the PA. The ex ante evaluation of EMFF OP was not available at the time of drafting the PA. There is an intra-ministry group on coordinating ESI Funds. pages 70-108	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	There will be one ERDF OP, one ESF OP, one RDP and one EMFF OP in Denmark. In 2014-2020 Denmark is allocated around EUR 0.21 billion for ERDF and EUR 0.21 billion for ESF. Additional EUR 0.62 billion (50% of the funding) will be devoted to EAFRD operations. The allocation for EMFF amounts to EUR 0.21 billion. The ESI Funds finance eight thematic objectives, out of which "Promoting climate change adaptation" receives 21% of the funding, "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" gets 17%, and "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 11% of the total funding for ERDF, ESF and EAFRD (EMFF funding for thematic objectives not available at the time of research). Total funding for Danish EMFF OP can be found at: http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries/cfp/emff/doc/overall-table-2014-2020.xls	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The parts of the PA subject to Commission decision [Article 15(1)] cover pages 1-183 and Annex I (partners). The parts of PA not subject to Commission decision [Article 15(2)] cover pages 183-193. The quality of the non-compulsory part is slightly lower. The text is more vague, especially on the part of territorial development.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	There were two workshops (September 2012 on framework and thematic concentration, December 2013 PA) with partners (listed in Annex I). The intra-ministry group on coordinating ESI Funds met three times. Bilateral meetings with partners and consultations were held on each OP. The effect of the partnership was seen especially in identifying problems, finding solutions and concrete measures, as well as in actions to reduce administrative burden. No specific public consultation on PA was mentioned. pages 114-119, Annex I	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The Danish PA with its five main goals (employment, innovation, education, poverty reduction and climate/energy) is strongly linked with EU2020 and national plans, especially the Danish Growth Plan. Commission Recommendations on the Danish NRP have focused on fiscal policy, employability of people at the margins of labour market and increasing competitiveness at the domestic services sector. All ESF funding goes to thematic objectives concerned with employment, social inclusion and education. pages 1-84	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	There will be cross-representation in the MC of each OP. The Danish RDP and EMFF OP share the same MA. The coordination will be done through daily contacts and work. The funds also have different target groups. The Danish ESF and ERDF share the same MA and the same project database. At the regional level, the Regional Growth Forums act as regional coordinators to avoid double funding. The Danish PA lists CAP, Horizon 2020, Life, COSME, EASI, Erasmus, Asylum Fund, FEAD, and Connecting Europe as funding instruments with potential synergies with the ESI Funds. However, no clear issues or areas of cooperation/synergy are mentioned, neither are practical coordination mechanisms. Avoidance of double funding is discussed (funding different parts of the same project, different focus of funds, funding different types of projects). EIB is not discussed. pages 121-128	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Denmark has fulfilled all ex ante conditionalities Pages 129-174	Section 2.3

Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	For ERDF and ESF there is a system for electronic application. The system will be improved by the introduction of payment claim, accounting, communication and indicator data modules. The work started in March 2013 and finished by December 2014. For EAFRD there is an electronic application system for area-based measures. There is a plan to create an electronic system covering the whole EAFRD and EMFF for the 2014-2020 period. However, no dates or project steps/substance are discussed. pages 191-193	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	ITIs will not be used. There will be CLLD funded by EAFRD (thematic objective 9) and EMFF (thematic objective 8). 5% of ERDF funding (from thematic objectives 1 and 4) will go to sustainable urban development but there is no proper description on the actions involved in the PA. The EU Strategy for Baltic Sea Region is discussed in section 1.1.13 in terms of EAFRD and EMFF funding. There is a territorial approach to support 7 small island communities and 27 small islands, which receive higher state aid in ERDF projects falling under thematic objectives 1, 2 and 3. pages 183-190	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	No Page 190	Section 3, 3.1.5

9. Estonia

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	In the programming period 2014-2020 Estonia has one multi-fund operational programme for ERDF, CF and ESF. This is different to the programming period 2007 - 2013 where for each of the three funds one operational programme existed. The multi-funded operational programme covers the majority of the ESI-Fund budget (81%). Furthermore Estonia has one Rural Development Programme (EAFRD) and one Fisheries programme (EMFF). The three programmes are centrally managed and cover all 11 thematic objectives. The elaboration of the Partnership Agreement was coordinated by the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with all other ministries and the Government Office. The drawing up of the Operational Programme of the Structural Funds was managed by the Ministry of Finance; the preparation of the Rural Development Plan and the Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programme was managed by the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Finance represents the Managing Authority for ERDF, ESF and CF all relevant ministries are responsible for the implementation of the respective thematic focus. The Ministry of agriculture represents the Managing Authority for EAFRD and EMFF. (see PA page 102)	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The total ESIF Funds budget amounts EUR 4,4 bn with the following allocation in percentage: • 34% ERDF: 80% TO1,2,3,4,8,9,10,11; • 13% ESF: TO 8, 9, 10, 11; • 25% CF: TO 4,5,6,7, • 31% EAFRD: TO 1,2,3,4,5, 6, 8, 9, 10 • 1% EMFF: TO 3,6 All but ESI-Funds except the ESF contribute to the technical assistant budget ERDF, ESF and CF together cover 81% of the total ESI-Funds budget. (see PA page 87)	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The PA is one single document however the parts subject to EC [Article 15(1)] covers section 1 and 2 and ANNEX 1 (p. 1-192). Parts not subject to the EC cover 3 and 4 (page 195 - 208). The quality of the two parts is the same: issues are described logically, comprehensively and clearly in both parts.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The partnership principle is described in section 1.5.1. p. 89 of the PA. the involvement of social partners was based on the involvement plan approved by the steering committee and prepared at the beginning of the programming process. The national planning process was divided into stages, and partners from different levels were involved in each stage. The partners were divided into two groups: partners' umbrella organisations and sectoral partners. At the stage of drawing up the strategy and preparing the implementation system, umbrella organisations that have expertise and advocacy interest as regards the needs and development prospects of many different areas, i.e. at the national level, were involved. These organisations included: the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Estonian Employers' Confederation, the Estonian Association of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, the Estonian Council of Environmental NGOs, the Estonian Trade Union Confederation, the Network of Estonian Non-Profit Organisations, the Association of Estonian Cities, the Association of Municipalities of Estonia, the Estonian Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce, the Leader Forum, the Estonian Rectors Conference, the Estonian Qualifications Authority and the Estonian Chamber of Disabled People. The Ministry of Social Affairs was involved as the entity responsible for social inclusion, gender equality and non-discrimination issues, and the Gender Equality and Equal Treatment Commissioner was involved as the relevant supervisory authority. The role of other ministries was to engage partners by sector, by organising sectoral discussions and involving partners in the development of programmes and measures (and in subsequent implementation). Each ministry participating in the development of the Partnership Agreement prepared its list of partners and stakeholders with whom they cooperated during the process. These partners were treated as sectoral partners and included advocacy organisations, supporting and funding organisations, professional organisations (occupational, professional or creative associations), expert organisations (e.g. think-tanks and research institutions) and service providers (including consulting firms).	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA describes the main needs of Estonia from page 6-50 with the main needs to be tackled: - Finding new sources of growth, making the economy more knowledge-intensive and increasing the impact of Estonian research – referring to the country specific recommendations 3,4 and 5 to the National Reform Programme (NRP) - Increasing the export capacity and growth potential of Estonian enterprises – referring to the country specific recommendations 3,4 - More efficient use of natural resources and less energy- and carbon-intensive economy – referring to the country specific recommendations 3,4,5 - Improvement of sustainable options for the connection and movement of people and goods– referring to the country specific recommendations 1,4,5 - Increase in employment, better social cohesion and adapting the education system to the needs of society– referring to the country specific recommendations 2,3,5 - Increase in healthy life years and development of a health system that meets requirements – referring to the country specific recommendations 2	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

	Improving the efficiency of citizen-centred and coherent public governance – referring to the country specific recommendations 1,5 The PA furthermore includes the regional development trends which refer to specific recommendations 2,3,4,5 Country specific recommendations to the NRP, referred above are the following: • No 1 Pursue a growth-friendly fiscal policy • No 2: Improve incentives to work • No 3 Continue efforts to improve the labour-market • No 4 Improve energy efficiency, • No 5: Better balance local government revenue The PA points out that Estonia will use ESI funding to contribute to the following objectives: • high quality and accessible education based on the needs of students and society; • a high employment rate and high-quality working life; • a knowledge-intensive and internationally competitive economy; • a clean and diverse natural environment and efficient use of resources; and • sustainable connections and mobility options, satisfying the population's needs and supporting entrepreneurship. The PA describes the results of the ex-ante evaluation in page 51-58. In general there is a balance between the needs and the thematic concentration the programme acknowledges the country specific recommendations. However the Estonian programme covers all 11 thematic objectives with a focus on Research, support of SMEs and social inclusion, employment and labour mobility as well as lifelong learning.	
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The PA describes in page 103 the need for better adjustments between funds. In order to avoid duplication of work and ensure coordination between instruments and Operational Programmes, national processes related to planning and budgeting will be combined: budgetary decisions will be made considering all instruments together, and their use will be harmonised, where necessary. The complementarity of measures and instruments will be borne in mind and managed during the drafting of the State Budget Strategy and annual State Budget Acts and during the monitoring of their implementation. Thematic coordination, incl. combining different sources to fund a particular sector, will take place through the monitoring committees of the Operational Programmes and, if necessary, through subcommittees or sectoral committees set up and managed on the basis of existing national coordination mechanisms, where these exist. The Monitoring Committee of the Operational Programme for Cohesion Policy Funds will consist of representatives of all related ministries, the European Commission and partners. Sectoral committees will consist of representatives of related ministries and partners. Besides sectoral committees, a national working group was established in order to implement the objectives of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The members of the working group are the national contact point, representatives of Managing Authority and other ministries, coordinators of priority axes, etc. The working group coordinates information exchange concerning the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, its	Section 2.1

	Action Plan and priority areas; programming of funds of relevance for EUSBSR implementation, as well as monitoring of implementation.	
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The fulfilment of the thematic ex-ante conditionalities is undergoing but according to the PA there are still quite a lot conditionalities unfulfilled (1.2, 4.1, 5.1, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 9.1, 9.3, 10.1, 10.3, 11). According to the PA description in Table 6 page 106 all of the necessary criteria are under way of fulfilment and are planned to be fulfilled during 2014 as well as 2015 and 2016. However the PA is dated to June 2014 and there might be a delay in finalising the necessary conditionalities planned to be finalised in 2014. However it is assumed that since all the described activities are under way that the necessary finalisation will be before the end of 2016. Regarding the general ex-ante conditionalities Table 7 page 160 the following conditionalities are only partly or not fulfilled: 1. Anti-discrimination (partly), 2. Gender (partly), 3. Disability (partly) - in all three cases the missing criterion concerns the arrangement of trainings for staff of the authorities involved in the management and control of the ESI Funds. However according to Table 9 page 170 the proposal concerning training to be submitted by the Ministry of Social Affairs. Training activities are planned for the entire period of the structural funds. There seems to be no difficulties to fulfil the necessary criteria.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	The PA describes in section 4 page 208 the functions of the planned e-cohesion tool called Structural Fund information system. the functions are described in detail and will enable applicants to enter with person IDs for filling in the application forms. Payment claims will also be submitted in the Structural Fund information system as well as interim and final reports. All project-related procedures will be automatically recorded in the Structural Fund information system, ensuring the existence of an audit trail concerning the data submitted by applicants and beneficiaries. In addition, applicants and beneficiaries will be able to obtain feedback on an ongoing basis and track the project relevant information via the state portal at all times. this includes changes of application, certification of expenditure, payment claims, monitoring reports, irregularities, checks and follow up activities, etc. The functionalities that facilitate electronic data exchange with beneficiaries will be gradually introduced until fully implemented by the end of 2015.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	According to the PA section 3 page 196 the integrated approach of the programme will be mainly addressed with implementing CLLD. The ITIs will not be applied. Sustainable urban development is intended to be supported primarily through the 'Sustainable urban development' priority axis (9) of the Operational Programme with a view to meeting the development needs described in section 1.1.3 'Regional development trends and challenges'. The 'Sustainable urban development' priority axis will be implemented in urban areas with populations exceeding 50.000. There are five areas that meet this criterion in Estonia: Tallinn, Tartu, Pärnu, Narva and Kohtla-Järve/Jõhvi. The most important macro regional strategy for Estonia is the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region (EUSBSR) which is an important source for funding and cooperation. It is well defined and linked to the ESI-Funds and there are several concrete actions described which will be supported by ESI Funds (see PA page 199).	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The most important macro regional strategy for Estonia is the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea Region which is an important source for funding and cooperation. It is well defined and linked to the ESI-Funds There are several concrete actions described which will be supported by ESI-Funds with the objective of the EU strategy (see PA page 199). In order to even out the development differences and backwardness of other county centres compared to the urban areas of Tallinn and Tartu, interventions are planned which are aimed at the comprehensive development of the county centres into strong centres that can ensure the existence of jobs, the provision of high-quality services and the availability of jobs and services across the region. Interventions should result in sustainable, high-quality and accessible healthcare services, as well as a higher employment rate among people with a burden of care (incl. parents) and of people who have difficulty coping financially. Specific targeted areas are: All regions outside the urban areas of Tallinn and Tartu, Urban areas in Ida-Viru County. The interventions will be funded by ERDF and EAFRD.	Section 3, 3.1.5
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10. Finland

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The Finnish PA focuses on three priorities 1) promoting innovative and competitive business and research environment; 2) increasing labour market participation through improved employment, social inclusion and education policies; and 3) reinforcing sustainable and efficient use of resources for environment friendly growth. The three priorities are covered by ten thematic objectives, which the 4 ESI Funds finance in different combinations. EAFRD contributes to each thematic objective and hence to each chosen priority. ESF contributes to 2nd priority only, whereas about 60% of ERDF support goes to priority 3 and 40% to priority 1. According to summary of Ex Ante evaluations, the thematic objectives and their division is logical but there is need for further coordination in the areas of support to rural broadband, infrastructure and businesses.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	There are two multi-fund operational programmes, co-financed by ERDF and ESF (OP Mainland Finland and OP Åland Islands). There are two RDPs (Mainland Finland RDP and Åland Islands RDP) and one Maritime and Fisheries Fund programme. In 2014-2020 Finland is allocated around EUR 0.79 billion for ERDF and EUR 0.51 billion for ESF. Additional EUR 2.38 billion (63% of the funding) will be devoted to EAFRD operations. The allocation for EMFF amounts to EUR 74.4 million. The ESI Funds finance ten thematic objectives, out of which "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives 43% of the funding. "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 17%, and "Strengthening research, technological development and innovation" 11% of the total ESI funding. Detailed ESI funds' allocation can be found on page 61 of the PA (inserted into excel sheet 'Financials - them obj' and 'Financials - progs')	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The parts of the PA subject to Commission decision [Article 15(1)] cover pages 1-86 and Annex I (EAC). The parts of PA not subject to Commission decision [Article 15(2)] cover pages 86-97. The quality of the two parts is the same: issues are described logically, comprehensively and clearly in both parts.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The Finnish administrative tradition and legal provisions require the involvement of partners in policy planning. The work on PA and coordinating the ESI OPs was led by the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, which set up an advisory group on regional and structural policy. Ministries, social partners, environmental associations and gender equality associations were represented in this group. Each operational programme was drafted on the basis of work done by specific working groups, which had wide participation from ministries, regions, municipalities, social partners, environmental associations and research organisations. There were public consultations on each OP but there was no separate public consultation for the PA. pages 56-57	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The country-specific recommendations in the Finnish national reform programme were related to long-term sustainability of public finances, productivity of public services, reducing unemployment and raising the effective retirement age, increasing competition, and diversification of business structure and wage development. These recommendations are included in the PA in priority 1) promoting innovative and competitive business and research environment and 2) increasing labour market participation through improved employment, social inclusion and education policies. Finland has also set ambitious greenhouse gas reduction and renewable energy targets as part of EU2020 objectives. These are visible in priority 3) reinforcing sustainable and efficient use of resources for environment friendly growth. The four ESI Funds finance the three chosen priorities in a complementary way, according to their objectives.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Coordination of ESI Funds is ensured at national level through the Advisory Group on Regional and Structural Funds, cross-membership in Monitoring Committees of OPs and administrative work. At the regional and local level, coordination is ensured through Regional Cooperation Advisory Boards. Also, the 15 Centres for Economy, Transport and the Environment operate as regionalised MA for the ESI Fund programmes. The Funds operate in synergy in several areas, such as EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, bio economy, promotion of innovation, renewable energy, lifelong learning and CLLD. Synergies are sought through utilising EU-funded research results as a starting point for practical projects and through funding spin-off themes and issues. Coordination is ensured through specific types of operations funded, geographical concentration of funding, information on other received funding, and through Monitoring Committees and administrative work. pages 68-78	Section 2.1

State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Mainland Finland has fulfilled all EAC. The only EAC not fulfilled by Åland Islands were A.1.1 (research and innovation strategy for smart specialisation), A.10.3. (lifelong learning strategy) and A.10.4. (strategy for improving vocational training). For all these strategies, the deadline was set for end of June 2015. pages 79-86, 94-141	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	All applications, payment applications, information requests to the beneficiaries, funding decisions, monitoring and reporting will be done electronically over secure systems. There will be fully electronic administrative processes for all ESI Funds. No deadlines were mentioned. page 96	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	LEADER groups cover the whole country, and there are Fisheries CLLD groups as well. There will be urban CLLD initiatives in areas not covered by LEADER or fisheries groups (towns/cities over 15 000 inhabitants). The sustainable city development is covered by a strategy for the six largest cities (Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa, Oulu, Tampere, Turku) and this ITI will receive EUR 39.46 million of ERDF funding. The Finnish OPs included in the PA have some common objectives with the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. The EUSBSR objectives 1 (save the sea) 2 (connect the region) 3 (increase prosperity) are supported by actions funded by the different ESI Funds. EAFRD and EMFF will mainly fund projects related to objective 1, whereas ERDF and ESF will focus more on objectives 2 and 3. Compatibility with EUSBSR will be one of the selection criteria for EMFF funded projects. pages 86-93	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The sparsely populated areas of Northern and Eastern Finland require integrated approach in ESI Funding. ERDF will focus on removing obstacles for SME growth related to traffic and reach ability, as well as activating new businesses and developing businesses with growth potential. ESF funding is necessary to support active employment policy and improvement of working conditions. EAFRD funding develops the inadequate broadband connections, which have an effect on the development and operation of businesses. The provision of services in remote rural areas must be ensured, for instance, through renewing service structures and models with the support of Leader funding. pages 93-96	Section 3, 3.1.5

11. France

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The PA argues that the ex-ante evaluation of the 2014-2020 OP have demonstrated their potential in contributing to the achievement of the Europe 2020 Strategy goals. This is due not least by the fact that all OPs contribute to the 11 TOs. The PA aims to achieve, through a double approach of territorial and thematic policy-making, and in accordance to the National Reform Programme, to achieving the Europe2020 objectives. In France the OPs will cover the 11 TOs therefore, in the following way: The ESIF interventions will be spread in a balanced manner across the three pillars of the strategy. The ESIF will be focused most importantly on TO 3 and 6 and in a balanced manner between TOs 8, 9 and 10. The ERDF will be focused strongly on TO1. The EMFF will be focused mainly on the TOs 3, 4, 6 and 8. The thematic concentration of all ESF and ERDF OPs will follow the Article 4 principles.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The list on p.164 shows that there are 7 ERDF OPs, 6 ESF OPs, 27 ERDF/ESF OPs, 30 EAFRD OPs, and 1 EMFF OP. The table on this page also shows the resources planned by fund for each OP and each year between 2014-2020. The table on p.145 of the PA shows the financial allocation planned for each Fund and by TO. • total ERDF= EUR 8.426.107.776 • total ESF=EUR 6.026.907.278 • total EAFRD= EUR 11.384.844.248 • total EMFF= EUR 588.000.000 • total ESIF= EUR 26.425.859302 The table shows that the TOs with the highest allocation are the TOs 3 (mainly EAFRD), 6 (mainly EAFRD), and 5 (mainly EAFRD). The table also shows that the allocation across the TOs within the individual ESIF is balanced, with the ERDF covering all TOs except for TO11 and the ESF covering TOs 8, 9 10, 11; and the EAFRD covering all TOs except for TOs 7 and 11.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The two parts are difficult to discern and no particular difference can be noticed.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	An "interfold" group has been created and coordinated by the DATAR in the course of preparing the PA. This group was composed of the representatives of the responsible managing ministries for each fund, the ministries responsible for each of the relevant thematic fields, the Secrétariat général pour les Affaires européennes (SGAE) and the regional councils. This working group met at least twice a month between 2012 and 2013 to prepare documents that were then to be validated by the relevant administrations within the Interfund Steering Committee which met every 2 months between 2012 and 2013. Two types of partnerships were introduced: 1) national partnership: over 350 bodies at national level responsible for representing the various regional networks; 2) l'Instance Nationale de Préparation de l'Accord de partenariat (INPAP) consisting of 70 bodies representing the national partnership and responsible for commenting on each new draft of the PA. The names of the members of these bodies are listed in the form of tables within the same section. The three phases of consulting the national partnership (written procedure with 96 contributions; 17 thematic seminars and their results and impact on the PA; broad online public consultation from 1-15.6.2013) are described in the PA. The PA also describes the main changes achieved as well as those that were not taken on board in the PA as a result of these partner consultations.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The decentralisation resulting from the changes in this period in France is assessed to have a positive impact on the future bottom-up policy-making in Cohesion Policy. The Ops are based on ex-ante evaluations assessing their territorial needs. They have been oriented along the results from those ex-ante evaluations as well as the National Reform Programme and the TOs chosen in a highly balanced manner as described above, and therefore contributing to achieving the Europe 2020 objectives. The PA describes the main challenges faced in France and highlights the need for a territorial approach due to the differences witnessed across the country. The territorial approach therefore goes hand in hand with the growing decentralisation. According to the PA, the PA serves as an instrument to create a coherent approach towards reducing the challenges between the European, the national, the regional and the local levels.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The PA argues that France will make full use of the instruments and regulations available for 2014-2020 to mobilize the ESIF in a combined or a complementary manner. The fact that the regional councils will take on the role of MA for the ERDF and the EAFRD OP and a part of the ESF OPs will enable the further coordination and complementarity of the ESIF. Since all TOs are concerned, all fields of intervention are concerned by the complementarity, although the ESF is confined to the TOs 8, 9, 10 and occasionally 11. In a limited number of intervention fields, only one of the ESIF will be concerned (e.g. there is no TOs where only the EAFRD will contribute). The PA describes in detail how the ESIF Ops are to be implemented and coordinated given the administrative changes. The national ESF OPs as well as the regional OPs managed by the préfets in the regions of Guyane, Guadeloupe and Martinique will contribute to TOs 8 and 9. The regional OPs managed by the regional Councils will contribute only to TO10. For the ERDF, a national coordination framework has been put in place which however does not concern 2 of the OPs. The EMFF will be implemented by the DPMA	Section 2.1

	although the regional councils will also be in charge of some of the measures, in the role of intermediate bodies. In order to avoid duplications, 2 bodies are planned to be put in place for coordinating at national level: 1) National State-Region committee: coordination and observation of ESIF activities; 2) National body of partner coordination: reporting to the national partnership about progress. In addition, coordination authorities will be put in place: The CEGT is the inter-fund coordination authority supported by the national TA OP. Its functions are described in detail in the PA. The CEGT is also the coordination authority for the ERDF OPs. The ESF OPs in contrast are coordinated by the DGEFP. The EAFRD is coordinated by the DGPAAT. The DPMA is the coordination authority for the EMFF. At regional level, the President of the regional council and the Préfet de région will lead the inter-fund observation committee which will ensure the regional partnership, the coordination between the regional OPs and their MAs as well as the regional OPs and other regional and national funds. There will also be working groups and networks ensuring the coordination between the bodies implementing the national and regional OPs.	
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The EAC fulfilment is observed at the level of the PA with the exception of the EAC7. All EAC have been fulfilled when the PA was submitted except two. Out of the ERDF/ESF EAC, 13 have been fulfilled; out of the EAFRD EACs, 5 out of 8 were fulfilled and the EACs 4.3 and 6 will be completed in the framework of the EAFRD OP. With regards to the national EACs, the EACs 4, 5 and 6 were fully completed; and the EACs 1, 2 and 3 were partially fulfilled. 6.1. however is only partially fulfilled and the second criterion of 6.2. has not yet been fulfilled. The table in this sections described the level of fulfilment for each EAC as well as the level of verification for each of them.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	While an electronic system was already in place for coordinating the Cohesion funds in 2007-2013, a new system has been developed for 2014-2020 based on an ex-ante evaluation, called SYNERGIE, which responds to the expectations of the new regulations as well as the needs of the users. It enables the management of the ERDF and ESF as well as collecting all data needed at PA level. The old platform (PRESAGE) will be used until the final closure of the 2007-2013 OPs and all new data uploaded into the system will be transferred into SYNERGIE. The new features of this new system are described in the relevant section of the PA.	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	Each OP will need to identify the territorial needs and the instruments most suited for meeting them (dedicated Priority Axis, possibly multi-fund axis; ITI, CLLD). An arrangement for sustainable urban development will also have to be put in place. An inter-fund approach using territorial instruments (ITI, CLLD) will have to be used for territories with different needs ("mixed" such as coastal regions for instance). In this framework, min.5% of the EAFRD of each OP will be used for Leader and a minimum of 5% of the ERDF at national level will be used for urban development. This is described in more detail for each type of territory. ITIs will be used in different types of territories: agglomerations, metropolitan areas and urban areas; priority districts in cities; rural areas. They will be financed by the ERDF and in some cases the ESF and EAFRD (not the EMFF). The means for implementing urban development (responding to the needs of urban areas) are also described in detail in this section of the PA. This will mainly be financed by the ERDF and in part by the ESF (respectively around 10% and 1%) and strongly linked to the city policies (politique de la ville). The MRS and their related instruments are also described (Alpine MRS in development; Atlantic MRS). In addition, this section of the PA also presents the actions planned by type of territorial challenge faced.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The PA describes the approaches to be taken for each type of territorial area and challenges faced. The ERDF will play the major role for each of the instruments and measures foreseen (whether urban development, ITIs, etc) but the ESF is also integrated within these measures according to the PA. The EAFRD is integrated in some instances in contrast to the EMFF. In addition, the PA describes the coordination of the funds' contribution to territorial development with national and regional policies in place. Therefore, it can be argued that there is an integrated approach to territorial development.	Section 3, 3.1.5

7. Germany

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	In the 2014-2020 period in Germany most of the operational programmes are implemented at regional level by the Länder. A total of 48 funding programmes are being put in place. For the ERDF and the ESF, there are 15 operational programmes for each fund at regional level and one multi-fund programme – a joint ERDF/ESF programme for Lower Saxony. There is also one national programme under the ESF. Regarding EAFRD, there are 14 development programmes for rural areas. Regarding EMFF Germany has a single national programme. (see PA page 156 section 1.6) This is similar to the programming period 2007-2013 with the exception of the multiannual programme. Germany is not a beneficiary country under the Cohesion Fund. For the ESI funds the thematic objectives 1,3,4, 5,6 8,9,10 have been addressed. (see section 1.3.1. page 72 of the PA). Page 162 describes the coordination between the ESI-Funds at different levels. At the national level and between MS and with the EC the responsible bodies are the Ministry for economic affairs and energy. According to the PA the main element of a positive coordination is the cooperation with the Länder. The ministry will accompany the activities of the Länder based on the legal requirements and overtakes the financial control at the end of the programming period. Different to the last period the partners of the Länder will be involved throughout the whole programming period. For the ESF there is a special Länder committee. In the monitoring committees for each fund representatives from the other ESI-Funds are involved in order to exclude double funding. In some Länder there are joint monitoring committees for all ESI-Funds. Coordination is also assured via different regional participation processes.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The total ESIF Funds budget amounts EUR 26,8 bn with the following allocation in percentage: • 40% ERDF: 80% TO 1,3,4, less than 20% TO 5,6,9; • 28% ESF: TO 8, 9, 10; • 31% EAFRD: TO 1,2,3,4,5, 6, 8, 9, 10 • 1% EMFF: TO 3,4,6,8 • TO 7,11 are not covered in the German PA • TO 1,3,4,9 cover 60% of the total financial budget (See financial table) (See also PA page 144)	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)

How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	Part 1 of the PA covers almost all aspects of Article 15 and Article 21 of the CPR Part 2 of the PA covers: 1. the arrangements to ensure an integrated approach to the use of the ESI Funds for the territorial development of specific subregional areas, in particular the implementation arrangements for Articles 32, 33 and 36 accompanied by the principles for identifying the urban areas where integrated actions for sustainable urban development are to be implemented; 2. arrangements to ensure efficient implementation of the ESI Funds, including an assessment of the existing systems for electronic data exchange, and a summary of the actions planned to gradually permit all exchanges of information between beneficiaries, and authorities responsible for management and control of programmes, to be carried out by electronic data exchange (article 15 (2) b)	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	According to the PA the partnership principle has been fully addressed with involving the 16 Länder of Germany in the development of the PA. At page 148 of the PA it is described that the PA development process is according to the federal structure of Germany where the main formulation of the PA content is done by the regional authorities considering the regional strengths and weaknesses. The PA development has been evolved in a multi-stage procedure with information exchange and the regular delivery of regional priorities. The Ministry of Economic affairs and Energy has coordinated the development of the PA and has the main responsibility of the ERDF implementation, the ministry of Labour and social affairs coordinates the ESF implementation in the country. The Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture is responsible for the implementation of the Rural Development programme and the EMFF. The PA lists the main sources where the involvement of partners will be described: The discussion process has been documented, the involvement of social and economic partners are described in the operational programmes according to the regulation.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA describes the major challenges and needs of Germany in page 10-68. The main issues of concern are: • demographic change, particularly in eastern Germany • shortage of skilled workers in various industries and regions due to demographic change • innovative capacity needs to be improved and regional innovation gaps closed • unsatisfactory levels of entrepreneurialism and the development in the regions and cities Key focus areas to achieve this are the better utilisation of the potential labour supply, the training and education of the young generation and the integration of disadvantaged groups safeguarding and development of rural areas, better networking of infrastructure in poor rural areas with their surrounding regions, the raising of innovation potentials, the improvement of sectoral and regional competitiveness and the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and protection of the environment represent significant work to be done in the future. The replacements of fossil fuels by renewable energy sources, efficient energy generation and technologies to increase energy efficiency and energy saving, as well as the protection and conservation of the environment are major challenges described in the PA. The challenges do perfectly match with the thematic concentration on research, SME support and renewable energy support. This is also coherent with the country specific recommendations. The PA considers the differences between east and western Länder of Germany and the particular impact of demographic changes creating unbalanced economic development and deprived areas with particular needs.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The synergy between ESI-Funds and other EU and national funds is in general coordinated with specific inter-department working groups where national and regional representatives are participating. However the PA describes AT PAGE 165 coordination of synergies with the following EU funding instruments (European research area, European innovation partnership, HORIZON 2020, European Innovation and Technology institute, Knowledge and Innovation Community, Marie Curie Measures, COSME, Connecting Europe Facility and LIFE+ . In a planned HORIZON 2020 event relevant stakeholder will be informed and potential synergies will be elaborated. (see PA page 171) The main national funding instrument is the „Verbesserung der regionalen Wirtschaftsstruktur" (GRW)³² which should complement the regional funding instruments. The coordination between the national and regional administrations is regulated by the GRW national regulation. GRW sets the framework for the national regional development policy and assures the national implementation of EU regulations especially the state aid rules, in the frame of GWR the Länder define funding territories and the level of funding in different territories. Within the GWR regulation is a coordination framework defined which includes also the ESI-Funds.	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	According to the PA section 2.3. all Ex-ante conditionalities are fulfilled (general as well as thematic)	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	E-cohesion has been successfully established already in the programming period 2007-2013. The system will continue to be improved in the programming period 2014-2020. PA page 230 section 4 describes the effort of the Länder to improve the e-cohesion system regarding accessibility for beneficiaries, and the reduction of administrative burden via internet based application and information systems. In many Länder the information exchange between beneficiaries and implementing bodies will be web-based. However in most cases there are already installed systems and there is a need for improvement and amendments of communication functions, data exchange, document management and the realisation of the only-once-encoding-principle and its inter operationally. However the coordination of e-cohesion has to be seen in the light of a federal system. Regarding the ESF and ERDF data exchange 9 of 16 Länder foresee cooperating systems between the two funds. For the rural development programme the IT based application is in most cases already possible. In general for taking e-cohesion forward a national wide working groups has been established	Section 4

³² <http://www.bmwi.de/BMWi/Redaktion/PDF/J-L/koordinierungsrahmen-gemeinschaftsaufgabe-verbesserung-regionale-wirtschaftsstruktur-ab-010714,property=pdf,bereich=bmwi2012,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	The PA supports integrated urban development, ITI, CLLD and links to macro regional strategies. However it is up to each OP to define how and whether those instruments are implemented. In most of the OPs integrated urban development is subject of programming. The implementation of integrated territorial development is planned via thematic objectives 6 and 9 and in some cases involving 4 and 3 (see PA page 218). Some ERDF OPs foresee mixed priority axes for integrated urban development rather than implementing ITIs. According to the PA ITIS will be implemented in Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein. The implementation of CLLD is mostly focused on EAFRD but does not exclude the involvement of other ESI-Funds. According to the PA Sachsen-Anhalt is planning an integrated CLLD approach involving EAFRD as well as ESF.	Section 3
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	this topic is not specifically mentioned in the PA	Section 3, 3.1.5

12. Greece

General reflections	Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas? ESI Funds in PA: The PA describes under Ch.1.3.1 the overall framework consisting of the Common Strategic Framework, the National Reform Programme, the Council Recommendations, the so called "new national development model Greece 2021" (based on several studies and approved by the Euro Group) and the Europe 2020 Strategy. In this framework the "Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality" is added. The PA identifies five so called "Financing Priorities" which also address the thematic coordination among ESI funds, namely: 1. Enhancing competitiveness and internationalization of enterprises (especially SMEs), transition to qualitative entrepreneurship, spearheaded innovation and growth in domestic value added, mainly addressed by the TO1, 2 and 3 (ERDF oriented but also ESF, EAFRD and the EMFF, the latter focusing on TO3); 2. Development and utilization of human resources skills - active social inclusion mainly addressed by TO 8, 9, 10 (ESF/YEI oriented with specific EAFRD elements regarding employment in rural areas and ERDF on "hard" infrastructures); 3. Protection of the environment - transition to an economy-friendly environment mainly addressed by TO 4, 5, 16 (ERDF/CF oriented but also addressing EAFRD and the EMFF); 4. Development, modernization and completion of infrastructures for economic and social development addressed by TO7 (ERDF/CF oriented); 5. Enhancing institutional capacity and efficiency of public administration and local government addressed by TO 11 and partially TO2 (mixed ERDF/ESF). There is also an overall differentiation, with ESF actions related to unemployment and exclusion being activated as early as possible (as an attempt to mitigate the negative effects of the economic and financial crisis) and ERDF/CF starting more progressively in order to allow for important projects to develop and mature. Hence the county has selected all 11 TOs and they are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. Respectively, the contributions of these funds are the following: the ERDF (42%), the ESF (19%), the CF (17%), the EAFRD (22%) while the EMFF share is not set yet. In the chapter 1.3.3 Analysis of Thematic Objectives (p.71-114) the priorities, process and topics for each TO are described; for each of them a delineation of results among ESI Fund is provided at the end of each TO Section, allowing the immediate recognition of the synergies of the Funds.	1.2 and 1.3

Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	In the 2014-2020 programming period, there will be seven national sectoral OPs and 13 regional OPs. These are: • 1 OP “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation” (ERDF/ESF) with 3.6 Billion EURO ESIF; • 1 OP “Transport Infrastructure, Environment and Sustainable Development” (ERDF/CF) with 4.3 Billion EURO ESIF; • 1 OP “Human Resources Development - Education and Lifelong Learning” (ESF) with 1.9 Billion EURO ESIF; • 1 OP “Public Sector Reform” (ERDF/ESF) with 0,4 Billion EURO ESIF; • 1 OP “Technical Assistance” (ERDF/ESF/CF) with 0.3 Billion EURO ESIF; • 1 RDP “Rural Development” (EAFRD) with 4.2 Billion EURO ESIF; • 1 OP “Fisheries and Sea” (EMFF); • 13 Regional OPs (ERDF/ESF) with budgets ranging from 0.1 to 0.9 Billion EURO ESIF. The Financial Allocation across the TOs and ESIF is provided on table 1, p.122 and table 5, p.139 of the PA.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The first part of the PA includes the analytical part. This is very thorough, identifying main needs on a TO basis and further defining based on territorial structures and specificities. It summarizes the status quo and the obstacles related to the achievement of the Europe 2020 targets. It is augmented by the summary of the Ex-Ante Evaluation. It also encompasses the Vision and the Strategic Options, outlines the 5 thematic financing priorities (see pt.1) and describes the relation of these priorities to the 11 Thematic Objectives and the expected results for each of them. These aspects are further formulated in the content of the OPs and the budget allocations. It is supplemented by the description of the horizontal principles and some technical details. This part is of high quality and addresses the most important development aspects and dilemmas of the country. The second part is more technical and analyses the coordination structures and the territorial development instruments (ITI, CLLD, etc.) and the provisions for an efficient implementation.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	In Chapter 1.5.1 the PA presents the main programming stages, the key participants in the process and their respective responsibilities starting in April 2012 in a well publicized and attended process. The list of involved stakeholders provided in Annex I is very extensive and well structured. The consultation process is escorted by thematic working groups related e.g. to the RIS3 at the national and regional level, industrial policy, active inclusion of the persons with disabilities, civil protection and illegal migration, social partners dialogue etc. also provisions for the inclusion of the stakeholders in the Annual Progress Reports are listed. Concerning MLG there is strong exchange between central and regional authorities, both during the programming but also during implementation with significant devolution of responsibilities and budget of the National OPs to the Regional MAs (e.g. related to small scale infrastructures under the RDP or SME support under the OP “Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation”. Another opportunity for active participation of the civil society in the process is provided by means of publishing the entire information related to the work of the working group for the preparation of the PA on the Single information web-portal for the SCF www.espa.gr. More information is provided under Pt.1/Coordination.	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The contribution of the PA to the achievement of the Europe 2020 objectives and the relation to each of the 3 aims is provided thoroughly and with able consideration. The PA provides a synopsis of the territorial analysis and the way the territorial imbalances and needs affect the achievement of each one of the Europe 2020 targets under Ch. 1.1.2, p.36ff. The Ex-ante Evaluation (Ch.1.2.3, p.47f) testifies the coherence to the Europe 2020 but also addresses the specific needs of the country and the decision to address all Thematic Objectives based on the acute needs due to the economic crisis, the Recommendations of the Council, the requirements of the Stability Pact and the Economic Adjustment Programme. It is stated that in the given situation of the country only a "growth approach" based on TO1,2 and 3 would not be beneficial. The PA sees the contribution concerning the "Memorandum of Understanding on Specific Economic Policy Conditionality" along three axes: Related to the necessary reforms under TO2 and TO11 on public administration and TO8, 9 and 10 regarding the Labour Market and Social Inclusion and Related to the creation of provisions for the effective Implementation of TO3 (RIS, National Strategy for Higher Education etc.).	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Information on Coordination is provided in Ch.2.1 . The necessity for strong national coordination is underlined by the creation of the National Coordination Authority (EAS) under the General Secretariat of Public Investment of the Ministry for Development, Competitiveness, Transport and Networks. In contrast to the 2007-2013 the EAS has only coordination and no management responsibilities. It supervises the implementation of the OPs regarding synergies among the funds and coherence to national and EU policies. It also provides guidance on monitoring and evaluation and develops the Integrated Information System and ensures its compatibility with the EAFRD IACS. Last but not least it is the contact point for the European Commission. Additionally the Special Service for Coordination and Monitoring of ESF actions is coordinating the ESF Sectoral OPs and the ESF-aspects of the Regional OPs and is integrated to the EAS. These departments are augmented by the PA Monitoring Committee and the Sub-Committees for Human Resources, Rural Development and Fisheries. Based on bipartite agreement (EAS and EC) further sub-committees can be defined. Additionally the EAS organizes thematic networks; in the initial phase there are organized: • Coordination network on Smart Specialisation; • Coordination network on State Aid and Financial Instruments; • Coordination network on Evaluation; • Coordination network on horizontal institutional and administrative issues; • Coordination network on Information and publicity; • National Environmental Network (under the Ministry of Environment); • CLLD, ITI and Urban Development Networks;	Section 2.1

	• Territorial cooperation Network. Additional coordination actions relate to: • TO 1 and Horizon 2020 • Life and environmental interventions • CEF and TEN-T investments, • EEA Financial Instrument in the areas of environment, climate change, renewable energy sources, civil society, human and social development and academic research; • Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD); • European Investment Bank (EIB); • CAP Pillar 1 and Pillar 2. • Public Investment Programme.	
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	All General EAC and all but two of the Thematic EAC are considered to be applicable (6.4 and 8.4 are not relevant to the content of the OPs). A detailed listing of the status of the ex-ante conditionalities implementation at national and regional level is presented in Annex IIIa, IIIb and IIIc. Out of them: • 3 General EAC are fulfilled (GExAC 1, 2 and 6); • 3 General EAC are partly fulfilled (GExAC 3, 4 and 5) • 1 General EAC is not fulfilled, GExAC 7. Detailed Action Plans have been compiled and negotiated with the EC. Regarding the implementation presented in details in the annexes referred, a conclusion can be drawn that by 31.12.2016 no ex-ante conditionality will remain non-fulfilled. Conditionalities that will be implemented last are: - 1 general ex-ante conditionalities: GExAC 7 and - 3 thematic ex-ante conditionalities 6.1, 8.1 and 8,3	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	The Integrated Information System (OPS) has acquired through the System "Electronic Submission" extensive capabilities regarding data entry and monitoring based on a number of standardised forms processed in a decentralised manner. These forms assist the beneficiaries allowing for automatic completion of many fields, thus minimising errors and the preliminary exchange with the MAs for the early error detection. Further updates are expected. The OPS department also applies an integrated and certified electronic data security policy. Further steps include in terms of technological capability and operational capacity the following: • Development of Technological Studies: quarter 2, 2014; • Recording and modelling of processes of ESPA 2014-2020: quarter 2, 2014; • Transitional system for minimum requirements of the Management and Control System of the ESPA 2014-2020: quarter 3, 2014; • Contracting of the OPS operation of the new period: quarter 4, 2014; • OPS Pilot Operation: quarter 4, 2015; • OPS full operation: quarter 1, 2016. In the meantime the OPS 2007-2013 will cover the operational needs.	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	The PA underlines the importance of area based integrated approaches; attention was paid to this topic also in the Territorial Analysis Ad integrated territorial development the PA foresees: • The regions develop their own regional or interregional strategies within the framework of the PA and the guidance of the National Coordination Authority; • The ROP are the tools for the specification of the CLLD, Urban Development and ITI (defining types of spatial entities, selection criteria, the necessary minimum content of local projects and their evaluation criteria, the thematic objectives, investment priorities and types of action as well as synergies); • The Sectoral OPs define specific objectives and actions per TO to be transferred to the regions (although more than one TO can be combined if justifiable); • Financing Instruments (e.g. UDFs) are supported; • The development of local integrated territorial development strategies, when unavailable or immature, are supported. Community led local development The steps to be followed are: • Securing local responsibility, participation and initiative; • Definition of challenges for the area addressed, differentiating between rural and urban areas; • Prioritisation of TOs (the following order is suggested top-down: - o TO9 as most important, TO8, To6, TO3 and the rest for rural areas and - o TO8, TO9 and TO6 and the rest for urban areas. • Delineation of the are based on administrative or functional criteria; • Deviation provisions of the above for small islands; • Development of Local Development Strategies and the Local Action Groups. Integrated territorial investments ITIs are aiming at the creation of development motors in the regions and the addressing of challenges at the interregional level. Main challenges are: • Promoting of competitiveness, innovation and entrepreneurship with the final goal to achieve employment, social cohesion and resource conservation • Production restructuring and creation of local or regional supply chains and • Reconciliation of intra-regional disparities. The following TOs are considered relevant: TO3, TO6, TO7, TO8 and to a lesser extent To1, TO4, TO2 and TO5 although the thematic selection could be expanded if justifiable. ITIs are financed by the ROP and the funds allocated to the Regions by the Sectoral OPs.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	Sustainable urban development Main challenges are considered the needs for integrated interventions in urban centres, the reversion of the decline of urban areas, the entangling of the negative social aspects of the crisis, the promotion of urban smart specialisation and the reclaim of public spaces. The following TOs are considered relevant: TO3, TO9, TO8, TO6 and TO2 although the thematic selection could be expanded if justifiable. The selection of areas will be subject to Local Integrated Plans. 6% of the ERDF and ESF will be devoted to Sustainable urban development. Main priority areas for cooperation The PA underlines the need to coordinate the mainstream OPs and the Territorial Cooperation OPs with the IPA II and the ENI. The priorities are: 1. The continuation of cooperation with adjacent member states (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy); 2. The preparation of adjacent non member states for admission (Albania, fYRoM, Turkey); 3. The promotion of cooperation and the preservation of peace at the interregional level through the MED ENI CBC and Black Sea Basin ENI CBC; 4. The promotion of transnational cooperation through the programmes ADRION, MED and Balkan-Mediterranean; 5. The exploitation of the opportunities offered by the Macro-Regional Strategies approach and the European Blue Growth Policy; 6. The presence in EU wide programs like INTERREG EUROPE, URBACT and ESPON	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The PA will implement an integrated approach for geographical areas suffering from poverty based on the following characteristics: 1. They are demonstrating particularly high negative values with respect to employment and unemployment; 2. They are characterized by increased (over the national average) aging population; 3. They are mostly sparsely (less than 100 people per square kilometre and a population of less than 50,000 inhabitants, far from greater urban centres; 4. They are characterised by persistent poverty; 5. They are isolated areas (islands or mainland), which, in combination with one or more of the above aggravates their position. A methodology will be proposed for the delineation of the areas. Further vulnerable groups are identified (inactive persons, long term unemployed, homeless, working poor, immigrants, persons with disabilities, persons with specific cultural traits, ex-convicts, single parents, low qualification persons, disease carriers etc.).	Section 3, 3.1.5

13. Hungary

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The Hungarian PA covers all eleven thematic objectives, which are funded by the ESI Funds in a relatively even manner. ERDF funds eight thematic objectives, mainly SME competitiveness and research. ESF funds go to four thematic objectives, in particular employment. ERDF finances eight objectives, especially environment and SME competitiveness. Cohesion Fund financing goes to four thematic objectives, most importantly sustainable transport. EMFF funds three thematic priorities. Out of the thematic objectives, environment and employment receive 14% each of the total ESI financing, transport 13% and SME competitiveness 12%. The contribution of each Fund to each chosen thematic objective is described clearly. However, the practical coordination of funds is not discussed. pages 72-97	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The ESI financing in Hungary will be delivered through nine OPs, out of which 7 are multi-fund and 2 single fund (EAFRD, EMFF). The multi-fund OPs will be as follows: 2 national OPs financed by the ERDF and ESF (Economic Development and Innovation, Human Resources Development), 2 national OPs financed by ERDF and CF (Environment and Efficiency, Integrated Transport), 1 national OP co-financed by ESF and CF (Public Administration and Services), and 2 territorial OPs co-financed by ERDF and ESF (Territorial, Competitive Central Hungary). In 2014-2020 Hungary is allocated around EUR 21.9 billion for Cohesion Policy (ERDF EUR 10.8 billion, ESF EUR 4.7 billion, Cohesion Fund EUR 6.0 billion) including EUR 49.8 million for the Youth Employment Initiative and EUR 361.8 million for territorial cooperation. 14% of the total funds, i.e. EUR 3.45 billion will go to EAFRD. The allocation for EMFF amounts to some EUR 39 million. Detailed ESI funds' allocation can be found on page 99 of the PA (inserted into excel sheet 'Financials - them obj' and 'Financials - progs') Pages 98-99	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The parts of the PA subject to Commission decision [Article 15(1)] cover pages 8-220 and Annex I (EAC). The parts of PA not subject to Commission decision [Article 15(2)] cover pages 221-234. The quality of the second part is lower.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	In the spring of 2013 there were negotiations with the key partners (e.g. regional and city administrations, social partners, research institutes and churches) on the PA. In the summer of 2013 the PA was uploaded in the internet for public consultation. A total of 620 contributions were received. The OPs were consulted publicly in the autumn of 2013. A total of 866 contributions were received online. Events were also organised to discuss the OPs in different regions. The main effects of the contributions are discussed in the section. pages 100-115	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The NRP 2014 contained several country-specific recommendations, such as financial stability, invigorating financial sector, taxation, youth employment, LLL, business environment, education, social inclusion, energy and transport. The Hungarian PA takes the ESI Fund-relevant recommendations into account. Hungary has set ambitious employment rate and renewable energy targets in the framework of EU2020. These targets are mobilised nationally through the Hungarian National Development and Territorial Development Concept, which is also mirrored in the PA and operationalised through the OPs. However, the ambition level of the EU2020 targets is not mirrored in the ESI Fund financing for the relevant thematic objectives. The Hungarian PA does not show much thematic concentration on specific TOs: all thematic objectives have been chosen in the programming processes. Rather, the different OPs operate wide policies. pages 8-73	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	There will be a strong central coordination of the Funds by the Prime Minister's Office. There will be cross-membership in the Monitoring Committees. The demarcation between EAFRD and ERDF/ESF is described. Several areas for synergies between ESI Funds are identified (tourism, employment, innovation, energy) but no concrete cooperation/coordination measures are described. The Hungarian PA lists Horizon 2020, LIFE, Connecting Europe Facility, FEAD, EIB, ISF-Borders, Kreativa Europa, Erasmus+, and COSME as funding instruments with potential synergies with the ESI Funds and identifies the authorities responsible for avoiding double funding. However, no clear issues or areas of cooperation/synergy are mentioned, neither are practical coordination mechanisms. pages 118-133	Section 2.1

State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The Hungarian PA identifies a large number of ex ante conditionalities that are not fulfilled or only partially fulfilled. <u>General ex ante conditionalities:</u> Not fulfilled (4. Public procurement; 7. Statistical systems and result indicators) Partially fulfilled (1. Anti-discrimination; 2. Gender; 3. Disability. In all these cases (1-3) the training authorities is the missing element.) <u>Thematic conditionalities:</u> Not fulfilled: (1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation; 7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures; 10. Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning) Partially fulfilled (2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, information and communication technologies; 4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors; 8. Promoting sustainable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility; 9. Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination; 11. Enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration). pages 135-210	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)). (Include table of deadlines)	The existing electronic applications (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD) were examined, and their functions (application, reporting, monitoring) were deemed sufficient. Development work to ensure interoperability of the databases started in the first quarter and was planned to be finished on the 3rd quarter of 2014. pages 233-234	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	There will be two territorial OPs (territorial and Central Hungary), which will be managed at NUTS3 level. Sustainable urban development will receive 5% of ERDF funding, but no details are given on which cities and how it will be done in practise. CLLD will be financed by EAFRD in the countryside and ESF&ERDF in the cities. The regional administrations are responsible for demarcation between countryside and cities. ITIs will not be used. Territorial cooperation and Danube Strategy (EUDRS) are mentioned as macro-regional strategies. The contribution of the funds to the Danube Strategy is discussed in sections 1.3.2 and 2.1.3. pages 221-229	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The most disadvantaged areas (striped rural areas on PA page 72 map) suffer from low levels of education, low employment rate, and a range of social problems. The ESI Funds (ERDF, ESF and EAFRD) will work together to alleviate these problems. The ERDF will focus on business support, the ESF on education and employment opportunities for people at the margins of the job market (especially Roma). The EAFRD will fund these areas especially through Leader actions. pages 230-232 and section 1.1.4	Section 3, 3.1.5

14. Ireland

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The Irish PA covers ten thematic objectives, which are funded by the 4 ESI Funds in a concentrated manner. EAFRD funds eight thematic objectives, with two-thirds of funds going to climate change and environment. ERDF funds five thematic objectives, mainly research, low-carbon economy and ICT. ESF funds go to three thematic objectives, and half of the ESF funds go to employment. EMFF funds three thematic priorities. The ex ante evaluation of the EMFF is not included in the PA as it was not finished. The coordination of funds is not described in a tangible and comprehensive manner. pages 103-130	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The programme architecture is similar to the 2007-13 period. There is one national ESF OP, which includes a specific allocation of the Youth Employment Initiative and two regional ERDF OPs, namely Border, Midland and Western Regional OP and the Southern and Eastern Regional OP). In addition, there will be one RDP and one Fisheries programme. Ireland receives around EUR 1.19 billion for Cohesion Policy (ERDF and ESF) including EUR 68.1 million for the Youth Employment Initiative and EUR 168.9 million for European territorial cooperation. The EAFRD allocation totals EUR 2.19 billion (i.e. 65% of total funding), whereas the allocation for EMFF amounts to some EUR 147.6 million. Out of the ten thematic objectives covered by the PA, "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives the largest share of funding, 25%. Environment plays a large role in the Irish PA, since "Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management" receives 21% and "Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors" gets 13% of the total ESI Funds' financing. Detailed ESI funds' allocation can be found on page 131 of the PA (inserted into excel sheet 'Financials - them obj' and 'Financials - progs')	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The parts of the PA subject to Commission decision [Article 15(1)] cover pages 1-246 and Annex I (partners). The parts of PA not subject to Commission decision [Article 15(2)] cover pages 247-262. The quality of the second part is lower than that of the first part. Especially the description related to e-governance is vague.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) had responsibility for co-ordinating the overall preparation of the PA. The partners (listed in Annex I) were consulted three times in the planning and drafting process. Furthermore, individual consultation processes were also undertaken for each OP. Partners were primarily consulted using email and follow up meetings with some partners were also held. Additionally, views of representatives of the five pillars of social partnership (construction industry, employers, farmers, trade unions, community and voluntary) were specifically sought on the draft PA. The mechanisms of participation and degree of influence are not clearly described. pages 135-153, Annex I	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The NRP 2014 is written on the basis of actions needed to reach the EU2020 targets. The PA is aligned with the NRP and EU2020 targets, and three country-specific recommendations. The recommendations were mostly focused on economic and employment issues (ERDF and ESF), hence not directly related to EAFRD and EMFF. The development needs listed in the PA (employment, availability of Next Generation Broadband, poverty and social inclusion, research and development, climate change and resource efficiency, and education) were identified before a proper description/analysis of the situation was given. pages 11-117	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The coordination between ESI Funds is described vaguely. Only the mutual representation in Monitoring Committees, National Coordination Committee of the Funds and the Partnership Agreement Monitoring Committee are mentioned. Day-to-day cooperation or synergies in specific issues are not discussed. The Irish PA lists LIFE programme, Erasmus+, EASI Programme, Connecting Europe, Territorial cooperation activities, Horizon 2020, COSME, Creative Europe, EASI, and the 7th Environmental Action Programme as funding instruments with potential synergies with the ESI Funds. However, no clear issues or areas of cooperation/synergy are mentioned, neither are practical coordination mechanisms. It is only said that references to these funding instruments will be made in the OPs where appropriate. EIB financial instruments will not be used. pages 156-176	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Ireland has fulfilled all the ex ante conditionalities. pages 177-237	Section 2.3

Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	The EAFRD and ESF MAs were sent a questionnaire regarding their current systems of electronic data exchange and to assess the level of compliance of the current systems with the EU requirements. An Implementation Group was established to carry out the project. The open procurement process for the new IT system will begin in 2015 and is expected to be in place by 31 December 2015. The e-cohesion requirements do not apply to EMFF and EAFRD. pages 260-262	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	CLLD will be used in the delivery of the LEADER Programme under the EAFRD and the funding of Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAGs) in the delivery of the EMFF. There will be no multi-fund CLLD. ITIs will not be used in any of the OPs. Sustainable urban development will be delivered through a separate priority axis under Thematic Objective 6 (e). EUR 40 million of ERDF funds will be devoted to urban development. Reference to macro-regional strategies is only given in relation to the European Territorial Cooperation programmes. pages 247-260	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	No	Section 3, 3.1.5

15. Italy

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	ESI Fund in the PA From p. 149 onwards, the PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of the thematic objectives. In Italy, all 11 TOs are selected and will be implemented through ERDF, ESF, EAFRD and EMFF resources. The allocation of resources and selection of the TOs have been based on the recommendation at Community level embedded in the ex-ante evaluation. Distinctions in the allocation have been made according to the type of regions: i.e. more developed, transition, less developed. Coordination The intention of the PA is to give priority in the use of the national Development and Cohesion Fund (FSC) for the majority of interventions that requires a significant contribution, e.g. complex infrastructure, environmental interventions. ESIF could be more usefully concentrated in strengthening, transformation and development of the enterprise system, know-how and social inclusion. For instance, under TO2 (ERDF and EAFRD resources), it has been envisaged within the Agency for the Digital Italy, a department aimed at coordinating the different interventions involving the managing authorities of OP at national and regional level, and the national and regional authorities. ERDF resources under this TO should be deployed in cooperation with the Strategic Plan for broadband deployment, which on the basis of an economic analysis, identifies the criteria for the prioritisation of actions. The ministry for economic development will coordinate the interventions under this specific aspect of this TO. As for TO3 (ERDF, EAFRD and EMFF), in order to ensure consistency between national and regional interventions and avoid overlapping, periodic coordination meetings involving the main public authorities will be organised. The aim of these meetings is to coordinate the actions, coordinate the selection criteria under which beneficiaries are selected, share raw data and take decision in case of State Aid implications. Similar meetings are also envisaged under TO3, and specifically for interventions referring to smart grids.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	Programme architecture p. 320 of the Partnership Agreement present the programme architecture for the 2014-2020 period. Following, a detailed description of the OP at national (NOP) and regional level (ROP) is provided. National Operational Programmes covering all regions: • NOP “for the school - competences and environment for learning” (TO10 and 11 - ESF and ERDF resources) • NOP “System for active policy for employment” (TO 8 and 11 - ESF) • NOP “Inclusion” (TO9 and 11 - ESF)	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)

	• NOP “Metropolitan cities” (ERDF and ESF) targeted to 14 Italian metropolitan cities • NOP “Governance and institutional capacity” (TO11 in support of other TOs - ERDF and ESF) • NOP “Initiative youth employment (ESF) Only for regions in transition and less developed • NOP Research and innovation (ERDF and ESF) • NOP Enterprises and competitiveness (ERDF) Only for less developed regions • NOP Infrastructure and networks (ERDF) • NOP Culture (ERDF) • NOP legality (ERDF and ESF) Under EAFRD resources, there are the national rural network, and the programme for risk management, water infrastructure and animal biodiversity. Finally, along with these programmes at national level, each of the 20 Italian regions has Regional Operational Programme for ESF and ERDF, and the Rural Development Programmes.	
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The two parts are difficult to discern and no particular difference can be noticed.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	Italy intends to capitalise from the Cohesion Action Plan ³³ experiences, which had an active role in the definition of some important interventions and call preparation. However, (p. 288 of the PA) in order to integrate the new methodological aspects of the 2014-2020 period, the ministry of cohesion presented the document “method and objectives for an efficient use of ESIF 2014-2020”. The document has introduced 7 new methodological innovations, which has oriented the programming, and it has been defined on the basis of an online consultation process in which 84 stakeholders took part (for a total of 77 contributions). On the basis of the methodological hypothesis developed in the document, 4 thematic round tables have been set up: (A) labour, competitiveness of productive systems and innovation; (B); valorisation, management and land protection (C) Quality of life and social inclusion. At these round tables central administrations, associations and socio-economic partnership have taken part and various ministers have coordinated them. Moreover, several plenary sessions were organised with the national forum of social and economic parties for the programming of ESIF fund along with bilateral meetings with specific organisations. Moreover, also round table discussions at a more political level were organised.	Section 1B, 1.5.1

³³ The Cohesion Action Plan, prepared in 2011 and adopted in November of that year, was created in order to accelerate the implementation of expenditure programmes, overcoming delays in the start-up of the operations of the Structural Funds 2007-2013 and responding to requests by the European Union.

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	p. 1 of the PA. In the selection of thematic fields, a great emphasis has been given to the country specific recommendations adopted by the European Council on the basis of the national reform programmes for 2013 and 2014. The main recommendations refer to: labour market, educational and vocational training, the development of the capital market, the strengthening of infrastructure, the reform of public administration. For each of these themes, the recommendations ask to implement certain measures. After taking into consideration these recommendations, the PA proceeds examining the Italian macro-economic context as well as the disparities, development needs and growth potentials at Thematic Objective level and it analyses the territorial challenges of the Italian territory, making a distinction between inner areas, urban areas, rural areas. Finally, as for the other strategies considered, the PA considers the EU Strategy for the Adriatic-Ionian region (EUSAIR), the EU Strategy for the Alpine region (EUSALP) as well as the 19 transnational or cross-border programmes in which Italy participates.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	p. 325 of the PA. Several elements are there to ensure coordination. First is the Plan for Administrative Strengthening (as laid down in the note from EC no. 969811 del 28 March 2014). Along with that, there are also the monitoring committees that especially for ROP FSE and ERDF will have to be joint to ensure coordination. At the national level a monitoring and accompanying committee will be set up. Moreover, in order to ensure coordination between national or regional programmes and transnational cooperation ones, already in the 2007-13 period, a strategic coordination group was set up with this aim and it will keep running during the 14-20 period. As for the coordination between ESI funds and other financial instrument at national or European level, an ad hoc coordination will be ensured in particular with Horizon2020, Life, Erasmus+, European Globalisation Adjustment Fund, EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI), Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD), Marie Curie actions.	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	p. 335 of the PA. At the level of ESI funds <u>Ex-ante conditionality fulfilled (20):</u> Most of them are satisfied, namely: - 3.1. SMEs, - 4.2. Cogeneration, - 4.3. renewable energies, - 5.1. good environmental and agronomic conditions,	Section 2.3

	- 5.3 minimal requirements for fertilizers and plant protections products (EAFRD), - 5.4 other standards envisaged in the national legislation (EAFRD), 6.2, 8.1, 8.2, 8.3, 8.4, 8.5, 8.6, 9.2, 10.1, 10.2, 10.3, 10.4, 11.1. <u>Ex-ante conditionality partially fulfilled (5)</u> 1.1, 2.2, 4.1, 6.1, 9.1. <u>Ex-ante conditionality non fulfilled (5)</u> 1.2, 2.1, 7.1., 7.2, 7.3 General Ex-ante conditionality Fulfilled (4): GExAC 1, 2, 3, 7, Partially fulfilled (3): GExAC 4, 5, 6. Not fulfilled: none. Challenges relate mainly to ex-ante conditionality not or partially satisfied which relate to: public procurement, state aid, infrastructure for research, digital growth, railways, other transport modes. However, the PA includes a list of measures that the interested ministries intend to implement to satisfy the ex-ante conditionality which are partially or not satisfied. Deadlines are not included in the PA.	
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	p. 700 No specific mention of e-cohesion and no table of deadlines included. However, at the national level the monitoring is ensured by the ministry of economy and finance in technical coordination with the department for economic development and cohesion, the central administrations. For this aim, a working group was created to define the information set to gather by the central system. Moreover, a technical table was created with central and regional administrations to rationalise the information collected, to draft guidelines for the administrative simplification etc. Therefore the system has been streamlined and simplified compared to 2007-2014 programming period. As for the web access to information, the intention is to strengthen the web portal open, called Coesione, started in 2012 which publishes on a two-months basis the monitoring data. This is in line with the provisions of art. 115 of the CPR.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	p. 664 CLLD The PA acknowledges that in the past results were achieved, but with difficulties and with impacts differentiated from territory to territory. In some other cases, results have been totally missing. To avoid such phenomena, the objectives of the CLLD will be tailored around precise themes, which on the contrary of the past programming periods, will be defined very specifically. The population interested by CLLD should not be between 10,000 and 150,000. However, if met some characteristics, it can also be up to 200,000 inhabitants. The action plans will concentrate on a limited number of areas of interventions (not more than 3). The	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	local action group will pick the themes from a list laid down in the regional programmes to be coherent with the emerging needs and the opportunities identified for their territories. The operational programme therefore will have to be flexible enough to allow local action groups to define coherent actions with the themes selected. Although the intention is to concentrate actions in order to achieve a limited number of objectives, this does not mean the elaboration of monothematic strategies. In order to finance CLLD projects, several funds could be interested. As for the action plans, a multi-fund approach is preferred, with a minimum and maximum allocation of funds (e.g. each action plan should have ERDF or ESF resources between 1 and 5 MEUR). As for territorial cooperation, Italy in 2014-2020 participates in 19 programmes ITI Nothing mentioned specific to the Italian case. Coordination As far as the coordination is concerned, as several ESI funds will be involved, the technical committee for the actuation of community-led interventions will be set-up with the role of leading the selection process of intervention themes and the selection of local action groups on the basis of their action plans submitted and the characteristics of the partnership. At this technical committee, the MA of each OP and experts of local development will take part. They will follow-up the actuation of CLLD interventions as well as they will guarantee the link with the wider territorial policy at regional level. It will also define the expected result and the objective of community-led initiatives, the territorial priority, and the themes.	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	p. 689 As for social exclusion and discrimination, the interventions envisaged in TO9 intend to develop an integrated approach in the definition of interventions. Moreover TO9 will also consider areas subject to poverty in an integrated manner. Integrated approached are also envisaged in CLLD and ITI. These two are mainly framed by the national urban agenda and strategy for inner urban areas.	Section 3, 3.1.5

16. Latvia

General reflections	Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas? ESI Funds in PA The Partnership Agreement (PA) of Latvia covers five ESI Funds from which Latvia will secure investment financing: - The ERDF will be used to support investments in research and innovation, information and communication technologies in order to support development and structural adjustment of economies for purposes of increasing competitiveness of SMEs. - The CF will be used to promote integration into common market of the EU and to promote application of environmental standards and construction of major transportation infrastructure. - The ESF will be used to support improvement of employment prospects, strengthening of social integration, decreasing poverty, promoting education opportunities and lifelong learning and developing active, comprehensive and sustainable social integration, - EAFRD will be used to promote agricultural competitiveness, to ensure sustainable management of natural resources and actions in the area of climate policy, as well to achieve a balanced territorial development of rural economies and communities, including by creating and supporting employment. - EMFF will support fisheries that are competitive, economically viable and sustainable from the social and environmental point of view, as well as facilitating balanced and inclusive territorial development of fishery regions. In 2014-2020 investments through the five ESI funds will be implemented through 3 Operational Programmes at the national level. The OP "Growth and employment" will be financed through the ERDF, CF and ESF. The Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 will source the EAFRD and the Action Programme for the Development of Fisheries in 2014-2020" the EMFF. Latvia intends to spread investments across all 11 TOs. The selection of the TOs and the Investment Priorities (IPs) has been based mainly on meeting the objectives of „Europe 2020" strategy and implementation of recommendations of the EU Council. Furthermore. The Latvian ESI investment strategy is based on priority issues defined in the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy „Latvia 2030", NRP for Implementation of „Europe 2020" Strategy and the National Development Plan 2020 considering development areas defined in EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. Based on an analysis of the development challenges facing Latvia six overall priorities were defined to be addressed with the aid of ESI funds. Table 1.3.2 of the PA provides a summary of justification for thematic objectives and investment priorities selected within framework of ERDF, ESF and CF OP. Coordination Section 3.1 the PA provides a description of measures planned to ensure that the PA and the OPs are coordinated during implementation.	1.2 and 1.3

Planning documents for ESI Funds for year 2014–2020 are developed on the basis of priorities and objectives set by National Development Plan 2020 and implemented on the basis of the availability of state and municipal budget resources, Cohesion Policy and Common Agricultural Policy Funds, and other investment instruments of the EU budget, EU and other foreign financial aid instruments, and private funding. The Ministry of Finance as the institution responsible for the development of the PA in cooperation with the Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre³⁴ and the Ministry of Agriculture is responsible for the overall joint coordination of all the previously mentioned financial resources thus ensuring alignment of investments with the objectives of the PA. Furthermore, to ensure oversight of the National Development Plan and ESI and the coordination of other financial instruments and assistance and integrated territorial development the Ministry of Finance has created a PA Monitoring team. The PA Monitoring group ensures high level oversight and coordination of the implementation of measures and includes representatives of all sector ministries, State Chancellery, planning regions and cooperation partners.

The OP “Growth and employment” has a Monitoring Committee to coordinate investments for all three Cohesion Funds (ERDF, CF and ESF). To ensure administration and more effective implementation and monitoring of priorities related to the Cohesion Funds a Sub-Committee(s) of the Monitoring Committee is created consisting of sector ministries, planning regions and cooperation partners. The objective of the Subcommittee/-s is to ensure „cooperation, exchange of information in planning of objectives, determining criteria for project applications, drafting of legal acts, implementation and supervision thereof, to ensure timely resolution of identified planning and implementation problems, by promoting efficiency”.

In order to ensure coordination with EAFRD and EMFF, during the preparation of the OP the Ministry of Finance consulted with the Ministry of Agriculture, the responsible line ministry, regarding the measures and conditionality for the funding to be included in the planning documents.

The implementation procedure of the OP foresees coordination by the attendance of a representative of the leading institutions at supervision committees of the EAFRD and the EMFF (Monitoring teams), and by attendance of a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture at the Monitoring Committee of the CP Funds OP. With respect to the European Territorial Cohesion (ETC) programme the Ministry of Environment and Regional Development has created a consultative work group which includes representatives from the Ministry, Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre, planning regions and social partners with the task of overseeing the development of the ETC programme in alignment with the National Development Plan. Due to the overlap of ETC and CF OP, all ETC programmes are coordinated by the Ministry of Finance.

Several other means of coordinating different but related investments are discussed in the PA. An e-administration system will be further developed to streamline administration procedures (section 4.1 E-Funds on pages 190-191 of the PA).

³⁴ In Latvia responsibility for the National Sustainable Development Strategy implementation and overall policy coordination and monitoring at the national level lies with the Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre

Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	In the 2014-2020 programming period investments through five ESI funds will be implemented through 3 Operational Programmes at the national level. The OP “Growth and employment” will be financed through the ERDF, CF, ESF, YEI. The Rural Development Programme 2014-2020 will source the EAFRD and the Action Programme for the Development of Fisheries in 2014-2020” the EMFF. Table 1.6.1. in the PA (on page 144) provides an overview of OP indicative financing by years during the programming period. Of the indicative total 5 632 643 738 ESI funding available approximately 78% are allocated to the OP “Growth and employment”, 19% to EAFRD and 3% to EMFF. Table 1.4.1. in the PA (on page 129) provides an overview of indicative financing by thematic objectives and funds. The thematic objectives have the following indicative financing in decreasing order of financing: • TO7. Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures – 21%; • TO6. Preservation and protection of the environment and promoting resource efficiency – 14%; • TO3. Enhancing competitiveness of the SMEs, as well as agriculture sector (for EAFRD) and fisheries and aquaculture sector (for EMFF) – 14%; • TO10. Investing in education, training, and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning – 9%; • TO4. Supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy in all sectors – 9%; • TO9. Promoting social inclusion by combating poverty and any discrimination – 9%; • TO1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation – 9%. • TO8. Promoting stable and quality employment and supporting labour mobility – 5%; • TO5. Promoting climate change adaptation, risk prevention and management – 5%; • TO2. Enhancing access to, and use and quality of, ICT – 3%; • TO11. Enhancing institutional capacity and an efficient public administration – 3%.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The PA of Latvia is generally written as one integral document. No major discernible differences are evident between different parts of the PA in terms of the importance of the subject discussed and level of detail and argumentation provided. Most of the sections of the PA contain some cross-referencing between sections. Section 1.2 Summary of Ex-ante Evaluation on pages 77-80 is somewhat brief and lacks specificity regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the three evaluated OPs and whether/how the results of the evaluation has benefitted the programming phase in Latvia.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The preparation of the PA was started after discussions on the draft National Development Plan 2020 with a wide range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The partnership principle was observed in development of the PA and OP through various separate forums, such as, the National Tripartite Cooperation Council (triple sided social dialogue forum of national level), Working Group for Management of Reforms (a group set up to deal with the economic crisis to take reform decision for the country) and the Council for Implementation of Non-governmental Organization and Cabinet Cooperation Memorandum (involvement of civic society in the work of state administration). The institutional framework of the ESI Funds for 2014-2020 in Latvia is the following: 1. The Managing Authority of the CP funds is the Ministry of Finance which is in charge of preparing and	Section 1B, 1.5.1

implementing the OP of the CP funds and in involving all line ministries and social and cooperation partners.

2. The Managing Authority of the EAFRD and EMFF is the Ministry of Agriculture which is in charge of preparing and implementing operational programmes of the EAFRD and EMFF.

The Managing Authorities established several planning and management bodies for planning for the ESI Funds:

Interim Supervisory Committee (ISC)

It consists of representatives of the state and local government institutions involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds, territorial administration, social and economic partners, non-governmental organizations, as well as of the institutions involved in planning and implementation of the ESI funds. It supervises the process of developing and approval of the PA and OP, oversees the process of negotiations with the EC on the approval of the PA and OP and makes decisions on specific objectives and target values.

EAFRD ISC and EMFF Monitoring Committee

The EAFRD ISC and EMFF MC consists of representatives of the state and local government institutions, social and economic partners and non-governmental organizations involved in the implementation of the EAFRD and EMFF, as well as of other institutions involved in planning and implementation of the EAFRD and EMFF. Primary tasks include:

1. discussion of priorities and strategic objectives for the implementation of the EAFRD and EMFF;
2. submission of proposals for measures/priorities and funding to the Managing Authority (Ministry of Agriculture) in the framework of the operational programmes of the EAFRD and EMFF.

Cooperation partners and the public have been involved in drafting planning documents of the EAFRD and EMFF through:

1. regional conferences and discussions;
2. working groups and expert meetings;
3. high level meetings with cooperation partners to discuss Latvia's priorities and strategic objectives.

Working Group

The Working Group includes the line ministries, cooperation partners and the public and was responsible for drafting planning documents of the CP funds. Ministries and State Chancellery prepared draft planning documents in line with the tasks defined in the National Development Plan 2020 and these were discussed with cooperation partners at special meetings devoted to reviewing comments submitted by public stakeholders. Subsequently proposals for planning documents were discussed in the ISC including comments received from stakeholders and the public.

Additionally, the Managing Authority (Ministry of Finance) and the competent line ministries organized regular meetings with experts and cooperation partners in order to discuss strategic development of various sectors in relation to the planning process of the ESI Funds.

Public Consultations

In the course of drafting the PA more than 30 topical discussions were organized, a public participation procedure of the draft programming documents of 2014 – 2020 was organized, and the PA was discussed at several conferences organized by local governments and partners.

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The investment strategy using ESI funds is developed to concentrate resources and critical mass of investments in order to achieve desired changes in Latvia considering defined needs, to contribute directly to the achievement of objectives of „Europe 2020” strategy and implementation of recommendations of the EU Council. The ESI investment strategy is based on development areas and challenges defined in the Sustainable Development Strategy „Latvia 2030”, National Reform Programme (NRP) and National Development Plan 2020 taking into account the priorities of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region. NRP defines nine quantitative objectives/ targets to be achieved in Latvia within the context of strategy „Europe 2020” and supported by ESI funds. ESI funds will help to introduce five of EU Council recommendations, which are concerned with long-term and youth unemployment, scope of social services and measures for activation of beneficiaries of social assistance benefits, reforms of higher education and research institutions, energy efficiency and increase of efficiency of judicial system. Based on an analysis of factors hindering the development of competitiveness, the following overall priorities are set in the PA: 1. increase of economic productivity, value added, quality of innovation, research and science; 2. sustainable and efficient transportation infrastructure; 3. sustainable use of natural and cultural resources; 4. high employment rate in inclusive society; 5. high quality and efficiency of education system; 6. balanced and sustainable territorial development. The context and justification for the selection of these priorities is discussed in detail in Section 1.1 on pages 8-77. Section 1.2 "Summary of Ex-ante Evaluation" is presented on pages 77-80 but is very general with respect to conclusions and recommendations concerning the ESI investment strategy defined in the three OP. Section 1.3. "Selected Thematic Objectives and Investment Priorities" (pages 80-111) provides a comprehensive overview of how the defined development priorities will be addressed through the 11 Thematic Objectives, defined investment priorities and OPs and how these are linked to Europe 2020, NRP and recommendations of the EU Council.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The OP “Growth and employment” has a Monitoring Committee, created by the Ministry of Finance, to coordinate investments for all three Cohesion Funds (ERDF, CF and ESF). To ensure administration and more effective implementation and monitoring of priorities related to the Cohesion Funds a Sub-Committee of the Monitoring Committee was created consisting of sector ministries, planning regions and cooperation partners. The Subcommittee(s) will ensure „cooperation, exchange of information in planning of objectives, determining criteria for project applications, drafting of legal acts, implementation and supervision thereof, to ensure timely resolution of identified planning and implementation problems, by promoting efficiency”. In order to ensure coordination with EAFRD and EMFF, during the preparation of the OP the Ministry of Finance consulted with the Ministry of Agriculture, the responsible line ministry, regarding the measures and conditionality for the funding to be included in the planning documents. The implementation procedure of the OP foresees coordination by the attendance of a representative of the leading institution (Ministry of Finance) at Monitoring Committees of the EAFRD and the EMFF, and by attendance of a representative of the Ministry of Agriculture at Management Committees of the CP Funds OP. With respect to the European Territorial Cohesion (ETC) programme the Ministry of Environment and Regional Development has created a Consultative Working Group which includes representatives from the Ministry, Cross-sectoral Coordination Centre, planning regions and social partners with the task of overseeing the development of the ETC programme in alignment with the National Development Plan. Due to the overlap of ETC and CF OP, all ETC programmes are coordinated by the Ministry of Finance. Implementation and supervision of the ETC programmes will be undertaken by a national subcommittee of the EU Structural Fund objective's ETC programmes, to provide advisory functions to the Ministry of Finance, thus serving as an additional condition for funding within the Monitoring Committee of the respective programme. The Ministry of Finance will inform other institutions involved in the implementation of ESI Funds and financial instruments regarding activities supported within the framework of the ETC programmes. To ensure the coordination between CP funds, EAFRD, EMFF and ETC and consistency with goals and priority areas of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region several mechanisms are proposed including involvement of the EUSBRS National Contact Point in PA Management Team and Monitoring Committees of the respective OPs as well as participation of the Ministry of Finance as PA coordinator in the EUSBRS Working group in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (national coordinator of EUSBRS). In Section 2.1 (pages 148-156) the PA then also describes the arrangements foreseen for the coordination with other priority areas including in Horizon 2020, ESFRI, Marie Curie Research Fellowship Programme, Norwegian Financial Instrument Programme, LIFE+, CEF Digital, COSME, EEA financial instrument, Natura 2000, LEADER, PROGRESS, Nordic Council of Ministers Programme „Nordplus”, Latvian - Swiss Cooperation Programme and others.	Section 2.1

State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	<u>General Ex-ante Conditionalities</u> Most of the GExAC are fulfilled. Five GExAC are partially fulfilled (1, 2, 3, 4 and 5). The only partially covered conditionalities are to be fulfilled by 30.06.2015. <u>Thematic Ex-ante Conditionalities</u> All ex-ante conditionalities related to Thematic Objectives/ Investment Priorities for which investments are planned are considered applicable. Ex-ante conditionalities considered non-applicable do not have planned investments. Of the 22 applicable thematic EAC, 12 are fulfilled, 8 are partially fulfilled, 2 are not fulfilled (1.1, 6.2, 7.1, 7.2, 7.3, 9.1, 9.3 and 11.1 are partially fulfilled / 6.1 and 10.1 are not fulfilled).	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	Registration and monitoring of projects funded by CP funds in the 2007-2013 programming period of CP funds was executed using a decentralized IT system module. One of the shortcomings of the decentralized IT system was the non-availability of detailed information in one place for all institutions involved in the management of ESI funds. In the 2014-2020 programming period of EU CP funds one central IT system will be used for registration and monitoring of projects which will be available for all institutions involved in CP fund management, as well as project applicants/beneficiaries. The existing central project management information IT system of the Central Finance and Contracting Agency will be used, but will be supplemented with additional functionality defined in EC regulations and Latvian national provisions. Procurement on supplementary functionality of the Central Finance and Contracting Agency IT system was to be announced in the last quarter of 2013 and it was planned that the contract with the system developer would be concluded by the middle of 2014. By the end of 2014, electronic data exchange platform was to be developed in the central information system of CP fund management, to allow the project applicant and beneficiary to submit project applications and to allow comprehensive management of financed projects. With regards to EAFRD and EMFF, a range of important measures has been performed in the 2004–2006 and 2007–2013 programming period to ensure exchange of information electronically among beneficiaries and responsible authorities. Operation of information systems in 2014–2020 programming period is planned to be improved to ensure these services to as broad range of support applicants/ beneficiaries as possible. In addition, the operation of these IT systems is planned to be expanded not only for the purpose of EAFRD and EMFF implementation, but also in respect of other available financial instruments. A table of deadlines is not included.	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	CLLD Integrated development of the territories in Latvia is directed toward addressing economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges in the municipalities of the centres of the national and regional importance, Latgale region and the municipalities of the coastal area of the Baltic Sea through targeted investments. Latvia intends to implement CLLD by attracting funding from several funds, including the EAFRD and EMFF to increase the competitiveness of the agriculture sector fishing and aquaculture will be enhanced. CLLD approach from EAFRD will be implemented in the entire territory of Latvia, including in towns with a population up to 15 000. Indicatively, 32 Local Action Groups will be selected to submit local development strategies as the basis for investment financing. ITI The Sustainable Strategy of Latvia „Latvija 2030” defines a network of 9 national level centres (cities) as the basis for a polycentric development structure, which need to be strengthened to reduce the current concentration of the development around the capital city Riga. ERDF funds will be secured by these development centres based on integrated development programmes focussing on the following: strengthening business environment, improvement of urban environment, facilitation of employment and energy efficiency measures, stimulating sustainable development of internationally significant cultural and natural heritage and related services, improvement of social infrastructure and physical environment of schools and vocational educational establishments. To ensure selection of operations within ITI according to EU regulations, the following steps will be undertaken: - Coordination of integrated development programmes of municipalities; - Concluding delegation agreement between the Managing Authority, the municipality of the city and intermediate body; - Selection of operations and evaluation of ITI supported actions; - Agreement on project implementation. ETC Latvia has defined priority thematic objectives within the framework of the ETC instrument, which are in accord with the National Development Plan 2020. At the same time the priorities set by Latvia were adjusted to the cooperation format and objectives of specific ETC programme. Thematic objectives and investment priorities supported in the scope of the programmes will be identified in the development of ETC programmes. One of the principles during discussions will be ensuring coordinated and complementing investments with other target programmes „European territorial cooperation” and „Investments in employment and growth” and ensuring OP content is coordinated with bilateral and tripartite programmes A Consultative work group will be established with a purpose of supervising the development of ETC instrument OP for 2014–2020. A national sub-committee will also be established to ensure an advisory function for the national authority responsible for the implementation of ETC programmes and avoiding overlapping of project activities with other financial instruments.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	Latvia is planning participation in the following ETC programmes: - Estonian - Latvian Cross Border cooperation program; - Latvian - Lithuania Cross Border Cooperation Programme; - Latvian - Russian Cross Border cooperation program; - Latvian - Lithuanian - Belarusian Cross-Border program; - Central Baltic Cross-Border Cooperation Programme; - Baltic Sea Region - Transnational Cooperation Programme; - INTERREG EUROPE Interregional Cooperation Programme; - URBACT III Interregional Cooperation Programme; - ESPON Interregional Cooperation Programme; - INTERACT III territorial cooperation programs of good governance program. Thematic focus of ETC programmes during the 2014 – 2020 programming period is based on cooperation areas identified in EUSBSR to ensure efficient regional impact of the projects prepared in ETC programmes EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region In the context of ESI funds, EUSBSR is a instrument of cooperation amongst eight EU Member States in the Baltic Sea region to address common regional problems. Special interests of Latvia in EUSBSR context are: 1. Increasing competitiveness of the Baltic Sea Eastern shore and ensuring balanced development. 2. EUSBSR framework priority areas including energy, education, research, culture, health, competitiveness and public safety. 3. EUSBSR objective 'Connect the Region', striving for coordinated approach in development of transportation infrastructure (Western – Eastern, Northern-Southern direction). Investments of ESI funds in Latvia in these areas will provide direct contribution to reaching of EUSBSR objectives. Indicative priority axes and specific objectives contributing to reaching EUSBSR objectives are identified in Annex 9 of the PA. To ensure the achievement of EUSBSR and alignment with national operational programmes, Baltic Sea Region countries are holding regular meetings to foster the development of common projects a process in which Latvia is actively participating in. To ensure the coordination between CP funds, EAFRD, EMFF and ETC and consistency with goals and priority areas of EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region several mechanisms are proposed including involvement of EUSBSR National Contact Point in PA Management Team and Monitoring Committees of the respective OPs as well as participation of the Ministry of Finance as PA coordinator in the EUSBSR working group in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (national coordinator of EUSBSR).	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	Integrated development of the territories in Latvia is directed toward addressing economic, environmental, climate, demographic and social challenges in the cities of the national and regional importance, in Latgale region and the municipalities of the coastal area of the Baltic Sea through targeted investments. ERDF measures will be used to address economic, environment, climate, demographic and social problems in Latgale Region, national and regional level development centres and municipalities of their functional areas. The Sustainable Strategy of Latvia „Latvija 2030” defines a network of 9 national level centres (cities) as the basis for a polycentric development structure, which need to be strengthened to reduce the current	Section 3, 3.1.5

concentration of the development around the capital city Riga. ERDF funds will be secured by these development centres based on integrated development programmes focussing on the following: strengthening business environment, improvement of urban environment, facilitation of employment and energy efficiency measures, stimulating sustainable development of internationally significant cultural and natural heritage and related services, improvement of social infrastructure and physical environment of schools and vocational educational establishments. ITI will be used to support development of national level development centres. More detailed analysis is provided in sub-chapter “Territorial development” of the Chapter 1.1 “Analysis of differences, development needs and growth potential”.

Major differences in demographic and development indicators are observed in different parts of Latvia. Rural areas and the eastern part of Latvia (Latgale region) have experienced greatest depopulation and have the highest level of poverty and residents are at greatest risk of discrimination or social exclusion, especially in the risk groups. Chapter 5 of OP „ Special needs for the areas with highest poverty or discrimination risk, especially population risk groups” provides more detailed information on the challenges and investment strategies.

17. Lithuania

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	From page 76 onwards, the PA describes the reasoning behind the selection of thematic objectives (TOs) Lithuania will be focusing on the next programming period. Lithuania selected all 11 TOs and this is well justified in the PA. These TOs are to be implemented through the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. These funds are the cornerstone of Lithuania's medium and long-term development strategy. The OP for Lithuania (covering ERDF, ESF and CF) has an allocation of EUR 6.7 billion, the RDP (covering EAFRD) has an allocation of EUR 1.6 billion, EMFF operational programme (covering EMFF) has an allocation of EUR 63 million. These funds will be combined to achieve the following goals: shift to a low carbon economy, upgrading of infrastructure, improved innovativeness and RDI investments, reduction of unemployment, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, improvement of human capital, increase of competitiveness of agri-food sector and sustainable management of resources. The selection of the TOs and the Investment Priorities (IPs) has been based mainly on the experience of the 2007-2013 period, the national and regional strategic documents, the comparison of the main social and economic indicators of the EU and Lithuania, the 2013 country-specific recommendations of the Council.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The PA covers five EU funds: the ERDF, the ESF, the CF, the EAFRD and the EMFF. Investments will focus on innovativeness and investments into RDI, ensuring quality, openness and creativity in education and training, ensuring efficiency in public administration, development of the digital society, development of modern basic infrastructure, creation of a better environment for business, sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, promotion of employment, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, and territorial development. Cohesion policy will be delivered by one multi-fund operational programme for the ERDF, the Cohesion Fund and the ESF, covering all the thematic objectives under cohesion policy. Moreover, there is one RDP (financed by the EAFRD) and one fisheries programme (financed by the EMFF). The RDP covers thematic objectives 1-6 and 8-10, whereas fisheries programme - thematic objectives 3,4,6 and 8.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The first part of the PA includes the majority of topics and issues concerning thematic concentration, the Europe 2020 priorities, OP architecture and ex-ante evaluations, the TOs chosen and the way the ESIF will be used to achieve them. It also includes the horizontal topics as well as details about how the TOs will be achieved through the use of ESIF. On the other hand, the second part includes analyses on the territorial development instruments (ITI, CLLD) and details about the implementation of the partnership principle. In general, it can be stated that the more analytical but also the politically sensitive issues are tackled in Part 1 compared to Part 2.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	In 2014-2020 programming period the increased interest of partners to participate in the programming process could be observed. New initiatives were undertaken to encourage this partnership in the programming process, which included preparation of methodical documents and organisation of public discussions with partners. The list of partners engaged in the preparation of the PA, the OP, RDP and fisheries programme is provided in the annex 1 of the PA. For the preparation of the drafts of PA and the OP the EU Structural Support Commission for the period 2014-2020 was established in 2010. Representatives from different ministries, implementing agencies, social, economic and regional partners were members of this commission. The commission consisted from 52 members, 23 of them were representatives of social, economic and regional partners. In June-September of 2013 public discussions were organised to discuss the mentioned national strategic documents. In the preparation of the RDP 2014-2020 in order to safeguard the partnership principle the existing structure was used - Rural development network - which consisted of more than 900 members. For the preparation of the fisheries programme the list of partners was prepared, who had good possibilities to provide comments and suggestions to the programme.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA will focus on the following major challenges in line with the strategic goals of the Europe 2020 strategy: • Smart growth: Promotion of RDI, improvement of the quality of education and training, of the efficiency of public administration and development of digital society; • Sustainable growth: Development of basic modern infrastructure, the creation of a better business environment as well as sustainable and efficient use of natural resources; • Inclusive growth: more and better jobs, especially for young people, low skilled, long term unemployed and older workers. and reducing poverty and social exclusion. These funds are the cornerstone of Lithuania's medium and long-term development strategy. They will mobilize additional public national and private funding for growth and jobs creation and will reduce territorial disparities in Lithuania. Investments will focus on innovativeness and investments into RDI, ensuring quality, openness and creativity in education and training, ensuring efficiency in public administration, development of the digital society, development of modern basic infrastructure, creation of a better environment for business, sustainable and efficient use of natural resources, promotion of employment, reduction of poverty and social exclusion, and territorial development.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The coordination of the ESI funds will be carried out through the complementarity and concentration implementing the most important priorities at the EU and national level, also through wider monitoring of OPs by more efficient coordination of evaluation activities and through provision of more user friendly and more coordinated information to applicants. The functions of Monitoring Committees will be also extended. In order to safeguard the coherence between the ESI and ETC programmes, during the 2014-2020 programming period the ETC programmes will have less objectives - for every ETC programme four main objectives will be selected . Such concentration will diminish the thematic coverage of ETC programmes, however better synergies in the selected areas will be achieved. The coordination between BSS and ESI funds is also foreseen - the key representatives of the BSS will be invited to participate in the Monitoring Committees of the ESI funds. In order to make use of opportunities of the other EU and international programmes (such as Horizon 2020, LIFE, NER 300, etc.), the coherence of financing of these programmes and better information flow will be assured.	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The ex ante conditionalities are provided in the annex 2 of the PA. Both specific and general ex ante conditionalities, responsible institutions and deadlines for unimplemented ex ante conditionalities are foreseen. The ex ante conditionalities for Rural Development are stated separately. Moreover the coherence of ex ante conditionalities with priorities of the ESIF is also provided.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)). (Include table of deadlines)	In the chapter 4 of the PA, the measures planned for ensuring that the PA and the OPs are implemented successfully are described. During the 2007-2013 period one of the main improvements of the support administration information systems was the creation of the DES (Data Exchange System), which was the main tool for providing electronic services to project implementers. This allowed the decrease of the administrative burden and exchange of information among applicants, project implementers and support administration institutions. During the 2014-2020 programming period applicants wishing to get support from the ERDF, ESF and/or the Cohesion fund will be able to submit project applications through DES. The information system for EAFRD will be also similar to DES. Further improvement and development of the information systems will be based on the current system and further improvements will be made using the best practise from the 2007-2013 programming period.	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	Investments to urban areas in order to solve economic, social, demographic, environmental and climate change problems will be carried out as integrated territorial investments (ITI). Such investments will allow making development strategies adapted to individual challenges and to the potential of every territory by using complex (URBAN type) as well as different sectorial measures in order to solve most important problems and to improve interaction among territories. EAFRD and EMFF are not going to be directly used to carry out ITI, however certain opportunities are foreseen to support cooperation projects between urban areas, rural and fisheries areas LAGs. Integrated approach to territorial development will be ensured by coordination of investment actions from ERDF, the CF and ESF actions with CLLD implementing partners and involvement of these partners in the planning of investments. All ITI programmes will be prepared and carried out in consultation with urban, communities of target territories and socio-economic partners.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	Taking into account recommendations of the EC, during planning of priorities of the programming period 2014-2020, the objectives and the priorities of the BSS (Baltic Sea Strategy) were taken into account. Implementation of the OP, RDP and fisheries programme of 2014-2020 will also contribute to the realisation of the BSS different objectives.	Section 3, 3.1.5

18. Luxembourg

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The challenges faced in the different areas (economic, political, societal, climate and energy) are described at the onset of the PA. The choice of the TO is then explained in relation to those challenges as well as the lessons learned from the 2007-2013 period. In the ERDF, best practice examples carried out in 2007-2013 are carried on in 2014-2020 given their positive impact on research and innovation (Priority 1) and energy as well as urban development (Priority 3) but not on SME development. The positive effects described in detail in the PA have led to carrying on with these projects as they greatly contribute towards achieving the Europe2020 objectives. In order to efficiently use the ESIF to contribute to Europe 2020, the ERDF in LU will focus only on those two sectors and achieve targeted and successful results. In the EAFRD some changes will be carried out to ensure a more successful implementation in 2014-2020. With regards to the ESF, the MA has asked a reallocation of the resources foreseen initially so as to focus more on human capital and reintegration of young people while maintaining the measures for older people.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	Each ESIF in LU has only 1 OP and there will be no multi-fund OPs: • TO1 will be covered by the ERDF OP (EUR 9.166.129,44), • TO3 by the EAFRD OP (EUR 29.889.950,00), • TO4 by the ERDF OP (EUR 9.166.129,44) and the EAFRD OP (EUR 29.982.000,00), • TO6 by the EAFRD OP (EUR 32.960.035,00), • TO8 by the ESF OP (EUR 10.830.359,96) , • TO9 by the ESF OP (EUR 4.011.244,80) and the EAFRD OP (EUR 6.684.570,00), • TO10 by the ESF OP (EUR 4.011.244,80). • TOs 2,5,7 and 11 are not allocated any resources.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The two parts are difficult to discern and no particular difference can be noticed.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The PA highlights that the partnership in the development of the PA is based on a coordinated and integrated approach aimed to favour synergies. An Interministerial body has been created composed of the MA of the ERDF, ESF and EAFRD Ops. The MA of the ERDF OP and the Directorate of Regional Development within the Ministry of the Economy were responsible for coordinating the Interministerial group. In addition to the Ministries where the MAs of the funds were seated, the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Infrastructures responsible for the INTERREG, ESPON, URBACT and INTERACT programmes. Since December 2012 the body met regularly. Other relevant ministries were also consulted. In parallel to the development process of the PA, the OPs were also being developed. Different specific partners participated in the preparation activities. The PA lists the local authorities, economic and social partners, as well as other relevant actors (e.g. research). The PA describes the results of the interactive consultation sessions for each of the funds.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA describes the challenges faced in Luxembourg in the economic, political, societal and energy areas. The PA highlights that in 2014-2020 LU will focus merely on those areas and objectives that will effectively lead to achieving the Europe2020 objectives. Given the small economy and administration of LU, there are great synergies between the PA, the OPs and the NRP.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Since the 2007-2013 period a working group was in place composed of the MA of the SF Ops. The ERDF MA in the Ministry of the Economy had the coordinating role of this group. The group was responsible for developing the strategies and priorities for the OPs as well as negotiating the PA. This group will be maintained in 2014-2020. In addition, a monitoring group by fund will be installed, composed of the representatives of the fund and OP in question, the representatives of the other funds and OPs, as well the European Commission. Moreover, technical committees of the EAFRD to ensure that other ministries are present in the monitoring committees whenever the ERDF and ESF representatives are not. There will also be an arrangement to ensure the coordination the funds within the ETC programmes. The EIB will also coordinate with the ESIF and the other national funds in place. The PA describes how the coordination and synergies will be ensured at strategic as well as at operational levels.	Section 2.1

State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	All EACs have been fulfilled and described in the table of the relevant section of the PA. The challenges have not been described.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)). (Include table of deadlines)	The e-cohesion measures planned for the 2014-2020 period are: - an online platform for the ERDF, ESF and ECT programmes (merging the existing separate ESF and ERDF sites and open to all interested actors) - an online platform for exchanging data and information between the beneficiaries and the MA (two separate platforms for the ESF and the ERD) - an online platform that allows for the exchange of digital documents (e.g. possibility for beneficiaries to upload financing requests or for MAs to upload information documents for beneficiaries). The EAFRD MA also plans to launch a web-platform which will allow for the MA and the beneficiaries to exchange information and relevant documents.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	LU is seen as one single region. Nevertheless, the integrated approach to territorial development instruments can be considered. Due to the small size of the economy, the small amount of resources and the lack of administrative capacity available for using CLLD, the ERDF and the ESF will not make use of the instrument, unlike the EAFRD through Leader. ITI will however be used by the ERDF, to support urban development. LU does not participate in an MRS.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	There are no priority zones in LU due to its geographical size. The activities planned under the ERDF, ESF and EAFRD concern the whole national territory.	Section 3, 3.1.5

19. Malta

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	Malta has 5 operational programmes in the programming period 2014-2020 with a total budget of EUR 827 million. Operational Programme I financed by ERDF and CF addresses the competitiveness needs of Malta referring to the Thematic Objectives 1 to 4, 6-7, 9 and 10. Operational Programme II financed by ESF addresses human capital and the need for a more inclusive society (TO 8, 11). Operational Programme II financed by ERDF addresses solely the Stimulate Private Sector Investment for economic growth (TO 3). Furthermore Malta has one EAFRD and one EMFF programme. Malta has chosen to finance investment under all 11 thematic objectives defined in the Regulations. All 11 thematic objectives are divided into three funding priorities: 1. Fostering competitiveness through innovation and the creation of a business-friendly environment, 2. Sustaining an environmentally-friendly and resource-efficient economy, 3. Creating opportunities through investment in human capital and improving health and well-being (see PA section 1.3).	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The total ESIF Funds budget amounts EUR 4.4 bn with the following allocation in percentage: • 64% ERDF: TO 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10 • 13% ESF: TO 8, 9, 10, 11 • 26% CF: TO 6,7 • 12 % EAFRD: TO 1,3,4,5, 6, 8, 9, 10 • 1% EMFF: TO 3,4,6,8 ERDF, ESF and CF together cover 86% of the total ESI-Funds budget. (see PA page 194)	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	Part 1 covers all parts which are subject to EC decisions. Part 2 as a separate document covers all parts of the PA not subject to EC decisions. Both parts are very detailed and of equal quality. Part 2 describes in detail the particular needs of deprived areas which are addressed in an integrated approach (see PA part 2 section 3.1.5, 3.1.6).	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The PA describes the partnership principle on page 153 onwards. The Authority responsible for coordinating the preparation of the Partnership Agreement is the Office of the Permanent Secretary within the Ministry for European Affairs and Implementation of the Electoral Manifesto. The institutional framework required to implement the partnership and multi-level governance principle in respect of the 2014-2020 period was set up in April 2012. The framework, steered by the Office of the Permanent Secretary, consisted of an Inter-Ministerial Committee for Programming 2014-2020 (IMC) with representatives from line Ministries (covering all the ESI funds plus other government stakeholders) and supported by a number of Sectoral Sub-Committees that looked into different thematic objectives. The role of the Inter-Ministerial Committee was to provide strategic input and guidance into the programming process, supported by the Sectoral Sub-Committees. The Inter-Ministerial Committee included, amongst its core members, the Permanent Secretary responsible for EU Funds, as well as the Permanent Secretaries heading the Ministries responsible for Gozo, Resources and Rural Affairs, Finance, the Economy and Investment (and including Economic Policy, and Budget Affairs), and also Fair Competition, Small Business and Consumers, apart from the Head of the National Statistics Office. Moreover, other Ministries such as the Ministry for Education and Employment and the Ministry for Justice Dialogue and Family, amongst others, participated in this Committee depending on the Agenda. Seven sectoral Sub-Committees were set up in November 2012 with a view to providing input and support to the Inter-Ministerial Committee in its role of providing strategic input and guidance to the 2014-2020 programming process. Each Sectoral Sub-Committee was chaired by the Permanent Secretary responsible for the respective policy area, and included a representative from relevant public sector organisations, the socio-economic partners, civil society groups and non-governmental organisations with an interest in the particular policy area. The key formal structures within which social dialogue and public consultations take place in Malta were used as the basis for selecting the stakeholders that would participate in the Sectoral Sub-Committees, notably the Malta Council for Economic and Social Development (MCESD) and the Malta EU Steering and Action Committee (MEUSAC).	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	Starting with page 5 the PA describes in section 1.1.1 in a very detailed manner the economic and social performance of the island. Based on this analysis the main needs are to promote internationalisation, innovation and R&D within enterprises to increase product quality, develop new technologies and deliver better services, increase access to finance, encouraging investments in ICT and promote targeted investments in niche areas, particularly within the tourism sector, which can leverage further economic development. Furthermore there is a strong need in reduction of Malta's reliance on non-renewable sources of energy, and reducing GHG emission. The PA expresses the governmental aim to build stronger urban-rural linkages whilst ensuring the sustainable development of urban areas, particularly those affected by social and health inequalities and address social inequalities, skills mismatches, low penetration rates in higher education and improving the sustainability of health care provision remains a challenge which necessitates results oriented investments. At page 78-79 the PA clearly refers to the Europe 2020 targets the coherence between Malta's Strategic orientation and Europe 2020 (see Table 1.39, page. 79).	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	At page 164 the PA describes the how to arrange the coordination between ESI Funds. The PA however refers to the system already established during 2007-2013 which will be pursued. According to the PA the Government will continue to ensure coordination between the relevant line Ministries and entities responsible for the implementation of projects under these programmes and the respective Managing Authority responsible for the management and implementation of the ESI Funds through the Inter Ministerial Coordination Committee (see section below on Coordination Structures) in order to ensure complementarity between the different actions and funds.	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	According to the PA page 169 Malta carried out an assessment on the fulfilment of all ex-ante conditionalities that are applicable to meet the objectives of the Partnership Agreement for the efficient use of European funds for 2014-2020 in accordance with Regulation (EU) No: 1303/2013. The twenty-two (22) thematic ex-ante conditionalities which are considered to be applicable at this stage can be divided into three categories: 1. Eight conditionalities that have been fulfilled, (Digital Growth, Energy (RES), Waste, Active Labour Market Policies, EAFRD (GAEC, Fertilisers, National Standards) and Administrative Efficiency); 2. Seven (7) conditionalities that have been partially fulfilled (R&I (S3), SBA, Energy Efficiency, Poverty, Health, Early School Leaving and Lifelong Learning); 3. Seven (7) conditionalities that are not fulfilled (R&I (Budgeting), Risk Prevention and Risk Management, Water, Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training). The fourteen (14) thematic ex-ante conditionalities which have been partially fulfilled or not fulfilled are being planned to be fulfilled by the relevant ministries between 2014 and December 2016 in line with the respective action plans. In the case of the seven (7) general ex-ante conditionalities, Malta has fulfilled five (5) of these while the Public Procurement general ex-ante conditionality will be fulfilled by 2014 in line with the respective action plan. The general ex-ante conditionalities on statistical systems and result indicators will be assessed at the level of the operational programmes.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	According to PA part 2 page 200 the current Structural Funds Database (SFD07-13) and the EFF Database are web-enabled information management and monitoring systems, developed for Government with a view to manage the Structural and Cohesion Funds and the European Fisheries Fund respectively. The database is accessible both through an application and a browser-based version. In the main, the application is used for the implementing of financial data at the level of the Managing Authority, while the browser-based version incorporates additional modules namely: Generation of Financial Reports, the generation of Statements of Expenditure (SOE) and Indicators. Taking into account the requirements of the Common Provisions Regulation the government has tasked the national IT Agency (MITA) with a view to undertaking an in depth assessment of the current system including its technical characteristics. Based on this assessment some necessary improvements have been identified. The PA describes the necessary steps for improvement which are planned in 2014 and 2015 (see page 203).	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	The PA describes in detail the arrangements regarding an integrated approach to territorial development in PA part 2 section 3 page 176. Based on the experience acquired under the 2007-2013 Rural Development Programme, Malta will continue to apply the CLLD approach for interventions under the 2014-2020 EAFRD for interventions designated as LEADER local development. Malta is planning to allocate 5% of its total fund allocation for Malta's Rural Development Programme for 2014-2020 for this purpose addressing TO 3 and TO 9. For CLLD the already established Local Action Groups will remain. Regarding ITI Malta government made arrangements to implement territorial investments in Gozo for the 2014-2020 period. 10% of Malta's national allocation for the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund will be earmarked to address the specific needs of Gozo. Additionally to CLLD and ITI Malta allocates 5% of its ERDF resources which may also be supported through the ESF, to implement integrated sustainable urban development interventions in identified urban areas. The principles for identifying the urban areas where integrated actions for sustainable urban development are to be implemented are as follows: high level of unemployment; high at-risk of poverty rate and where social problems are more pronounced; and the level of economic activity in particular the potential to attract commercial activity, recreation of cultural heritage and create niches within the tourism sector will also be key factors in the identification of urban areas. The PA does not include any links to macro-regional strategies.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	PA part 2 section 3.1.5 describes the specific needs of the Malta Communities and its target groups at the highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion. According to the PA Malta is aiming to develop an anti-poverty strategy using ESF as well as ERDF for implementing measures under this strategy (p. 190). The aim is to invest in health, social and education infrastructure, as well as support physical and economic regeneration of deprived urban and rural communities and from the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD). ERDF supported actions: Develop bottom up approaches to community regeneration in which the communities take responsibility for the renovation and maintenance of their own dwellings. Encourage community based approaches in the provision of health and social facilities. Provide adequate facilities and resources to the most vulnerable groups. Support measures to promote a healthy lifestyle. ESF supported actions: Empower the different target groups to prevent the dependency and extend as much as possible the independent living. Stimulate parenting competencies development to foster the stability of the families. To develop capacity building for NGOs in order to build a network of quality service providers reaching the specific needs and locations. To provide the necessary quality services according to the specific needs of each individual and of the communities. To stimulate interaction of generations (children, youth and elderly) as a factor of stabilisation of the families. To support the individuals to create their own sources of income within the development of the communities. Holistic and integrated assistance (profiling, self assessment and individual action plans) to the families based on the collaboration of all relevant actors that shall be involved in tackling the individual problems. ERDF/ESF Other target groups as may be determined during the course of the programme. Specific focus again lies on Gozo. Under the 2014-2020 programming, Gozo's territorial challenges will be addressed through strategic investments across all of the ESI funds targeting: road and transport infrastructure (in line with the TEN-T guidelines and the priorities identified under the CEF facility). Furthermore, the ESI Funds are envisaged to contribute towards maximising the competitive edge of the island through investment in the environment particularly in the natural and cultural heritage. The objective of these investments is to address Gozo's permanent natural handicaps in particular its double insularity, peripherality and economic dependence on mainland Malta.	Section 3, 3.1.5

20. Netherlands

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The Netherlands decided to focus the four funds (ERDF, ESF, EAFRD, and EMFF) and seven underlying operational programmes on thematic objective 1 (strengthening research, technological development and innovation), 3 (increasing competitiveness of small and medium sized enterprises, as well as the agricultural sector and fisheries and aquaculture sector), 4 (assistance in the transition to a carbon neutral economy in all sectors), 5 (improving the adaptation of climate change, risk prevention and management), 6 (protection of the environment and improving the efficient use of natural resources), 8 (improving the employment and strengthening labour mobility) and 9 (improving social inclusion and fighting poverty). These thematic objectives are closely related to the financial priorities related to innovation (1 and 3), labour market participation (8 and 9) and an environment friendly economy (4, 5 and 6). • ERDF programmes contribute to objectives 1 and 4. • ESF contributes to objectives 8 and 9 (just like the OP for the Western part of the Netherlands financed by ERDF). • The EAFRD focus on objectives 3, 5, 6 and 9 (just as 1 and 10). EMFF contributes to objectives 2, 7 and 11. In this way the different funds and operational programmes coordinate the thematic focus. Where possible, following a regional approach, 2 or more funds join forces. This is the case for the municipalities Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht where ESF money is combined with ERDF in a sustainable city programme, to increase employment participation. The Dutch government strives to create coherence and synergy between funds, so far this is possible, reasonable and proportional. Nevertheless, stakeholders consulted during the development of the PA indicate that the pre-conditions for realising synergy are not clear and that synergy should not be a goal in itself. The relevant ministries for every OP of the four funds worked together during the development of the programmes to find synergies and cooperation. • First of all, the project managers of the different funds were coming together on a regular basis while drawing up their programmes. • Secondly, on a regular basis technical sessions were organised with different regions and (inter)national specialists on topics in operational programmes. • Thirdly, an expert meeting was organised in 2012 to discuss the synergy and cooperation between ESI funds. • Fourthly, cross fund working groups were established that discuss topics (like ex ante evaluations / monitoring / indicators; financing instruments; community led local development; communication; flat rates and standard unit costs; synergy). Agreements were made that the funds should provide efforts to find synergies between OPs, just like the improvement of cooperation between funds on operational level.	1.2 and 1.3

Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	Cohesion policy will be implemented through 5 operational programmes, as was the case in the 2007-2013 programming period. These are 4 regional operational programmes co-financed by ERDF (North, West, South and East) and 1 national operational programme co-financed by ESF. Moreover there will be 1 EAFRD rural development programme and 1 EMFF co-financed programme. • In total 507 million is allocated to ERDF of which 332.47 million to thematic objective 1, 121.34 million to thematic objective 4, 11.66 million to thematic objective 8, 21.56 million to thematic objective 9, and 20.29 million for the technical assistance. • In total 507 million is allocated to ESF of which 126 million is allocated to thematic objective 8, 361.03 million to thematic objective 9, and 20.29 million to technical assistance. • In total 607 million Euro is allocated to EAFRD (of which 22.08 million to thematic objective 1, 162.33 million to thematic objective 3, 176.17 million to thematic objective 5 (just as for thematic objectives 6), 40.96 million to thematic objective 9, 7.44 million to thematic objective 10, and 22.17 million for technical assistance. • In total 102 million Euro is allocated to EMFF of which 21.88 million is allocated to thematic objective 3, 73.56 million to thematic objective 6, and 6.09 million on technical assistance. EU budget is equally spread amongst the different funds (with the exception for EMFF) making a total of 1742 million Euro. Most budget is allocated to thematic objectives 9, 1 and 6, while thematic objective 10 receives a minor part of EU budget.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The PA is built up around the regulatory requirements. The first chapter address the arrangements to ensure alignment with the Europe 2020 strategy as well as the Fund specific missions pursuant to their Treaty-based objectives, including economic, social and territorial cohesion (Art. 14(1)(a) CPR). The first chapter also addresses the application of horizontal principles and policy objectives for the implementation of the ESI Funds + list of programmes. The second chapter address the arrangements to ensure effective implementation (Art. 14(1)(b) CPR). Chapter 3 addresses the integrated approach to territorial development (Art. 14(2)(a) CPR), while chapter 4 address the arrangements to ensure efficient implementation (Art. 14(2)(b) CPR).	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The PA provides an elaborated description on the partnership developed and how partners were involved during the preparation of the PA and progress reports. The Ministry of economic affairs is the coordinating Ministry for the ESI funds. The state secretary for economic affairs is responsible for ERDF, EAFRD, and EMFF, while the state secretary of social affairs and employment is responsible for ESF. The representatives of the four funds met each other once in the two weeks / month, while preparing the PA and OPs. Partners are involved in different ways. • A first group consists of regional parties responsible for the four regions of ERDF and ELFPO. These partners are represented in the national working group ERDF and POP3 (the new agricultural development programme). • A second group of partners consists of actors that are directly related to the funds (national government and regional governments). These are united in the working group on cohesion policy (including the involved ministries, MA, CA, AA, representative organisations of local and regional governments, and other stakeholders). • The third group consists of partners that are involved in one or more OPs and that were invited to provide a reaction on the draft PA. A fourth group consists of other stakeholders, including citizens. During the development of the PA different information and consultation events were organised (that are described in detail in the PA, with the type and number of participants, discussion topics, the outcomes of these meetings, and how these are addressed in the further development of the PA). The way stakeholders were involved seems appropriate given the large number of events / meetings organised. The thematic focus of the PA is determined based on the wishes and needs of parties (further tested on completeness and correctness). A bottom up approach was followed. The PA indicates that there is a good basis and support for the implementation and for realising the policy objectives. Most of the above described actors were also consulted during the development of each of the seven OPs. Each individual OP followed their own strategy and the involvement of partners is discussed in each separate OP. It is decided that every programme has its own monitoring committee, given the diversity of programmes.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
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Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	When comparing the EU2020 objectives with actual achievements one see that the Netherlands needs extra investments in three core areas, namely: (1) labour market participation, (2) increasing R&D expenditures, and (3) sustainable energy and climate change. Moreover, investments are needed for increasing social inclusion. The four funds therefore mainly focus on these core areas, showing a strong relationship between the ESI funds and performance of the Netherlands on the EU2020 targets. The CSR of 2013 for the Netherlands also address the importance of increasing labour market participation, especially for the disadvantaged groups. The 2012 CSR, however, also address the importance of investing in a closer relationship between universities and business enterprises. The SWOT analysis included in the PA echoes similar development needs, explaining that the main challenges can be found in the areas of sustainable economic growth, increasing R&D expenditures, and making better use of the labour market potential related to ageing society and preventing social exclusion. The SWOT analysis also refers to the shortage of technical staff in some parts of the country, and dealing with integral challenges in the larger cities. Important challenges are identified related to improving the cooperation between businesses, knowledge institutes, and government. The Netherlands show less regional differences in economic performance, especially compared to other EU countries. As a result the four ERDF regions face similar challenges. Nevertheless, the PA indicate that the specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of every region should get attention in the different programmes. All together there is a strong alignment between the thematic concentration, country performance on EU2020 indicators, CSR and development needs for the Netherlands. Since the Netherlands is not one of the largest receivers of European money (0.3% of all funds EU wide), the PA makes clear that a focused approach is necessary, spending the money on a limited number of thematic areas. The focus on innovation, sustainability and labour market participation is closely aligned with the experiences of the Netherlands in the previous programming periods and other policy measures in place.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The Ministry of Economic affairs is the coordinating Ministry for the ESI funds. The state secretary for economic affairs is responsible for ERDF, EAFRD, and EMFF, while the state secretary of social affairs and employment is responsible for ESF. The representatives of the four funds met each other once in the two weeks / month, while preparing the PA and OPs. The PA mainly provides a description of the coordination and cooperation mechanisms while preparing the different programmes, and less on the mechanisms in place while running the programme (see question on partnership principle). During the preparation regular meetings were organised between project managers of the different funds, technical sessions and expert meetings were organised, and overarching working groups across funds were established (discussing topics like ex ante evaluations / monitoring / indicators, financing instruments, Community led Local Development, Communication, Flat rates and Standard unit costs, and synergy between funds / programmes). A working group consisting of representatives of the MA of the four ESI funds was formed to explore: (1) improvement of the accessibility for applicants with transcending project proposals (going beyond one fund) by improving the cooperation between back office of each fund. This include e.g. a common website, appointing contact persons per MA that have sufficient knowledge of the other funds, yearly meeting of regional networks and funds on national level, involvement of other programmes as Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 and Life+, and ETC programmes. For 2014-2020 the cross fund working group on communication continues its operation (that was set up in 2007-2013 and expanded its cooperation activities since then). Potential cooperation between funds are carefully investigated according to the PA and it was concluded that this differs per type of funds. The cooperation between ERDF and ESF is most intensive. Also on regional level investments are made to improve the cooperation between funds (with the help of RIS3). There is a close relationship with national policies (agriculture, national strategy green growth, national environmental policies, top sector policy, programme INkoop Innovatie Urgent, Strategic Energy Technology plan, common fisheries policies, guideline for Maritime strategy, and Delta programme). Coordination with the EIB is not mentioned in the PA.	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The PA include the following ex ante conditionalities on national level and indicate for each conditionality the level of fulfilment. (1) anti discriminations: "The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union anti-discrimination law and policy in the field of ESI Funds ". This ex ante conditionality is fulfilled; (2) Equality between men and women: "The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of Union gender equality law and policy in the field of ESI Funds". This ex ante conditionality is fulfilled; (3) People with disabilities: "The existence of administrative capacity for the implementation and application of the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in the field of ESI Funds in accordance with Council Decision 2010/48/EC". This ex ante conditionality is fulfilled; (4) Public procurement: "The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union public procurement law in the field of the ESI funds". This ex ante conditionality is fulfilled;	Section 2.3

	(5) State aid: “The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union State aid rules in the field of the ESI funds”. This ex ante conditionality is fulfilled. (6) Environmental arrangements: “The existence of arrangements for the effective application of Union environmental legislation related to EIA and SEA”. This ex ante conditionality is fulfilled. Besides, ex ante conditionalities are also defined per theme. For the theme research and innovation the following conditionalities are not fulfilled: measures assuring minimum requirement for energy performance of buildings (according to article 3 and 5 of the Directive 2010/31/EU); measures needed for the establishment of a system of energy performance certificates for buildings (accordance to article 11 of the Directive 2010/31/10). For the theme reducing poverty and active inclusion all ex ante conditionalities are fulfilled.	
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	In Chapter 4 the measures are described for electronic data exchange. • For ERDF one national electronic information system will be set up, that will be used by all regional programmes. This concerns an upgrade of the current system of MA South Netherlands. • For ESF a central information system was developed in 2007-2013 (called Diane-system). This system includes an e-portal in which subsidy requests and final declarations are processed (via e-forms). This system and forms are adjusted based on the needs of the new programme 2014-2020. In 2014 an analysis will be carried out in order to develop an improved e-portal. One of the issues that will be further assessed is an improvement of the communication possibilities between applicant and MA. Also the link between the Diane-system and SFC2014 will be improved. The PA also refers to an improved data exchange between MA, AA, CA and EC. • For the ELFP as well as ELGF important steps were made in the last year's payments requests (digital). This digitalisation will be continued including all steps from application to final payments of the subsidy. On YouTube a number of promotion / instruction videos are placed how to apply. • EMFF is not obliged for electronic data exchange with beneficiaries. Nevertheless, efforts are made to improve this situation. The PA does not provide an elaborated assessment of the existing stage of development and clear commitments as regards the steps needed to fulfil the legal requirement to establish systems for electronic exchange with beneficiaries – not only vis-à-vis the Commission, but also with respect to partners and beneficiaries. No concrete plan is provided how to meet the 2014 (or 2016) deadline.	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	The PA describes the territorial approach to be applied. Community led local development (CLL) receives support in the Netherlands from EAFRD (under the name LEADER), stimulating local development in rural areas (finally contributing to thematic objectives 9, improving social inclusion). In total 20 LEADER/CLLD areas are identified that will focus on (1) shrinking population, (2) social innovation; (3) economic development of areas that are lacking behind; (4) circular economy, bio based economy, sustainable energy; (4) improving relationship city and rural areas; (5) increasing and improvement of infrastructure of agro tourism; (6) multifunctional ground and water use; (7) nature and environment education. For EMFF no investments are made for CLLD. In general ERDF is not focussing on CLLD (priority 9d). Nevertheless, for the four largest cities CLLD could be a helpful instrument in order to mobilise local partners for the development of specific local solutions. In the development of the ERDF programme West Netherlands it is explored with stakeholders whether CLLD can be implemented (such as in The Hague). In case successful, such initiatives can be expanded. ITI are used in the ERDF programme of West Netherlands (four largest cities - called G4). The Netherlands is not reserving ESF budget for CLLD projects. Nevertheless, since the largest part of the budget is allocated to local governments, they can decide to work together with societal organisations or particular initiatives.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	Not applicable for the Netherlands (section not completed in PA). Where possible, following a regional approach, 2 or more funds join forces. This is the case for the municipalities Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag and Utrecht where ESF money is combined with ERDF in a sustainable city programme, to increase employment participation.	Section 3, 3.1.5

21. Poland

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The OPs planned for the 2014-2020 programming period are described in the PA starting from page 164. In 2014-2020, 8 Operational Programmes (OPs) are planned to be implemented at national level. At regional level, just like in the 2007-2013 programming period, 16 Regional Operational Programmes (ROPs) will be implemented following the structure adopted in the 2007-2013 programming period given that it is well fit to the goals adopted in the PA. The structure of the programmes moreover takes an integrated thematic and territorial approach and corresponds to the multi-level governance mechanisms for regional development policy which correspond to the polish legal system. A stronger decentralisation in the management of OPs translates into increasing the responsibilities of the self-governments of the voivodeships with regards to implementing regional development policy. This again calls for more financial commitment from the regional and local governments in the implementation of ROPs and a better cooperation with partners at voivodeship level. Every OP will directly contribute towards realizing the objectives set in the PA and achieving the results planned, particularly those contributing to the Europe 2020 Strategy and ensuring ring-fencing. Since around 66% of the ESIF are concentrated on the ROPs, regional leaders particularly focus on concentrating the funds on the objectives related to increasing employment levels and combating poverty. Table 4 in section 1.3. of the PA shows which OPs are planned to contribute to the achievement of each of the TOs.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	In 2014-2020, the OPs under the goal of "Investment for economic growth and employment" will be implemented at national as well as at the regional level: - 3 national OPs financed either from the ERDF or the ESF as well as 1 multi-fund national OP (ERDF + ESF co-financing) - 1 supra-regional OP concentrated on Eastern Poland (ERDF co-financing) - 1 Technical Assistance (TA) OP (ESF co-financing) - 15 multi-fund ROPs (ERDF + ESF co-financing) in those regions classified as "less developed regions" - 1 multi-fund OP (ERDF, ESF co-financing) for the Mazowieckie voivodeship counting amongst the "more-developed regions".	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The two parts are difficult to discern and no particular difference can be noticed.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The PA has been prepared in thematic and territorial working groups which included relevant partners, local partners and self-governments as well as self-government associations (e.g. association of communities, association of PL Voivodeships, etc). These partners had great influence on the elaboration of the PA and OPs. The PA describes which territorial bodies were responsible for overseeing the process and which exact bodies were involved (e.g. bodies representing people with disabilities). The PA also describes the online consultations, conferences, publication of information material, online feedback platforms etc. (all accessible) organised to involve all those various bodies. The public consultations were open from July to the end of August 2013 (published on various official websites at national and regional levels). Within 4 weeks, the Marshall Offices organised 12 consultation conferences in voivodeship cities for over 1000 participants. The same is true for conferences organised in Warsaw. The PA also describes the importance of involving partners in the implementation, evaluation and monitoring processes in 2014-2020. In view of ensuring that partners will be involved in an effective manner, trainings and workshops are planned within certain measures, particularly in the OPs TA and WER.	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA describes how Poland is planning to follow the 11 Thematic Objectives in the 2014-2020 programming period. In view of defining the path towards achieving the Europe 2020 goals, the following strategic documents have been taken as a basis for shaping the future regional development policy (PA, p.7): - Long-term national development strategy. Poland 2030. Third wave of modernisation – DSRK 2030 (main trends, concepts and plans with regards to the long-term development of the country) - Mid-term national development strategy – SRK 2020 - 9 integrated, cross-sectoral strategies, leading towards the achievement of the development goals Beside the objectives resulting from those national development strategies, the ESIF are planned to be concentrated on the following financial priorities (PA, p.8): - Strengthening the businesses and innovation environment - Social cohesion and activation - Network infrastructure in view of supporting growth and employment - Environment and effective resource management The goals of the PA are: - Strengthening economic competitiveness - Improving social and territorial cohesion - Improving the effectiveness of the public administration The specific goals within these objectives are based on the aforementioned national strategic goals and the country-specific recommendations from the European Commission. The PA describes how the objectives and the specific objectives are to achieve results, based on the needs and difficulties identified in the ex-ante evaluations. The following national challenges have been recorded and are to be addressed in the 2014-2020 period (PA, pp.18-49): - Low economic competitiveness (including a low expenditure for research and development, insufficient use of	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

	ICT in the economy ; low competitiveness of polish enterprises ; high emissions in the economy; high sensitivity and responsiveness to climate change and lack of risk management systems; unsatisfactory level of environmental protection and insufficient use of environmental and cultural resources ; low transport accessibility ; insufficient level of energy security ; insufficient use of labour market resources ; not sufficiently matching capacities in the qualification measures for cadres) - Insufficient social and territorial cohesion (high level of poverty and social exclusion as well as low access to services, insufficient access to transport, insufficient IT competencies especially in socially excluded groups) - Insufficient competencies and effectiveness of the government in key areas of economic competitiveness (competencies and IT knowledge of staff in public administrations) The PA then presents how the future OPs will contribute to each thematic objective chosen and which results are to be achieved for each of them.	
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The coordination between ESI funds is seen as highly important in view of creating complementarity and synergies. The responsibility of coordinating lies in the hands of the relevant ministries responsible for their respective fund. The responsible ministries are described in the relevant section of the PA, along with lists of their responsibilities and tasks in that respect. In addition, a PA Coordination Committee has been established. It plays an important role in any PA-implementation-related questions, the coordination between the ESI Funds and CP instruments, as well as other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB. There are additional, advisory coordination bodies in place, including the Territorial national and regional observatory Bodies or an Evaluation Body. Furthermore, at PA level, there is the Interdepartmental body for Programming and Implementing Structural and Cohesion Funds composed of the relevant ministries' representatives and the representatives of the implementing bodies. In addition the Ministry responsible for Regional Development organizes coordination meetings and information meetings which are also seen as instruments of coordination. The relevant section of the PA also describes what is being done to ensure the complementarity rather than overlap of the processes within the ESIFs.	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities – whether specific or general – is monitored by the ministry responsible for regional development, by observing the activities of the actors involved the monitoring report on these activities and the resulting recommendations are then presented to the Committee of the Council of Ministers for European Affairs up until the complete fulfilment of the ex-ante conditionalities. The PA describes how the process of fulfilling the ex-ante conditionalities is to be monitored. In the adopted PA version, a table shows that all ex-ante conditionalities that have not yet been fulfilled were to be achieved in 2014.	Section 2.3

Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	E-cohesion is mentioned in the PA in the context of the implementation of ITIs. In fact, more efficient tools of communication and cooperation are said to be necessary for carrying a more effective policy-making. Also, in view of better implementing and coordinating Technical Assistance at national level a new IT system is planned to be introduced (with the exception of ETC OPs). No table of deadlines included.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	ITI Poland will make use of the territorial instruments proposed by the European Commission in a way to act upon the potentials and needs identified in the relevant territories, namely both, urban as well as rural territories (PA, p.213). The PA includes a table which shows the ITI investments planned in each of the voivodeships, co-financed by the ERDF and the ESF. The implementation of ITIs in Poland aims to: - Promoting a partnership model where administrative units cooperate with each other at local level - More effective interventions through the implementation of integrated projects aiming to respond to the needs and challenges of cities and their functional areas - Increased influence of cities and their functional areas in their areas of influence in the context of cohesion policy. The conditions for an effective functioning of ITIs are also described in the PA. CLLD CLLD will be used to increase social participation. It should however complete the actions of local governments, not replace them. The use of CLLD is described in the individual OPs and based on analyses and evaluations (PA, p.208). In the framework of the EAFRD, CLLD will be applied in the OP for rural development, in the framework of the EMFF it will be applied in the OP Rybactwo i Morze 2014-2020 (RYBY - OP for fisheries). In both funds, CLLD will be implemented directly. In the case of the ERDF and the ESF, depending on the decision of the self-government of the voivodeship, three forms could be applied in the ROPs: - Direct implementation through a mono- or multi-fund OP at national level - Indirect implementation in rural and fishery-related areas (EMFF and EAFRD) - Mixed form implementation whenever the addressee of the competition is not clear-cut and the beneficiaries are targeted directly The objectives and priorities for implementing CLLD are further described in the PA.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The implementation of ITIs in Poland aims to: - Promoting a partnership model where administrative units cooperate with each other at local level - More effective interventions through the implementation of integrated projects aiming to respond to the needs and challenges of cities and their functional areas - Increased influence of cities and their functional areas in their areas of influence in the context of cohesion policy.	Section 3, 3.1.5

22. Portugal

General reflections	Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	ESI Funds in PA: Based on its National Reforms Program (PNR), Portugal has developed a list of priorities in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy. It will tackle employment, qualifications, environment and energy, I&D and put strong emphasis on combating poverty and social exclusion. EC Funds programming in Portugal also takes into consideration the persisting important inter-regional disparities in the country. The Portuguese PA provides a description of its intervention logic in different policy areas, based on a selection of TOs. The selected 11 TOs in Portugal in the 2014-2020 period have been divided into the following main areas: Competitiveness and Internationalisation (TO 1, TO 2, TO 3, TO 7, TO 11) Social Inclusion and Employment (TO8; TO 9); Human Capital (TO 10) and Sustainability: (TO 4, TO 5 and TO 6) (Detailed description of the coordination between the different TOs, ESIF and the proposed TOs and actions is provided from page 136 to page 209). Portugal will use EDRF, ESF, CF EAFRD and EMFF funding to implement these TOs. The ERDF contribution will amount to 40% of the total funding and the ESF will account for about 28 %. The EAFRD will contribute with 16 % and the CF with 11%. Coordination: The measures ensuring the coordination and successful implementation of the Portuguese PA and OPs are described in chapter 2 of the PA. These measures will follow four main Objectives: Simplification of the Governance Model, a Result Oriented approach, Common Rules for financing, and Simplification of Beneficiaries' access to funding. The existing Management of Control systems for the ESIF are considered to be adequate in the PA, but improvements will be introduced in the 2014-2020 period (e-Cohesion functionalities and adaptation to the new legal framework).
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The OPs planned for 2014-2012 Period in Portugal: - 4 Thematic OPs (For Mainland Portugal) (Multi-fund OPs: CF, ERDF and ESF co-financing) - 5 Regional OPs (For Mainland Portugal), (Multi-fund OPs. ERDF and ESF co-financing) (One More Developed Region: Lisbon, One Transition Region: Algarve and 3 Less developed Regions: Alentejo, Norte and Centro) - 2 Regional OPs (For Madeira and Azores Autonomous Regions), (Multi-fund OPs, ERDF and ESF co-financing) (One More Developed Region: Madeira, and Less Developed Region : Azores). - 3 Rural Development OPs (EAFRD co-financing) - One EMFF OP. - One Technical Assistance OP (ERDF Co-financing). Financial allocation per type of Region (More developed, Transition, Less developed), is provided on page 230 of the PA. Financial allocation across the TOs and ESIF is provided on p.210, 211 of the PA.

How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The Portuguese PA mainly takes a thematic approach, consistent with the Europe 2020 Strategy. Horizontal and territorial dimensions are also taken into account, in agreement with the Reform of Public administration carried out in Portugal. The differences between the two parts of the PA are not clear, although it can be said that analytical and political coordination issues are more detailed in the fourth part of the Document and coordination issues in the second part.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	In the PA preparation process, the Portuguese Government and Public Administration worked together with the civil society, following the European Code of Conduct for Partnership. Different types of stakeholders were involved in the process, namely institutions, research entities, enterprises and entrepreneurial organisations (CIP, CCP, CAOP, CTP), trade unions (CGTP-IN, UGT), and the public. - The Parliament (AR) was consulted as well as the Socio Economic Council (CES). - The National Association of Municipalities (ANMP) was actively involved and the Municipal inputs were reinforced by means of the Inter-municipal Communities and Metropolitan Areas. - Working Groups were involved and a large debate was launched in the preparation process. Other specific tools and instruments were developed such as bilateral and technical meetings, questionnaires, consultations with an Expert Committee on ESI Funds. Public consultation was carried out between June and August 2013, accounting for relevant inputs. Important topics of discussion included the reduction of the administrative burdens, the simplification of procedures and improved management as well as cost simplification and flexibility instruments. - In parallel, Sectoral Working Groups were put in place at Ministerial level to foster the national, sectoral and territorial strategies (Strategy for industrial Development and Employment 2014-2012; Working Groups for High Added Value Infrastructures (IEVA); Strategic Infrastructure and Transport Plan (PET3+), Strategies for Regional Intelligent Specialisation (RIS 3 National and Regional)). These plans were discussed by a broad range of stakeholders. - Ex-ante and environmental evaluation, (For PA and OPs), were supported by interviews, workshops and focus groups, case studies and inquiries, strongly involving relevant partners.	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The Portuguese PA gives a description of how the country intends to tackle the 11 TOs for the 2014-2020 programming period. The PA mentions Portuguese goals for the 2014-2014 programming period: - Competitiveness and Internationalisation (Stimulation of production of goods and services; Increasing of exports, Transfer of Scientific Research to productive Economy), - Social Inclusion and Employment (Improvement of youth qualification and Employment, Strategy in the Health Sector Development of competencies in labour market) - Human Capital (Completion of Obligatory School period, Reduction of Early School failure); - Sustainability and Efficient use of Resources (in a perspective of Sustainable development) - Territorial Asymmetries and Potentialities (reinforcement of Territorial cohesion, particularly in cities and in low density areas) - Public Administration Reform (Rationalisation and modernisation) and improvement of Public Administration Capacity. The PA for Portugal describes the main challenges for each of these goals and gives statistical data and description of the current situation based on ex-ante evaluation (pp.110-116), political approach and developed policies and instruments (namely in the context of the activities financed during the previous Programming Period), Future needs and main Objectives in the framework of Portugal 2020 and Europe 2020 (pp.1-110). Each of these issues is tackled separately in the PA Document and is coherent with the goals of the Europe 2020 Strategy and with the National Reforms Program.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation

What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The PA stresses the importance of coordination between the ESI Funds and other national and EU Instruments and the EIB. Although already the existing management of control systems for ESI funds can be considered adequate, improvements will be introduced (e-cohesion functionalities and adaptation to the new legal framework). For operational and continuity reasons this approach will be preferred to a complete reshuffling of the system. The Portuguese Ministries responsible for ESI Funds are described, along with their responsibilities and tasks. The main bodies are subordinates of the Ministério do Ambiente e Ordenamento do Território (MAOT) / Secretaria de Estado do Desenvolvimento Regional (SEDR), namely, the Inter-ministerial Coordination Commission (CIC Portugal 2010 The Political Coordination Body for all ESI Funds) and the Agency for Development and Cohesion (The General Technical Coordination Body for ESI Funds). Other Coordination Bodies are in place, including the Management Authorities for each OP (Technical Bodies), a Commission for Operational Programmes Follow-up (OPs Governance) and a Consultation Council for the Agency for Development and Cohesion. The Finances General Inspection, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance is the audit body responsible for all ESI Funds. Additionally, services of the Ministry of Agriculture and Sea assume the National Coordination of EAFRD (Gabinete de Planeamento e Políticas) and EMFF (Direcção GERAL de Recursos Naturais).	Section 2.1
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State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	General ex-ante and relevant thematic Ex-ante Conditionalities have been fulfilled according to a self-assessment illustrated in the PA of Portugal. The programming exercise carried out in Portugal (Portugal 2020), concerned the whole National Territory and Autonomous Regions of Madeira and Açores. Thematic EAC 2.2 and 7.4 were not taken into account by Portugal 2020 Document. The fulfilment status of Ex-ante Conditionalities (general or thematic) is monitored by the Secretaria de Estado do Desenvolvimento Regional (Secretariat for regional development). The applicable Ex-ante Conditionalities are the following (Described in Tables from pp 249 to 340 and from pp.341 to 389): - All 7 General Ex-ante Conditionalities (Anti-discrimination; Equality between Men and woman, People with Disabilities, Public procurement, State Aid, Environmental arrangements, Statistic Systems and results indicators), are to be applied. - Regarding Thematic Ex-ante Conditionalities, the tables show all ex-ante Conditionalities that are not fulfilled at the time of presenting the PA at the beginning of the year of 2014 as well as the perspectives for their fulfilment (to 2016). The PA document refers to a report ("Relatório de Verificação") which comprises specific details about the process of verification of Ex-Ante- Conditionalities.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	A specific Information System will be developed for the Portugal 2020 implementation. This system will be integrated in the e-cohesion initiative. The new IT System will build on a pre-existing information system developed in the previous programming periods. It will be improved in the 2014-2020 period to become a policy making tool, allowing for an improved communication between the Funds (Cohesion Fund, EAFRD and EMFF) and therefore for a better Governance of Portugal 2020. The new system will be based on the perspective of simplification of forms and procedures, making the access easy and promoting the Objectives of the PA (Management, certification, payments, audit, monitoring, evaluation and communication). Global coherence will be guaranteed between SI PT 2020, OPs and ESI Funds and with other Public Administration systems ("Balcão Portugal 2020", Project promoter's data base, General data base, Debts register).	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	Portugal will strongly take into consideration the territorial dimension of Cohesion Policy in the Framework of Europe 2020. Subsidiarity Principle will be applied in the context of Territorial Programmes and instruments. Public Policies will be managed according to the Portuguese State Territorial organisation (territorial entity), namely at NUTS II level (adequate level for sectoral and decentralised policies, combining Central and Local Governments). Inter-municipal cooperation will be fostered as bigger scale Municipal projects will be approved. Public, Private and Associative partners will be involved in Territorial Development Strategies at NUTS III level. The PA states that Action Programmes and investments will be properly contracted and questions of eligibilities and double financing will be carefully examined.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

ITI:

Interventions at NUTS III level (Or groups of contiguous NUTSIII) will be developed as a tool for ITIs, in order to secure the strategic coherence of other local interventions, in urban or rural territories. The CCDRs (Comissões de Coordenação e Desenvolvimento Regional) will promote this approach (Sub-Regional Strategic frameworks). A Commission regrouping the Agency for Development and Cohesion, OPs Managing Authorities CCDRs and independent experts are evaluating the coherence of proposed actions at this level and at National level.

- Territorial Cohesion and Development Pacts at NUTS II Level will be implemented and will make use of ITI.
- Integrated Actions for Urban Sustainable Development (AIDUS) will be designed and Territorial and Cohesion Development Pacts put in place for Lisbon and for Porto Metropolitan Areas.
- Employment Pacts involving Public Employment Agencies (articulated with NUTS II interventions).

CLLD:

The CLLD instrument will be used for Local Action Groups (Rural or Coastal) in order to increase social participation. The CLLD instrument will also be used for social insertion and inclusion (Fight against poverty and exclusion) responding to these problems in the Metropolitan areas of Lisbon and Porto. CLLD will make use of the complementarities among ESI Funds (FEADER, FEAMP, ESF and ERDF). An Indicative Table reporting CLLD funding is included p.411.

Territorial Cooperation:

Portugal is strongly involved in European Territorial Cooperation (ETC OPs) though cross-border, transnational and inter-regional cooperation. The PA includes an analysis of the modalities of these cooperation Schemes involving various UTS II Regions, detailing the main priorities:

- Cross border Cooperation with Spain will be continued in the framework of the new programming cycle. For Madeira, Azores and Canary Islands a new Single Cooperation Programme will be drafted (Cross-border and transnational with additional Interregional Funds under Art. 4 of European Territorial Cooperation Regulation). For the European Basin (ENI - European Neighbourhood Instrument), Cross-border cooperation will be reinforced with North Africa (Morocco).
- Transnational Cooperation will be continued and developed in the Atlantic Space and in Southwest Europe as well as in the Mediterranean.
- Inter-Regional cooperation will be addressed through a continued participation in ESPON, URBACT, INTERACT and INTERREG Europe.
- Cooperation structures and Bodies, namely CETs (Comunidades de Trabalho Transfronteiriças) will be reinforced, and their territorial intervention areas extended.

A Special Reference is made by the PA to the EU Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic Area and to the Action Programme for Blue Growth in the Atlantic that inspired the Portuguese Action Plan "Mar-Portugal".

Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The Portuguese PA details the specific structures and instruments that will intervene at territorial level to promote the social inclusion of citizens, making use of CCLD instruments (CLDS +). A new local network for Social intervention (RCLIS) will be created, coordinating all agents, available means and resources. Additionally, Employment and Insertion Contracts and existing National Structures (IEFP Network, Gabinetes de Inserção Profissional /GIP) will also tackle exclusion and poverty related issues.	Section 3, 3.1.5
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23. Romania

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	As per the analysis of development needs, Romania still displays "continuing and, in some cases, widening disparities with the EU across a broad in spectrum of issues". As a consequence, during the 2014-20 period, Romania will make investments using ESI Funds under all 11 Thematic Objectives, drawing resources under ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD and the EMFF. The need for funding greatly exceeds the allocation of resources, so it is estimated that even in the best-case scenario of complete absorption for funds allocated, only a fraction of the challenges could be meet during 2014-2020. The argumentation for the selection of all thematic objectives, together with the decisions behind the high level distribution of resources and the coordination among the different policy areas is presented in the PA from p.154 onwards. Econometric modelling simulations were also used for projections of different allocation scenarios under the thematic objectives. As such, the chosen option was to show preference of directing the bulk of available financial resources towards those thematic objectives that are more oriented towards infrastructure and maintaining ESF allocation at the minimum level imposed by the legislative framework (para.872). The obligations to international funding institutions requiring a strong focus transport and water projects were also taken into consideration. On the other hand, the reason behind the policy choices on the distribution of ESF allocation among Thematic objectives 8, 9 and 10 was related to potential of growth generation (para 873). Distance to national targets in relation to Europe 2020 strategy, national strategic documents and country specific recommendations has been also considered when allocation of funds has been proposed for specific thematic objectives. (para 874), as well as the lessons learned from the previous programming period, in terms of absorption capacity and demand from beneficiaries.	1.2 and especially 1.3

Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	Drawing on the lessons learned from the previous programming period and taking into consideration the funds available and the policy areas envisaged by the interventions, the ESI Funds will be implemented in Romania through 8 operational programmes at national level. Romania opted not to have regional OPs for the 2014-2020 period. The OPs are as follows: OP Competitiveness (ERDF), OP Human Capital (ESF), OP Large Infrastructure (ERDF and CF), Regional OP (ERDF), OP Administrative Capacity (ESF), OP Technical Assistance (ERDF), National Programme for Rural Development (EAFRD) and OP Fisheries and Maritime Affairs (EMFF). Distribution of ESI funds across thematic objectives (p.155, p.191-192): ERDF - 20.98% of the national allocation to TO1 - RTDI; TO2 -ICT; TO3 -SMEs. Additionally, 30.28% of the national ERDF allocation will be dedicated to TO4 concerning with low carbon transformation and 8.64% to TO6. 25.44% will be allocated to TO7. 8.23% will be allocated to TO9 and TO10. EAFRD - 1.17% to TO1, 28.54% to TO3, aiming o increase the competitiveness of the agriculture rural sector; 6.07% to TO4 low carbon transformation, 33.08% for TO5 and TO6; 6.61% will be allocated to TO8 and 22.31% to TO9 and TO10. EMFF - 50% to TO3, aiming o increase the competitiveness of the competitiveness of the fishing economy and aquaculture sector, 2% to TO4 low carbon transformation, 22% to TO6 and 20% EMFF. CF - 2.3% of allocation to TO4, low carbon transformation; 6.9% to TO5, 41.71% to TO6, 49.09% to TO7. ESF - 32.76% to TO8, 23.75% to TO9, a further 26.33% TO10. Around 11.12% will be dedicated to TO11, For technical assistance will be allocated 3.02% ERDF, 6.03% ESF, 2.23% EAFRD and 6% EMFF. In addition to support from ERDF • under TO 2 it is envisaged that EAFRD will support (indicative 25 million euro) • under TO 9, broadband infrastructure in rural areas (white areas) • under Leader local development strategies were identified as a local development priority. The financial allocation is presented in section 1.4.	1.3 and 1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	No noticeable difference can be observed between the two parts of the PA in terms of quality.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The PA mentions the Partnership framework diagram for programming (approved by Government Memorandum in 2012), which set up the institutional arrangements for developing the programming documents. The Ministry of European Funds (MEF) is responsible for the coordination of consultation process and also ensures the presidency of the Inter-institutional Committee for the PA (CIAP). CIAP has 64 members, out of which 70% are representatives in decision-making of central and local public institutions and 30% are representatives from the fields of economy and social policies, trade unions, academic institutions, nongovernmental organisations and other representatives of the civil society. A number of 12 Consultative Committees (10 sectoral and 2 regional/territorial) have been established under the umbrella of CIAP, covering the major topics in respect to policy areas. The list of all members involved in the programming process is annexed to the PA. Within the framework of the consultative committees sectoral priorities were debated and following the members input, the analysis and recommendations were enhanced. The programming documents, including the proposals formulated by each Consultative Committee are discussed within the CIAP, which, finally, validates them. In order to ensure a wider consultation framework on the programming documents, under the coordination of MEF, several focus-groups were organised at national and regional level . The meetings were attended especially by the representatives of the civil society, academic and cultural environment, etc. Moreover, MEF organized bilateral meetings with all entities that were interested in programming stages and the various versions of the documents under debate were published on the webpage of MEF and a unique contact address was provided (secretariat.ciap@fonduri-ue.ro). Following the public consultation, interested parties submitted comments to the CIAP secretariat. These, as well as other observations, proposals were registered and after an internal analysis, were integrated in the revised version of PA. The PA states that the partnership framework will operate beyond the programming phase, and will be extended to the management, implementation, monitoring and control. Institutional coordination for 2014-2020 involves three levels, in which economic and social partners will represent 40%, the remaining 60% being represented by the central and local public authorities.	Section 1B, 1.5.1 and Section 2.1
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Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	Taking into account the macroeconomic situation and policies, together with the highlighted bottlenecks to national growth, the Government of Romania has established the funding priorities for the use of European Structural and Investment Funds in the 2014-2020 PA with the global objective to reduce the economic and social development disparities between Romania and the EU Member States. The first section of the PA presents an overview of the current state of development, growth potentials specific need of the different regions, as well as the national challenges and priorities in terms of 1) competitiveness and local development; 2) people and society; 3) infrastructure; 4) resources; 5) administration and government. These are also in line with the Council's Country Specific Recommendations for 2014. The actions envisaged under the five development challenges are set to contribute towards Romania's Europe 2020 targets and an analysis of this contribution is annexed to the PA. Econometric modelling was also used to assess the impact of investments, under four different scenarios. The prospective effects that may be generated by ESI Funds on the GDP growth are related to the amounts planned to be spent under three categories of policy interventions: support for infrastructure, human capital development and promoting private investments in innovation. The analysis was carried out in terms of comparing the "without EU funds" baseline scenario relative to "with EU funds" scenario, undertaking a sensitivity analysis based on different rates of absorption. In setting up investment priorities, the distinctive spatial pattern of needs and opportunities were also taken into account. A combination of steering from National strategies and master plans, Regional Development Plans, selection criteria and the use of territorial development instruments will ensure that implementation of the ESI Funds is not spatially blind. As a novelty for 2014-2020, one of RO regions entered the category of "more developed regions", while some other areas are close behind. Along with the above, the prioritization and concentration of investments take into the account the national sectoral strategies and plans. As such, it can be concluded that the specific investment needs are correctly aligned by the objectives of the ESI fund and they are expected to have direct contributions to reaching EU2020 targets for Romania.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The PA details the specific arrangements in terms of complementarity between the ESI funds, as well as the synergies envisaged between the investments in different areas. The main areas of focus are related to the competitiveness, employment, education, social inclusion, environment protection, resources efficiency and climate change. Based on the lessons learned in 2007-2013 and the new challenges raised by the ESI Funds architecture in Romania, a coordination mechanism with structures on three levels (strategic committee, thematic inter-institutional, operational), will be set up in order to ensure the coherence of the interventions, complementarities and synergies in the programming and implementation stages. The coordination mechanism will function in parallel with the institutional framework designed for implementation and will bring together experts, operational staff, decision makers from the MAs and IBs, decision makers from other institutions responsible for national policies in Romania and the socio-economic partners (para 965, p.209) The PA also presents how the ESI Funds will be employed in correlation to other national or European instruments, particularly in respect to environment, climate action, education and employment. Specific details are presented in respect to complementarities between ESI Funds and Horizon 2020, ERA, Connecting Europe Facility, COSME, Erasmus+, Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived, LIFE, EAGF, Danube Strategy, Black Sea Synergy, EEA and Norway grants etc. The correlation with the ETC programmes will be ensured through a specific mechanism, involving: participation of relevant MAs in the Monitoring and Steering Committees of cooperation programmes; technical meetings on how the electronic systems can be used in this regard; encouraging project beneficiaries to contribute to EUSDR and other relevant strategies; replication for ETC of the results of the pilot project on coordination started by the Ministry of European Funds etc. The PA Steering Committee created for the strategic coordination of the ESI Funds 2014-2020 will have a key role in ensuring the coherence with other Union policies' instruments and in the same time with the Romanian national investments programmes and a correlation table in this respect is annexed to the PA.	Section 2.1

State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Several ex-ante conditionalities were not met at the beginning of the programming period and continue to remain a problem, as progress towards achieving the desired objectives is slow. As stated in the PA, the strategic policy lines presented [in the Partnership Agreement] already anticipate and reflect the strategic orientations and they will be fully reflected in accompanying strategies and studies. (p.408) The main challenges are related to the existence of a coherent strategic policy framework, as well as of the instruments, analyses and data necessary to justify policy choices. Gender equality and non-discrimination remain low on the agenda and constitute challenge in terms of ex-ante conditionalities. Deficiencies in the Procurement law has significantly affected the implementation of funds during 2007-2013 and efforts are being made to correct it. The situation is expected to improve as per 2015. The lack of national or regional risk assessments for disaster management taking into account climate change adaptation is expected to be solved by the end of 2015, as well. Furthermore the fields of transport, labour market and active ageing are to be developed in terms of fulfilling all EAC.	Section 2.3
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Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	As stated in the PA (para 1174, p.454), in terms of fulfilling minimum requirements stemming from the new Regulations of the EC for 2014-2020, the only area of concern remains the specific e-Cohesion requirement – for “full implementation of the electronic data exchange between beneficiaries and authorities”. At present, with the existing electronic systems, this area is practically uncovered. The exceptions are few and extremely limited. The MySMIS system that was developed recently and that has just undergone the testing stage, promises to solve most issues of that problem. MySMIS would fulfil entirely the e-Cohesion requirements for the 6 OPs the system was designed for. Since rural development and fisheries are not covered by the minimal requirements of e-Cohesion, only SOP HRD and the 4 OPs for ETC (would) remain uncovered. For SOP HRD, the ActionWeb system is successfully used since 2008, but its scope is still limited at present, not covering all e-Cohesion requirements. MIS-ETC has implemented e-Monitoring, a module of MIS-ETC Web Application, but this module is even more limited, dealing only with the beneficiary's expenditures, out of the whole area of data. In terms of quality of the existing electronic systems, they fulfil the minimum requirements, but they do not excel. The area where most of the systems could be improved relates to satisfying the users' needs (predefined reports, revision in terms of features and data content as such to become more user oriented). Key recommendations made by the evaluation report are relating to finalizing implementation of MySMIS and extending it to meet the needs of the ETC and ESF type programmes. For 2014-2020, four systems for data exchange will be developed at national level taking also into account the improvements underlined by the ex-ante evaluation. a) SMIS 2014+ / MySMIS - will cover six operational programmes under the responsibility of MEF; b) an information system for the European Territorial Cooperation under MRDPA responsibility; c) an information system for NRDP and one for OP FMA, under the responsibility of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD). Actions planned: - Elaboration of the system concept based on the new institutional and procedural framework and contracting the software application development services for SMIS 2014+ / MySMIS 2014+ (January-December 2014) - Developing of the electronic management system (January-December 2014) - Testing phase and enter into production of the SMIS2014+ (September-December 2014) - Training for SMIS 2014+ /MySMIS 2014+ users (September-December 2014) - Launching use SMIS 2014+ /MySMIS 2014+ (December 2014).	Section 4
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Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	For the 2014-2020 period, Romania set out five territorial development priorities, in respect to: Improving the quality of life for local and regional communities, promoting rural-urban partnerships, consolidating the urban network by polycentric development and territorial specialization, increasing accessibility and connectivity, ensuring equitable access to services of general interest. In order to address the territorial development priorities set out for 2014-2010, Romania will make full use of the ITI and CLLD mechanisms. The CLLD will target local communities needs limiting within the following types of territories: - rural areas - deprived areas within urban centres - fisheries and coastal areas where there are fisheries activities and aquaculture farms In respect to the coordination and administrative set-up for CLLD, the following arrangements are envisaged: • In case of CLLD for urban areas, a multi-fund financing for integrated development strategies will be used considering a Common Selection Committee (ERDF + ESF) for such type of strategies, committee established between relevant Managing Authorities. • For rural areas, LEADER funding through the National Rural Development Programme (NRDP) will be provided from EAFRD. The financial allocation from EAFRD for LEADER axis is maximum 7%. • Fisheries Local Actions Groups (FLAG) will be supported to draft local strategies period in coastal areas, Danube River, Danube Delta and inland fisheries and aquaculture areas. Complementarity mechanisms for LAGs and FLAGs are also set up in the PA. Romania will use ITI instrument with priority in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The ITI strategy will be implemented through an Action Plan that will include the proposed interventions and the mechanisms of implementation, with the use of all ESIF (ERDF, ESF, CF, EARD, EMFF). The ITI Functional Working Group will ensure a strong coordination between all partners involved in the implementation of ITI Danube Delta through an institutional coordination mechanism. In respect to urban development, the growth poles policy will continue to be financed taking into account the previous experience gained by Romania during 2007-2013 programming period in the implementation of the integrated plans for urban development, through a ring fenced estimated allocation. In addition to the support for the growth poles, other territorial development approach (such as local development centres etc.) will be also sustained. At least 5% of the ERDF national allocation will be dedicated to sustainable urban development. Romania pay particular attention to EUSDR. The thematic objectives and investment priorities are in close correlation with the objectives and targets set in the EUSDR Action Plan, foreseeing an alignment of policies and funding, based on the integrated EUSDR approach. The interventions will take into consideration several areas, and EUSDR relevance criteria is envisaged for ESI projects.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	Romania will continue to cooperate under the existing frameworks for sea-basin cooperation with the neighbouring states in the Black Sea and under the respective initiatives of the EU. Consequently, Romania's programming of ESI Funds in 2014-2020 has been designed to make a substantial contribution to Blue Growth. The PA contains specific funding priorities addressing Blue Economy Sectors or Blue Economy Focus Areas identified as high relevance, as well as general Funding Priorities of potential relevance to Blue Economy Sectors or Blue Economy Focus Areas identified as medium relevance.	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	Two main types of approach regarding the deprived communities are envisaged for 2014 – 2020 programming period: • The use of integrated plans that will involve, beside the measures concerning social houses, complementary measures in the fields of education, employment, • social and health care addressing the specific needs for deprived communities in urban areas identified as such (under the form of CLLD); • Soft measures targeting people in need and which are not included in the integrated plans addressed to deprived communities. Specific actions are also envisaged and described for the following target groups: - Children: - from poor families, - with parents working abroad - in residential or family-based child care institutions - single parent households - households with three or one more children - Elderly people - People suffering from addictions, affected by domestic violence and human trafficking, persons deprived of liberty or on probation - People who are jobless or have low incomes and homeless people - People with disabilities - Roma people	Section 3, 3.1.5

24. Slovakia

General reflections	Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The PA covers five funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the Cohesion Fund (CF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF). The coordination of individual EU Member States and integration of structural policies is ensured through the Europe 2020 strategy, which the National Reform Programme of the Slovak Republic (NRP) elaborates on. Their common intersection features five priority areas representing the pillars for the quality of life, sustainable growth and employment; the building of these pillars in the 2014 – 2020 programming period represents the main challenge for Slovakia. Slovakia has chosen to finance investment under all 11 thematic objectives defined in the Regulations. The programming phase was used not only for the elaboration of the Partnership Agreement and operational programmes (OPs), but also for an assessment of potential overlaps and synergies between funding instruments. The investment priorities for 2014-2020 are set out in a Partnership Agreement and include: - Promoting an innovation-friendly business environment by enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, improving innovation and research performance and developing an e-economy. - Developing infrastructure for economic growth and employment in particular key transport networks and sustainable urban transport; - Developing human capital and improved labour market participation by reinforcing all levels of education, increasing access to employment of the most vulnerable groups in society (in particular the young and long-term unemployed), and promoting social inclusion of Roma communities; - Encouraging the sustainable and efficient use of natural resources through promotion of energy efficiency and a low carbon economy, protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change; - Building modern and professional public administration by means of a thorough reform aimed at improving governance, tackling corruption and ensuring the efficiency and impartiality of the judiciary. Special attention should be given to ensure the stability and professionalism of bodies responsible for the ESI funds.
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The thematic objectives comply with the priorities for funding and financial allocations reflect the complexity of the individual thematic objectives. Cohesion policy will be delivered by 7 OPs, so 4 less compared to 2007-13 period: - 3 national OPs co-financed by ERDF (OP Research and Innovation, Integrated Regional OP, OP Technical Assistance) - 2 national OPs co-financed by ERDF and CF (OP Integrated Infrastructure, OP Quality of Environment); - 1 national OP co-financed by ESF and ERDF (OP Human Resources); - 1 national OP co-financed by ESF (OP Effective Public Administration) Moreover there is 1 Rural Development Programme (financed by EAFRD) and 1 Fisheries programme (financed by EMFF).

How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The PA for Slovakia does not include an explicit reference to distinct national policy mechanisms – this seems to be understandable given the fact that EU Cohesion Policy constitutes the key public investment money in most of the policy areas concerned. As a matter of fact no clear division between the two parts is given.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The responsible body for coordination of the use of the EU funds is The Government Office of the Slovak Republic. First, the PA describes the initial stage of the preparation process of the PA SR proposal, where a comprehensive analysis of gaps and development needs and growth potential was conducted. This happened in collaboration with relevant partners, taking into account the thematic objectives and key actions defined in the EC Position Paper. The analysis took into account the NRP, country-specific Council recommendations, the EU and Slovak legislative and strategic documents and experience from the 2007 – 2013 programming period. Moreover, the proposal of the analytical part of the PA SR was discussed at a meeting of the Partnership for the Cohesion Policy working group. As a next step, the strategic part and ex ante evaluation of the PA SR were prepared. Partial outputs of the PA SR were continuously sent and consulted with relevant partners. Expert inputs from the individual MAs were also incorporated, in relation to the parallel preparation of the OPs. Public consultation: The general public was also involved in the process of preparation of the PA SR, by means of a CCA questionnaire designed to collect public opinions and suggestions concerning the recent issues regarding the use of the EU funds in the 2014 – 2020 programming period . The information obtained through the questionnaire was considered in the selection of thematic objectives and investment priorities specified in the PA SR proposal. Suggestions from the public to reduce administrative burden have been incorporated in the relevant part of the PA SR, and serve as a significant input for the preparation of the ESI Funds management and control system. Besides that, the PA SR proposal was also discussed by the members of the Government Council for PA SR. Remark: It was sought to ensure a wide participation also from representatives of more remote areas, e.g. through support for travel costs. Partnership principle - Implementation phase: The relevant section of the PA also describes the involvement of partners beyond programming of the Partnership Agreement. More emphasis on public awareness at all levels of implementation using a wide range of tools (use of integrated information network of regional information centres, establishment of the Information call centre, etc.) will be put; new ways of communication and centralized system of education for the relevant partners involved in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PA SR and programmes (trainings, seminars, workshops) will be implemented. Cooperation with the partners will continue by involving the partners in the work of the National monitoring committee for the ESI Funds and the monitoring committees of individual programmes established by MAs. In the implementation process of the programmes, the expert working groups will be set up by the MAs under monitoring committee involving relevant partners, who shall actively cooperate with relevant MA of the programme on the preparation of progress report.	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The PA describes how Slovakia is planning to follow the chosen Thematic Objectives in the 2014-2020 programming period. The PA focus on the following priorities: - Promoting innovation friendly business environment by enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs, improving innovation and research performance and developing an e-economy, - Developing infrastructure for economic growth and employment, in particular key transport networks and sustainable urban transport, - Developing human capital growth and improved labour market participation by reinforcing all levels of education, increasing access to employment of the most vulnerable groups in society (in particular the young and long-term unemployed) and promoting social inclusion of Roma communities, - Encouraging sustainable and efficient use of natural resources through promotion of energy efficiency and a low carbon economy, protection of the environment and adaptation to climate change, - Building a modern and professional public administration by means of a thorough reform aimed at improving governance, tackling corruption and ensuring efficiency and impartiality of the judiciary. Special attention should be given to ensure the stability and professionalism of bodies responsible for ESI Funds. These funds are the cornerstone of Slovakia's medium and long-term development strategy. A substantial share of ESIF will be devoted to upgrading Slovakia's infrastructure. As regards Slovakia's rural areas, the EAFRD will contribute to increasing the sustainable use of natural resources, biodiversity and climate action, the competitiveness of the agri-food sector, as well as the balanced territorial development of rural communities and economies. The EMFF will target increasing the competitiveness of Slovak aquaculture and the sustainable management of natural resources in rural areas. In view of defining the path towards achieving the Europe 2020 goals, the National Strategy for Regional Development of the SR represents the core strategic document. Its updated version is in line with other strategic documents, namely strategy Europe 2020. In connection with the identified development potential of individual regions in the Slovak Republic and investments aimed at fostering their economic and social growth, the Partnership Agreement concentrates eligible contributions from the ESI Funds into those geographical territorial units which are expected to ensure the highest effectiveness of investment in addressing region-specific needs through using their local potential and resources. From the perspective of regional approach, the strategic objective of the PA SR is to ensure the implementation of investment priorities in those areas which have the highest development potential for the given priority. The PA SR concentrates, in a differentiated manner, the thematic objectives and priority areas of support into individual geographical territorial units stipulated in the national CTDS (Concept of the Territorial Development of Slovakia) planning document. Thus, good conditions are created for eliminating regional disparities. The CTDS takes on board and adjusts, in order to reflect Slovak specificities, the main EU principles of territorial development laid down in the Territorial Agenda of the European Union 2020. Moreover, the CTDS defines a system of tertiary development centres, settlement core areas and development axes which, based on the principles of a polycentric concept of settlement, creates a compact settlement structure which is organically linked to the settlement systems of the neighbouring countries.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

	Remark: The CTDS does not clearly stipulate rural areas. Most of the areas outside the CTDS-defined centres can primarily be viewed as rural areas. Rural settlements also represent a logical part of CTDS-defined agglomerations (settlement core areas) and development axes. From the perspective of the ESI Funds support, rural areas must be assessed individually and their boundaries further specified when processing integrated regional approaches for individual Slovak regions.	
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Coordination between the ESI Funds and other support instruments will be ensured by the following programme and project-level measures: <u>Legal framework and management provisions:</u> - harmonisation of the legal framework for the provision of support from the EAFRD and the EMFF and other ESI Funds in the SR, - harmonised methodology to set up the process for the provision and control of support provided from the ESI Funds, in the form of the Management and Control System; - harmonised conditions for the Management and Control System, including an arrangement for a separate management system for the EAFRD and inclusion of common mechanisms for monitoring and data collection for all the ESI Funds; - development and operation of a uniform information system for the ESI Funds (excluding the EAFRD) and its link to the separate EAFRD information system in order to support implementation of individual programmes and collection and generation of the data necessary for monitoring, evaluation and reliable reporting to the EU and the public on the use of EU financial support; <u>Coordination Mechanisms:</u> The responsible body for coordination of the use of the EU funds is The Government Office of the Slovak Republic. In this function it is in charge to ensure the following major coordination mechanisms: - active cooperation and guidance provided to entities involved in the provision of EU support with respect to setting the conditions for the provision of support at the level of individual programmes; - establishment of a formal working committee that will meet at regular interval in order to ensure coordination between the key ESI Funds programmes as well as between the ESI Funds programmes and European Territorial Cooperation programmes, and other EU and national support instruments. The working committee will be led by the Deputy Prime Minister for Investments. - regular reporting the Government on the implementation of mechanisms for the coordination of the ESI Funds with other support instruments, including identification of irregularities and relevant corrective measures to improve this mechanism; - joint activities in the area of information and publicity; - organisation of regular training activities, workshops and conferences for representatives of relevant socio-economic partners at the national and regional level, including the exchange of experience and good practices with foreign partners; - coordinating the provision of information and expert advice on the funding possibilities under the ESI Funds and other support instruments with the aim of providing a better public access to information;	Section 2.1

	- creating ad hoc working groups to adopt concrete steps towards a coordinated approach in the implementation of programmes; - creating administrative and legislative conditions for the management and implementation of the ESI Funds.	
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The PA describes how the process of fulfilling the ex-ante conditionalities is to be monitored. In the existing PA version, a table shows that all ex-ante conditionalities that have not yet been fulfilled were to be achieved in 2014.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	Slovakia plans to modify the current information system ITMS for the ESI Funds except for EAFRD and the information system of the Agricultural paying agency for EAFRD (hereinafter referred to as "IS APA") to meet the requirements of e-Cohesion policy defined in Regulation No 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council and the requirements of the Act No 305/2013 Coll. on electronic performance of public authorities and amending certain acts („Act on e-Government“), which constitutes the general legal basis for delivery of electronic services by public administration. The principles of e-Cohesion policy shall be implemented by creating centralised ISs, which shall be interlinked and integrated with other public administration ISs (hereinafter referred to as "PA IS"). The following ISs will be used for the ESI Funds: ITMS2014+ and IS PPA that will cover administration of the EAFRD and EAGF (not part of the ESI Funds), because these types of support are interlinked and their division into separate information system will be ineffective and costly. The two separate information systems (ITMS2014+ and IS PPA) will, to a certain extent, share the data and information stored in the systems. In Slovakia, an effective system for information and data exchange between the beneficiary and the provider of support and other bodies involved in the implementation of the ESI Funds in electronic form will be established by 31 December 2015. Also the deadline for a fully functional electronic data exchange within IS APA in line with eCohesion requirements is set at 31 December 2015. No table of deadlines included.	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	CLLD: The main authority responsible for the coordination of CLLD preparation and implementation at the national level will be the MARD SR (Ministry of Agriculture). The application of the CLLD-approach will primarily contribute towards achieving TO9. Individual rural development strategies will also contribute towards achieving other thematic objectives depending on the goals of local strategies, namely thematic objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10. The main priority areas implemented through the CLLD approach include Development of local economy and employment through the use of local resources and establishment of innovations in rural areas, as well as support for various types of employment in rural areas; Protection of the environment and adaptation to the consequences of climate change, efficient and sustainable utilisation of resources in rural areas; Capacity building and development of civil society in regions; Increased quality and safety of local infrastructures and physical regeneration of rural areas. The CLLD will be supported from the EAFRD through the RDP SR (LEADER Initiative) and the ERDF through the IROP = Integrated Regional Operational Programme. Next to the firm anchoring of CLLD in the Rural Development Programme (RDP) – which is an expected feature of such programme - it is foreseen to use also the Integrated Regional OP as policy lever for strengthening the locally-based bottom-up approaches. Whether this experiment will work out needs to be seen: IROP is an ERSDF programme and administration of such programmes is generally not used to this approach. The CLLD will not be implemented directly through the ESF and the EMFF. However, the ESF will contribute to the defined CLLD objectives on a complementary basis through open calls for LAGs under the OP HR. The EAFRD allocation for CLLD support will be at least 5 % of the Fund's contribution under the RDP SR allocation. The ERDF indicative allocation through the IROP will reach EUR 100 million. ITI: ITIs will be made on the basis of so-called regional integrated territorial strategies (RITS) under the IROP. The RITS will be the baseline strategic document for the implementation of ITIs at the regional level, having impacts on the local level. The planned measures and actions based on the RITS will be financed from a majority of the thematic priority axes of the IROP. In order to ensure an integrated approach and comprehensive solutions, the planned measures funded under the IROP will be complemented by “soft” measures funded from the ESF through the OP HR. Conclusion: The RITS will be based on economic and social development programmes adopted by individual self-governing regions and municipalities, as well as on regional, sectoral, conceptual and other relevant strategic documents. The RITS will represent a binding strategic document for the implementation of the IROP in the respective region, defining particular planned measures which will serve as the basis for applications for support, with a focus on integrated approach to territorial development. Urban dimension: CTDS (Concept of the Territorial Development of Slovakia), as hierarchically highest spatial planning tool, has defined the most significant areas of urban development based on the comprehensive assessment of the settlement system in Slovakia. This has been set as the main criterion to identify urban areas to be supported. Cities and towns proposed to be supported include Bratislava, Košice and population centres of the first category which represent its first sub-category defined by the CTDS, i.e., all regional capitals in Slovakia. This section of the PA describes a very important factor complementing the aforementioned main criterion is experience from the previous programming period, existence of a sufficient potential and capacity to meet the objectives in the form of economic growth and job creation while respecting the requirements of social development and environmental sustainability.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	Macro-regional strategies: In the 2014 - 2020 programming period, Slovakia will cooperate in the implementation of cross-border cooperation programmes (SK – CZ, HU – SK, PL – SK, SK – AT and HU – SK – RO – UA) in line with national and transnational strategies in order to ensure the complementarity with the mainstream programmes of the SR in identifying joint challenges which influence specific geographical areas. The LEADER initiative of the RDP SR for 2014 - 2020, as a follow-up to the experience gained from the 2007 - 2013 programming period, will continue to support transnational cooperation of LAGs, within the EU and in third countries. The support will focus on activities aimed at identifying joint development potential, developing common traditions, fostering tourism potential of cooperating territories, exchanging experience, as well as on the promotion and information activities in rural areas, etc. The complementarity and synergies within the framework of identified joint activities will be ensured solely through support to joint projects with significant cross-border impact. The focus of the cross-border cooperation programmes in which Slovakia participates may contribute towards meeting the objective of the Danube Region Strategy through the implementation of activities in the area of environmental protection, protection of the natural and cultural heritage, sustainable transport, enhanced institutional cooperation and a more effective cooperation in the area of education, R&D, as well as support for cross-border cooperation between entrepreneurs. Remark to Danube Strategy: The ETC programme for the Danube Region will geographically focus on the same countries as the Danube Strategy; Slovakia will play an active role in ensuring sustainable development of the region. This ETC will perform the function of a supplementary source of funding for the Danube Strategy, in particular to ensure better identification, networking and coordination of joint measures and activities.	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	In Slovakia, an integrated approach to address the specific needs of geographical areas the most affected by poverty or target groups most at risk of discrimination or social exclusion will be implemented for the target group of marginalised Roma communities. An integrated approach to the inclusion of MRC will be achieved with the investment support of four measures (education, employment, housing and healthcare). The aim of parallel interventions of the EU Funds is to achieve greater integration of separated and segregated Roma communities in society, and also in relation to the priorities of the Strategy for the integration of Roma until 2020. Moreover, in the framework of OPs of the SR, also the social aspect is public procurement will be used, which should bring greater participation in the labour market not only for the MRC. In terms of RDP contribution to the inclusion of marginalised groups of population, including MRCs, the possibilities of using EAFRD for the inclusion of marginalised groups will be considered within the framework of RDP. Under CLLD, a contribution of a territorial development strategy to social inclusion of marginalised groups of population will be one of the selection criteria for LAGs. Remark: Table 20 in the PA demonstrates the role and the contribution of the ESI Funds in the implementation of the integrated approach to address the specific needs of geographical areas most affected by poverty or of target groups at highest risk of discrimination or social exclusion. To sum it up, no geographical hot-spots of MCR could be identified within the PA. In line with the inclusion of MRC, geographical areas will be identified at the level of self-governments.	Section 3, 3.1.5

25. Slovenia

General reflections	Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The Slovenian PA focuses on five priorities 1) research and innovation; 2) employment and employability ; 3) shift to a low-carbon economy; 4) quality of the transport infrastructure and developing infrastructure to achieve a better environmental status and the efficient management of resources; 5) capacities and efficiency of the public administration and the judicial system. The five priorities are covered by 11 thematic objectives, which are financed by 5 ESI Funds in different combinations. (Summary of PA, p.1)Information on priority axes is not available in the PA. Actually, the Cohesion Policy OP is set-up of 11 priority axes. (see table as part of this grid) In order to secure appropriate contributions to the TOs, experts groups consisting of intermediate bodies and different types of experts will be established for the implementation of Cohesion Policy. They will, among others, prepare implementation plans, secure synergies and complementarity at the operational level and review the implemented operations. A good overview is provided on p. 153. The Cohesion Policy OP focuses on two major areas: (1) investing in RDI, competitiveness, employment and training (ERDF, ESF) and (2) infrastructure to achieve a better environmental status, sustainable energy use and sustainable mobility, as well as the efficient management of resources (CF, ERDF). The RDP focuses on (1) the facilitation of processes of structural adjustment in agriculture, (2) efficient organisation of the agricultural market, (3) sustainable exploitation of forests and improvement of competitiveness in forestry and non-industrial wood processing, 4) promotion of agricultural practices with favourable effects on natural resources and adaptation to climate change, (5) green jobs and rural development based on endogenous potential of local environments and (6) knowledge and innovation transfer as horizontal objective. The EMFF OP addresses 3 thematic objectives: 3 (competitiveness of agricultural sector), 6 (environment, resource-efficiency) and 8 (employment). (details in PA, pp. 104-128)
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	Slovenia has 3 operational programmes. The cohesion policy programme is a multi-fund programme co-financed by ERDF, ESF and CF. The other two are mono-fund programmes, one RDP co-financed by EAFRD and one EMFF OP. In 2014-2020 Slovenia is allocated around EUR 1.39 billion ERDF, EUR 717 million ESF and EUR 895 million CF. The allocation for the EAFRD OP amounts to EUR 838 million and for the EMFF OP to EUR 8.2 million. The ESI Funds, including the CF, address 11 thematic objectives. The strongest concentrations of funds can be found in TO1) 1. Strengthening research, technological development and innovation (13%), in TO3) 3. Enhancing the competitiveness of SMEs in the agricultural sector, the fishery and aquaculture sector (20%); and in TO6) 6. Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency (16%). Detailed ESI Funds' allocations can be found on page pp.119-120 of the PA.

How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The parts of the PA subject to Commissions decision [Article 15(1)] cover pages 1-169 and Annex I (EAC). The parts of PA not subject to Commission decision [Article 15(2)] cover pages 169-197. Both parts of similar quality. Issues are clearly presented, supported by factual information and structured logically.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The partnership principle is the key underlying guide that Slovenia pursues in the context of drawing funds under the CSF. The preparation of the PA was coordinated by the newly-established Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy (GODC) (in the period preceding 1 March 2014 the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology had the coordinating role) together with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Environment and in cooperation with other competent ministries. Interested stakeholders were involved in the preparation of the programming documents for the 2014-2020 period since September 2012, after the draft of the inclusion strategy in the process of preparation of all key strategic and programming documents in Slovenia had been prepared. The partners included in the dialogue were selected according to the following criteria: representative organisations (e.g. chambers, professional associations, universities, institutes, etc.); NGOs' representatives; people participating in social dialogue, and institutions active in regional development. The inclusion processes are described in detail. A public consultation on the PA was carried out (p.130).	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The country-specific recommendations in the Slovenian National Reform Programme 2014-2015, published in April 2014, are characterised mainly by measure to eliminate macroeconomic imbalances, primarily for of achieving economic growth and creating jobs. In order to boost economic growth, Slovenia will give priority to the implementing measures set out in the three key pillars: financial pillar, corporate governance and privatisation, fiscal pillar. The specific recommendations are: 1) reinforcement of the budgetary strategy (correction of the excessive deficit and restriction of debt growth), 2) long-term sustainability of public finances and limiting the costs of ageing, 3) labour market and wages, 4) banks and the banking system, 5) regulatory framework for banks and supervisory capacities, 6) reductions of barriers to entry and operation of regulated services, 7) reduction of the length of judicial proceedings, 8) management of state-owned companies and privatisation, 9) restructuring of companies and improving the business environment. The recommendations strongly focus on systemic adaptations and can only partly be addressed directly by operational programmes of the ESI Funds. They “will play a decisive role in mobilising investment in economic development (...) while making every effort to help remove certain barriers and bottlenecks that now deter private investment.” (PA, p.12) They are addressed in the strategies of strengthening competitiveness, better environment and higher resource-efficiency and enhanced employment. Only recommendations 6, 7 and 9 are more specific and can more directly be linked to thematic objectives. Recommendation 2 is specifically addressed in thematic objectives 8-10. Recommendations 6 and 7 are addressed in TOs related to competitiveness and greening the economy. While the national targets for the Europe 2020 seem to be quite demanding to be achieved in the given macro-economic and systemic context, the Europe 2020 objectives are well addressed through concentrating the funds on TO1 (RTDI), TO3 (competitiveness) and TO6 (environment and resource-efficiency). Another means of concentration was chosen in order to respond to the key needs identified under TO 4 (low-carbon economy): A coordinated approach (p.40) to delivering priority investments related to energy policies and transport, agriculture, research, development, entrepreneurship and employment	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation

What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	The Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy ensures the coordination of development strategy, development policy and competitiveness policy, their implementation and methodological links between the development policies and results-oriented budgeting. For the Cohesion Policy OP, the Inter-ministerial Coordination Committee (established already for period 2007-2013) will secure coordinated implementation of the programme and smooth administration - related also to the coordination of other EU instruments and national instruments. In the period 2014-2020 its responsibility includes the coordination with EAFRD and EMFF. For beneficiaries and applicants a new website will function as a central info point allowing interactive communication and information exchange.	Section 2.1
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State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Information on the fulfilment of the EAC is given in Annex 2 which is not attached to the publicly available PA document.	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	The implementation of the cohesion policy was supported by four core information systems which were created separately to respond to the specific needs of individual areas in the last programme period. The assessment shows that there is room for simplification and improvement of the current system. Key findings and recommendations are: • The information system should be organised in a way that allows high-quality financial management, monitoring, control and assessment, including analysis of data, and should not allow for setting up separate databases. • There should be a unified method for entering data which must apply to all users; the entering of data into the information system must be prompt, consistent and harmonised. In 2012, activities to ensure electronic data exchange with economic entities, civil society entities and public administration bodies have been started. In general, the requirements of e-cohesion are provided. The architecture of existing information systems is being improved. The plan finalisation is June 2015. (p.195) RDP: electronic processing of applications and payment claims is possible. - A substantial upgrade is planned in 8 phases, including deadlines. (pp. 195-196) EMFF: Data related to the application registered in a specific IT tool, measure data entered by intermediate body in parallel. - Existing information system will be upgraded. No deadline given. (p. 197)	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	ITIs only to implement integrated measures for the sustainable development of urban areas. Urban dimension: supported through ITIs, which will allow to link activities aimed at improving the quality of the living environment and security in cities/towns, energy efficiency, sustainable mobility and accessibility, entrepreneurship development and social inclusion. Priority will be given to investments which directly contribute to creating new jobs and improving the living environment. Urban municipalities, responsible for spatial and urban planning, have to prepare urban development strategies and can on this basis apply for integrated projects. Based on criteria presented in the PA, 11 urban municipalities are eligible for ITIs. Based on an agreement with the responsible ministry, urban municipalities will select projects and, if appropriately qualified, also execute and control the operations. CLLD: envisaged for EAFRD, EMFF, ERDF with a focus on rural areas throughout Slovenia. LAGs will be set up in areas with 10,000 to 150,000 inhabitants. ERDF will support LAGs in areas with above 150,000 inhabitants. A CLLD Coordination Committee with representatives from all funds will be set up. It will prepare a joint implementation (national) regulation and define all provisions, conditions, procedures and liabilities. macro-regional strategies: The establishment of cross-border functional areas has strategic importance for Slovenia. Aimed at establishing long-term territorial cohesion, the strengthening of functional links between border cities and the development of the Slovenian polycentric settlement system will also provide steady supply for inhabitants living in predominantly rural border areas. The contents common to all cross-border programs (with Italy, Austria, Hungary and Croatia) and to transnational programmes (Danube and Adriatic-Ionian region) are also based on the EUSAIR and EUSDR to a large degree. Details are provided in the PA and the strategic orientations related to the EUSDR are concentrated on TO3 and TO5, TO6, TO7.	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	The risk of poverty and/or social exclusion has been persistently increasing across Slovenia since the economic crisis. The material situation of the population has been rapidly deteriorating, which has manifested in the highest rate of material deprivation since 2007 (at 5.1%), reaching 6.7% in 2013. The gap between the two cohesion regions is significant. Unemployment in the cohesion region Zahodna Slovenija was under the national average in 2013, while it was above the national average in Vzhodna Slovenija, where 58.5% of all unemployed lived. Accordingly, 53% of the ESF flows into Vzhodna Slovenija and 63% of the ERDF. As over 86% of Slovenia's territory is in less favourable areas (of which 72% are hill or mountain regions), people living in these areas face difficulties in agricultural production. The EAFRD provides compensation payments for land cultivated in areas with natural and other handicaps and helps maintain agricultural activity, maintains population density and ensures a favourable income for the population in these areas. Integrated approaches are not developed in more detail.	Section 3, 3.1.5

26. Spain

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	ESI Funds in PA: Spanish PA describes the Thematic Objectives developed according to the Strategy 2020, from p.223 to p.249 of the Document. The Objectives described and pursued by Spain are in accordance with the CSR (see summary of the PA) and with the National Reform Programme for 2013, 2013, 2014. They additionally take into account the Recommendations of the Commission Position Paper. For the next Programming Period, Spain selected the all 10 TOs (TOs: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). TO 11 was not Programmed in the Spanish PA and will be covered by Funds allocated to Technical Assistance. For each TO, PA document details expected results, related Indicators and Funds.	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	From p.249 to p.252, PA Document presents the splitting of ESI Funding per TO and per Type of Fund (ESF, EAFDR; and EMFF Funds) and subsequently, Funds allocated to Specific Initiatives or Policies: Youth Employment Initiative, Climate Change Objectives, Territorial Cooperation and Technical Assistance. Spanish PA assumes ERDF and ESF will respectively amount for: 53,8 % of ERDF Funding ; ESF: 20,6 % of ESF Funding, 22,5 % of EAFRD: Funding and 3,1 % of EMFF Funding.	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	Spanish PA is clearly divided in four parts. First part includes socio-economic and territorial analysis, description of Thematic Objectives, and ex-ante evaluation, horizontal and general principles and Objectives for implementation. A second part details more precisely the measures for the implementation of the partnership principle. The Third part includes the analysis of Territorial development Instruments (CCLD, ITI, MRS, European Territorial Cooperation). A Fourth part is dedicated to Information and data systems related with PA implementation.	
How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	In Spain the Partnership Agreement elaboration process was coordinated by the General Directorate for Community Funds (Dirección General de Fondos Comunitarios (DGFC), Body depending from the Ministry of Economy and of Public Administrations. Main bodies involved in this process were: Public Administration Bodies (General, Regional and Local Administrations), Socio-economic Agents and Civil Society representatives. Specific measures were adopted to facilitate participation. A two phase consultation and association process was built on PA principles implementation. This was based firstly on information meetings and on inputs and recommendations recollection (on Horizontal and Transversal Objectives persecution; on mechanisms, procedures and resources mobilisation and on Funds implementation). In a second step consisted on a public consultation procedure, before the PA Document was submitted to the Commission. The PA summarises the agent's inputs on implementation of PA Principles and enhances main recommendations.	Section 1B, 1.5.1

Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives

Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The Spanish PA gives detailed description how Spain intends to achieve the Europe 2020 Objectives in the 2014-2020 programming period. The main challenges set up by Spain are related with the need to increment productivity and Competitiveness as well as Employment in Tax Consolidation and Restrictive Credit environments. The PA Document, describes from page 5 to page 231, the activities and measures to be carried out to alleviate these problems. For each Thematic Objective, it elaborates diagnosis (Based on a SWOT analysis,) and then sets intervention prepositions articulated in the Commission Position Paper Priorities. Results of the PA ex-ante evaluation are also presented and commented and taken into account for this exercise.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
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Implementation

What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Two main Coordination Areas were established by Spanish Authorities, articulating ERDF, ESF and EFAMP Funds. First area is the "intelligent and Integrated Growth" (Through competition for growth and employment). Second area is the "European Connecting Mechanisms" (Through Socio-economic, territorial and Social Cohesion and through Sustainable growth based on Natural Resources). The responsibilities have been attributed to specific Bodies, as follows: - A Committee for the Coordination of ESI Funds (that will also subsequently assume PA follow-up and high level evaluation) - An Evaluation Committee where ERDF, ESF Management Bodies, General State Administration and by Autonomous Communities, and the EU Commission are sitting. This Body will be in charge of OPs evaluation, methodologies adoption, evaluation and results diffusion. It will also have an important role on indicators management, selection and follow-up. - Programmes Follow-up Committees (Common Coordination and follow-up avoiding overlapping at the different Administration levels). - Communication networks (Network called "GERIP" and composed by people responsible for information at Regional level. - Thematic Networks based on Good practice learned from former Programming Periods). Seven Thematic Coordination Networks were set up (for ID &D; for Urban Initiatives; Environmental Bodies; for Equal Rights Policies; for Social Inclusion, National Rural Network and Spanish Network of Fishing Groups).	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The list of Ex-Ante Conditionalities applicable to Spain are detailed in the adopted PA version that shows all those that have not yet been fulfilled and are to be achieved in 2014. The General and Ex-Ante Conditionalities are monitored by the Committee for the Coordination of ESI Funds.	Section 2.3

Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	Since 2007 and in conformity with EU Regulations, Spanish Law (Law 11/ 2007 on Electronic Access), has put in place a data systems enabling electronic audit and storage. Some of the implemented measures are already compatible with the e-cohesion system. This systems is operated by ESI Funds Management Authorities and applies to Intermediary Bodies and Beneficiaries. New Regulations will update the existing functionalities to the 2020 Funds to cover Cohesion Fund, ERDF, ESF EAFRD and EMFF. The new system (called "Fondos 2020") will take into account new instruments such as ITIs, the articulation of Financing instruments, advanced payments, annual accounting etc. It will used by the Spanish Audit Authority (IGAE) as the main audit tool.	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	CLLD: After defining CLLD, its objectives an priorities, the Spanish PA explains how it will be used by ESI Funds in a compatible way with LEADER measures, in the framework of EAFRD and with ERDF and ESF Funding support. Intervention areas will be defined at Municipal level (either in low density Rural or Costal areas), or in higher density urban areas) and Local Action Groups will be introduced locally. ITIs: The PA Document details the various type of territories subject To CLLD. The new management instrument called ITI is described as a tools for territorial interventions in specific sub regional areas. PA lists 4 ITIs to be financed by the corresponding Operational Programmes: ITI Blue: ITI "Mar Menor" (Murcia); ITI Provincia de Cadiz; ITI Industrialisation of Extremadura. OP Managing Authorities, Regional or Sub Regional Authorities will be responsible for the ITI management. Adequate administrative capacity will be guaranteed for the financial management of this instrument. For the Programming 2014-2020 period, EAFRD will be structured following a National Programme supported by 17 Rural Development Programmes (PDR). For EMFF there will be a single OP, and for EAFDR each Autonomous Community will finance and manage the CLLD. CLLD involving Local Action Groups will take a multi-fund approach, a Single Fund approach or combine both. PA refer time tables and procedures applying to Local Action Groups selection (EAFRD) (p.8 to p.10 Doc 2). Territorial Cooperation: Territorial Cooperation Programmes to be developed by Spain will be coherent with Europe 2020 Strategy. Main Inter-territorial Cooperation Programmes, their management structures and synergies are detailed: - For Cross-border Cooperation, priority will be given to synergies creation in relation with Innovation and Technology Transfers together with the Natural Risks Management, the Protection and Conservation of Environment and the Promotion of Natural and Cultural Resources. PA lists and details main Cooperation Cross-border Cooperation Programmes: Spain-France and Andorra (POCTEFA); Spain-Portugal (POCTEP); Spain-Portugal (Madeira-Azores-Canarias). In the case of this last Ultra-peripheral Programme, the cooperation area will be extended to Cabo Verde, Senegal and Mauritania. - Transnational Cooperation Programmes will also be developed in different geographical areas: the SUDOE (South Occidental Europe - SUDOE), the Atlantic Space Programme, the Mediterranean Programme and a specific MAC Programme (Madeira, Azores, Canarias, in the Framework of the Cross border Programme).	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4

	- Inter-Regional cooperation will be addressed through a continued participation in INTERREG EUROPE URBACT³⁵, INTERACT³⁶ and ESPON³⁷. Transnational Programmes ((SUDOE), Atlantic Space and MAC Programme), will influence the Atlantic Strategy . An Action-Plan for a Maritime Strategy in the Atlantic Region will be implemented to foster the "Blue Economy".	
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	Spanish PA details the specific Strategy for intervention in Maritime areas an articulation with the Atlantic Strategy for sea basins adopted since 2011 by the Commission. A "Blue IT" will be implemented in Spain, providing in a single instrument the ESI Funds contributions and the Atlantic Strategy. PA explain that Blue ITI will apply to all Spanish coastal Atlantic Regions (Galicia, Asturias, Cantabria, Basque Country, Canary Islands and Andalucía) and then details its thematic priorities and Funding sources (ERDF, ERDF for Territorial Cooperation, ESF, FEAMP). This Strategy will be managed in Spain by the General Directorate for Community Funds in the role of Management Authority for Atlantic Space OP.	Section 3, 3.1.5

³⁵ The Interreg Europe programme financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) aims to improve the implementation of regional development policies and programmes, in particular programmes for Investment for Growth and Jobs and European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) programmes

³⁶ INTERACT supports territorial cooperation between Regions of the EU. The programme promotes cooperation as a tool for growth and change through policy development and strategic orientation, within territorial cooperation and beyond.

³⁷ The ESPON 2020 Programme aims at promoting and fostering a European territorial dimension in development and cooperation by providing evidence, knowledge transfer and policy learning to public authorities and other policy actors at all levels.

27. Sweden

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The Swedish PA covers ten thematic objectives, which are funded by the 4 ESI Funds in a spread-out manner. EAFRD funds nine thematic objectives, with one-thirds of funds going to climate change and environment. ERDF funds six thematic objectives, mainly SME competitiveness and research. ESF funds go to three thematic objectives, with half of the ESF funds going to employment. EMFF funds three thematic priorities. The contribution of each Fund to each chosen thematic objective is described clearly. However, the practical coordination of funds is not discussed. pages 54-105	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	The ERDF will be implemented through one national and eight regional operational programmes. There will be one RDP, one EMFF programme and one national OP for ESF and the extra allocation from the Youth employment Initiative (YEI). The ESF, EAFRD and EMFF programmes will have subordinated regional action plans. In addition, there will be one multi-fund programme for Community Lead Local Development (CLLD) which will be supported from ERDF and ESF. In 2014-2020 Sweden is allocated around EUR 0.94 billion for ERDF and EUR 0.74 billion for ESF. Additional EUR 1.76 billion (49% of the funding) will be devoted to EAFRD operations. The allocation for EMFF amounts to EUR 119.5 million. The ESI Funds finance ten thematic objectives, out of which "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives 16% of the funding. "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 14%, and "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" 14% of the total ESI funding. Detailed ESI funds' allocation can be found on page 106-107 of the PA (inserted into excel sheet 'Financials - them obj' and 'Financials - progs')	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The parts of the PA subject to Commission decision [Article 15(1)] cover pages 1-150 and Annexes I, II & III. The parts of PA not subject to Commission decision [Article 15(2)] cover pages 151-168. The quality of the latter part is slightly weaker. There are less details given on issues such as e-cohesion progress in EAFRD and EMFF, as well as the practical coordination/division of labour of funds in Northern Sweden where integrated approach will be used.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	There were two dialogue meetings and two hearings concerning the PA. A large number of actors from local, regional and national level participated. Written contributions were also received. Specific hearings were arranged for each OP. The programmes were drafted with inputs from and dialogue with partners. The main issues raised by partners are discussed in the PA. pages 107-114, Annex II (list of partners)	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The NRP 2014 recommendations were mainly related to non-ESI Funds covered issues (fiscal policy, private indebtedness, efficiency in the housing market). Only one NRP recommendation, measures to improve labour market participation among young people and vulnerable groups, was directly related to ESF. The PA development needs are structured around EU2020 objectives. Sweden has set ambitious targets for greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency. However, the ESI Funds financing does not reflect this as the funds are spread relatively evenly amongst the priorities. pages 1-62	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2
Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	There is a coordination group for the Funds, chaired by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth. The Funds are thematically concentrated to different thematic objectives. Where two or more Funds finance one objective, the demarcation lines between the Funds are spelled out. Day-to-day arrangements to ensure coordination and synergies are not spelled out. Day-to-day cooperation or synergies in specific issues are not discussed. The Swedish PA lists national innovation strategy, Horizon 2020, COSME, financial instruments, CAP, Connecting Europe Facility, Life, Kreativa Europa, Erasmus+, Asylum and migration fund, FEAD, and EaSI as funding instruments with potential synergies with the ESI Funds. However, no clear issues or areas of cooperation/synergy are mentioned, neither are practical coordination mechanisms. EIB is not discussed. pages 128-141	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	Sweden has fulfilled all the ex ante conditionalities. page 142 + annex XI page 187-242	Section 2.3

Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)).	For EAFRD there is already an electronic system for applications and administration of area-based measures. The system will be developed to include project and business support (and EMFF measures), starting in 2014 and finishing in 2016. ERDF and ESF applications, decisions, payment handling and reporting are already done through secure electronic means. pages 166 -168	Section 4
Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	There will be multi-fund CLLD (all four Funds, total funding EUR 251.8 million), operated through Leader. Whereas the Leader group can get financing from several funds, the 'one project one fund' principle will be used at project level. ESF will focus on employment and equality projects, EMFF on sustainable development of aquatic resources. EAFRD funding will be used in municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants, ESF and ERDF funding in the whole country. One regional ERDF OP, Västsverige, will function through ITIs. Three regional OPs (Stockholm 100%, Skåne-Blekinge 18% and Västsverige 5% of funding) will fund sustainable urban development projects. EU Strategy for Baltic Sea Region is discussed, but it is not clear how the integrated approach works in practice in terms of different Funds. pages 152-163	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	There is an integrated approach to develop two sparsely populated regions in North of Sweden, Upper Norrland and Middle Norrland. Facilitating work commute and quicker access to wider markets, including investments into important transport routes and broadband access, are vital for the development of the regions. There will also be targeted business support. It is not explained how exactly the integrated approach is done in practice through the different ESI Funds. From the text in section 1.2, as well as from Commission comments, it becomes clear that Sweden plans to use thematic objective 7 (promoting sustainable transport, ERDF funding only) only in these two regions. page 164-166	Section 3, 3.1.5

28. United Kingdom

General reflections		Relevant Part of the PA
How does the Partnership Agreement (PA) cover the 5 ESI Funds and the related coordination of these funds across the different policy areas?	The UK PA covers ten thematic objectives, which are funded by the 4 ESI Funds in a concentrated manner. ERDF funds nine objectives, mainly SME competitiveness and research. ESF finances three objectives, mainly education and LLL. EAFRD funds ten thematic objectives, with three-quarters of the money going to environment. EMFF funds go towards four thematic objectives. However, not all nations will fund all the ten thematic objectives. GIB will fund only thematic objectives 3, 4, 8, and 10. NI will fund thematic objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10. Scotland will fund 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, and 10. ENG and WAL will finance thematic objectives 1-10. The choice of thematic objectives is reasoned in the national chapters. The coordination between the funds across different policy areas is not discussed clearly. Part I, pages 77-81, 179-182, 235-238, 287-289, 324-328, 350-351	1.2 and 1.3
Give an overview on the programme architecture in the MS and an overview of the indicative financial allocation across the thematic objectives and the ESI funds.	ESI Funds will finance 17 OPs in the UK. There will be one UK-level EMFF programme, four RDPs (ENG, SCO, WAL, NI). There will be six ERDF OPs and six ESF OPs (West Wales and the Valleys, East Wales, SCO, NI, ENG, GIB). The funding of the OPs is described in the national chapters. In 2014-2020 the UK is allocated approximately EUR 5.8 billion of EAFRD and EUR 4.9 billion of ESF funding, including EUR 206 million for the Youth Employment Initiative and EUR 866 million for European Territorial Cooperation. An additional EUR 5.18 billion will be devoted to EAFRD. The EMFF funding amounts to some EUR 243 million. The ESI Funds finance ten thematic objectives, out of which "Preserving and protecting the environment and promoting resource efficiency" receives 26% of the funding. "Enhancing competitiveness of SMEs" receives 15%, and "Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning" 13% of the total ESI funding. Detailed ESI funds' allocation can be found on pages 82-83 of the PA (inserted into excel sheet 'Financials - them obj' and 'Financials - progs') Part I, pages 82-83, 183-185, 239-240, 290-291, 329-330, 352-353	1.4 (financial allocation is highlighted in the summary of the PA agreement)
How are the provisions divided between the two parts of the PA? Assessment of the quality of the part that is not subject to EC decision in comparison to the essential parts?	The PA has been published in two separate parts. The parts of the PA subject to Commission decision [Article 15(1)] cover Part I (358 pages). The parts of PA not subject to Commission decision [Article 15(2)] covers Part II (61 pages). The second part is more vague in details, especially in terms of coordination with other funds.	

How are the partnership principle and MLG (Article 5 of the CPR) included in the PA? Has there been a public consultation in the PA process?	The PA and the thematic objectives were negotiated between the UK national governments. There was no official public consultation of the PA itself at UK level, only in Scotland and Wales for their own parts. Coordination of ESI Funds interests across the UK's nations is overseen by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills on behalf of the UK Government. England: an informal written consultation was done in March 2012 on the priorities for ESI Funds. Afterwards, a 'Partnership Team' formed by the local government, voluntary and higher education sectors input external expertise in development of priorities for the ESI Funds and worked with stakeholders around England. RDP was designed in close cooperation with partners and stakeholders. Scotland: A Stakeholder Engagement Group was established early in 2012 and met regularly to review progress on all ESI Funds and the thematic objectives. Working groups with a broader range of stakeholders with direct involvement in particular themes were formed. Consultation on the Partnership Agreement was undertaken, in conjunction with the consultations for each OP, during May-July 2013 and again in December 2013-February 2014, as well as through road shows and the websites. 305 responses across both consultations were received. Wales: There were a number of Advisory Groups and expert work streams/ working groups, reflecting a full range of stakeholder interests from the public, private and third sectors. A full public consultation - 'Wales and the EU: Partnership for Jobs and Growth' and "Rural Development Plan 2014 – 2020: Next Steps" - was launched in January 2013 to seek views from partners on the Welsh Governments proposals for Structural Funds and the RDP. The consultation ran until 23 April 2013 with over 200 responses received across the sectors. Northern Ireland: A Consultative Partnership Group was established to help guide the preparation of the NI contribution to the UK Partnership Agreement; and the ERDF and ESF operational programmes. Gibraltar: The PA includes a list of partners and stakeholders consulted. Part I, pages 87-88, 186-187, 241-242, 292-294, 331-333, 354	Section 1B, 1.5.1
Alignment with EU 2020 and treaty-based objectives		
Assess the balance between thematic concentration (alignment with EU 2020), the specific needs of territories (objectives of ESI funds) and national reform programmes.	The NRP 2014 country-specific recommendations included fiscal balance, increasing housing supply, tackling youth unemployment, reducing poverty, financing of corporate sector and network infrastructure. Out of these recommendations, unemployment and poverty are included in the PA and OPs. The UK PA is linked to EU2020 targets - especially since ten out of the eleven thematic objectives are included in the PA, although the PA notes that also significant domestic resources are deployed to reach the targets. The territorial balance is kept through the devolved OPs, which take into account the territorial specificities.	Section 1A, 1.1 and 1.2

Implementation		
What arrangements are foreseen in the PA regarding the coordination and synergies between ESI funds, other Union or national funding instruments and the EIB?	Delivery of the ESI Funds is a devolved responsibility in the UK, except for the UK-wide EMFF programme. England: the ERDF, the ESF and part of the EAFRD will be folded into a single ESI Funds Growth Programme for England, with strategic leadership at local level provided by Local Enterprise Partnerships and partners. Complementarity with Horizon 2020, Erasmus+, Cosme, Creative Europe, Life+, Eures and EaSI is discussed. MAs will ensure coordination and alignment. Scotland: a single programme board oversaw the development of all OPs. All ESI Funds, including the EMFF, will share governance arrangements to ensure that on-going activity and performance is monitored and tracked against the goals set in the Partnership Agreement. Complementarity with Cosme, EaSI, Erasmus+, Life+ and Horizon 2020 is discussed but no details are given. Wales: There will be one joint Monitoring Committee covering the ESI funds. The Economic Prioritisation Framework, mapping existing investments aligned to opportunities for economic growth enables ESI funds to be focused synergistically on adding value to these investments. Within the MA, there will be specific thematic teams. Complementarity with Horizon 2020 is mentioned but no details are given. Northern Ireland: The coordinating committee chaired by the Department of Finance and Personnel will be responsible for promoting the strategic coordination and complementarity. Complementarity and coordination with other EU-funded actions is not described. Gibraltar: The EU Programmes Secretariat will manage all EU funded programmes. Part I, pages 100-104, 191-197, 245-247, 298-302, 337-339, 355-356	Section 2.1
State of play of the fulfilment of ex ante conditionalities (EAC) with a focus on general EAC. What challenges can be identified?	The Partnership Agreement will only cover EACs where they are solely met at the UK level. As none of the general EACs are fulfilled at the UK level they will only be addressed in the operational programmes. Part I, page 106	Section 2.3
Overview on the e-cohesion measures (arrangements Article 15.2(b)). (Include table of deadlines)	Each nation has its own IT systems. England: Open procurement process for the new IT system for ERDF and ESF will begin in 2014. The system will be developed throughout 2014 and be in place in 2015. Scotland: Work is underway to develop data management systems for delivering the EAFRD, ESF and ERDF programmes. The system should be ready by spring 2015. Wales: A robust IT system exists but it is enhanced to reflect the new legislative framework and to support new business processes. No timetable is mentioned. Northern Ireland: Design, procurement and supply of database by end of 2014. Gibraltar: enhancement of IT system to reflect the new legislative framework and to support new business processes by November 2014. PA part II, pages 9-10, 20-21, 31-32, 47-48, 55-56, 58-59	Section 4

Integrated approaches		
What arrangements are in the PA ensuring integrated approach to territorial development? Overview on the urban dimension, ITIs, CLLDs and links macro-regional strategies.	5% of the ERDF financing will be used for urban development. SCO will fund urban green infrastructure and smart city technology. The other nations have not specified the sustainable urban development objectives/targets. SCO plans two ITIs for areas with specific socio-economic needs, the Highlands and Islands and the South West of Scotland. ENG: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly will have an ITI in recognition of the unique geographic challenges faced and its status as a Less Developed Region. The English authorities are considering the use of ITI(s) (instead of a single priority axis) for implementation of sustainable urban development under Article 7 of the ERDF Regulation. NI, WAL and GIB will not use ITIs. CLLD will be used in ENG, SCO, WAL and NI in the delivery of EAFRD and EMFF. ERDF and ESF-funded CLLD will only be used in ENG. GIB will not use CLLD at all. Atlantic Strategy is the only macro-regional strategy discussed, but no concrete details on ensuring integrated approach are described. PA part II, pages 3-8, 11-18, 22-28, 33-41, 49-52, 57-58	Section 3, 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3 and 3.1.4
Is there an integrated approach for specific geographical areas or target groups? Special focus on the intended role of ERDF and ESF.	ENG, SCO, WAL and NI will tackle poverty and social exclusion through integrated measures. Several target groups have been identified (e.g. long-term unemployed, young people NEET, disabled), and alleviating ESF/ERDF actions have been described in each national chapter. The only region of the UK that falls within scope of the EU definition of severe and permanent demographic handicap is the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. These integrated measures will include business infrastructure support and community sustainability measures. PA part II, pages 8-9, 18-19, 28-30, 42-46, 53-54, 58	Section 3, 3.1.5

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