

**REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY
- VECTOR OF ROMANIAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN
EUROPEAN ECONOMY STRUCTURES**

DOCTORAL THESIS SUMMARY



Scientific coordinator:
Ph D Prof. **ION POHOAȚĂ**

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Domain: Economy

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Annex 1 - Specific Operational Programmes structure within the 2014 - 2020

Key Words

Regions, regionalization, regional development policy, disparities, regional policy instruments, operational programs, impact assessment methods, project management, South East region.

Introduction

One of the most important and heterogeneous European Union policies is represented by the regional development policy, its main objective being to reduce economic and social disparities between different regions of the EU Member States, with positive effects on important sectors of development such as environmental protection, employment of labor, education and training, agriculture, small and medium enterprises, transport, economic growth, etc

The need to implement regional policy in the European structures is based on a number of considerations such as inefficient allocation of revenues from territorial point of view, manifesting an inverse proportionality in terms of growth and unequal distribution of income, increased harmonization of the major changes to the economic framework in close connection with the difficulties of EU enlargement, improving labor exploitation, reducing unemployment in disadvantaged areas, exploiting the benefits of integration, reducing to the point of extinction the interregional disparities, evaluating the results of applying regional policy instruments on regional economies.

Quantifying the costs of adhesion is an important lever of Member States to support the advantages, cost - benefit analysis having a fundamental role in decision-making. Projects supported by the European Union have effects on companies that implement them, the stakeholders, but also the regions in which they are implemented. These investments are aimed at developing regions.

This study aims to clarify some conceptual and methodological assessment of the impact of structural and cohesion funds on the social and economic development at a national and regional level, recommendations aimed at bringing a contribution to improving the effectiveness of regional policy development and implementation.

At the same time, this study tries to capture the opportunity of the European financial aid, as a reply to the social and economical problems identified. It highlights the importance of Community financial support and capacity for restructuring the Romanian economy and the way of accessing funds, studying changes in economic and social development arising out of the use of structural instruments. An important perspective aimed at Romania's ability to use structural instruments and the ability to use experience gained in the pre and post adherence regarding the current system of Structural and Cohesion Funds.

The base of choosing this theme is the need for studies leading to obtain relevant results on the status, trends, evolution of microeconomic and macroeconomic indicators in the context of the current economy in order to obtain a complete and complex vision of regional development policy, establishing the deficiencies identified during the implementation of development programs, and to anticipate the next policy sketching and development. This study revives the concerns about allocative efficiency and impact assessment methods of structural and cohesion funds on the social and economic development at national and regional level recommendations aimed at bringing a contribution to improving the effectiveness of regional policy development and implementation.

The major objective identified by the scientific work is represented by the presentation of the current framework of EU regional development policy, the evolution over time future prospects and implications of this policy on regional competitiveness through the implementation of structural funds.

The major objective is achieved by fulfilling certain subsequent objectives such as:

- The presentation and clarification the basic concepts, theoretical aspects, studying the current debate in the specialty literature, methods of assessing the impact of EU-funded projects;

- Analyzing the opinions of project managers of EU funded projects in terms of implementation and impact of these projects on the Romanian economy;
- The study of European funds absorption at a national and regional level within 2007-2013;
- Quantifying the actual impact regional development policy had in Romania, as well as determining the role this policy had in the Southeast region using regional GDP, regional income, employment rate and unemployment rate investments at regional level etc as indicators;
- Identifying major deficiencies that negatively influence the management of European projects;
- Proposing solutions, designing the necessary measures to be undertaken and new challenges 2014 - 2020 in order to increase the absorption of Community funds in Romania.

Assumptions

The aim of any scientific endeavor is represented by the activity of testing the assumptions which substantiated his initiation, especially when the work combines theory with empirical research, which can lead to the validation or invalidation of working premises.

1. A first hypothesis is related to the conceptual definition of regional development because theorizing the concept as well as locating accurately the discipline process gives greater legitimacy.

2. A second hypothesis is linked to membership of a supranational structure like the European Union, an instigator aspect of economic growth.

3. A third hypothesis starts from the premise that the more developed regions are and a higher level of competitiveness attract the most investments from European support and their impact is more streamlined.

4. The financial aid assembly from the European Union in Romania and other states is complicated and sophisticated.

5. The fifth hypothesis addresses the boundaries in establishing and classifying regions at the European Union level, and also the problem of territorial reorganization in Romania.

6. Although the rate of EU funds absorption is modest, grant funds are preferred to bank loans which are difficult to obtain and have an interest-bearing rates.

7. Most projects submitted and approved are usually concentrated around the more developed regions namely the Bucharest - Ilfov and West area. As a starting point I propose to study the Regional Operational Program since it achieved the highest degree of absorption being The Best Managed Operational Program in Romania.

8. Regarding the impact of EU funded projects on regional development I chose as a study case the Cost Benefit Analysis project evaluation method and the estimation of an EU-funded project desirability.

9. Another hypothesis is based on the study of disparities in identification and analysis of indices of disparity by the example of the South East.

10. The last hypothesis and otherwise very important subject is to improve government capacity to manage EU funds more efficiently.

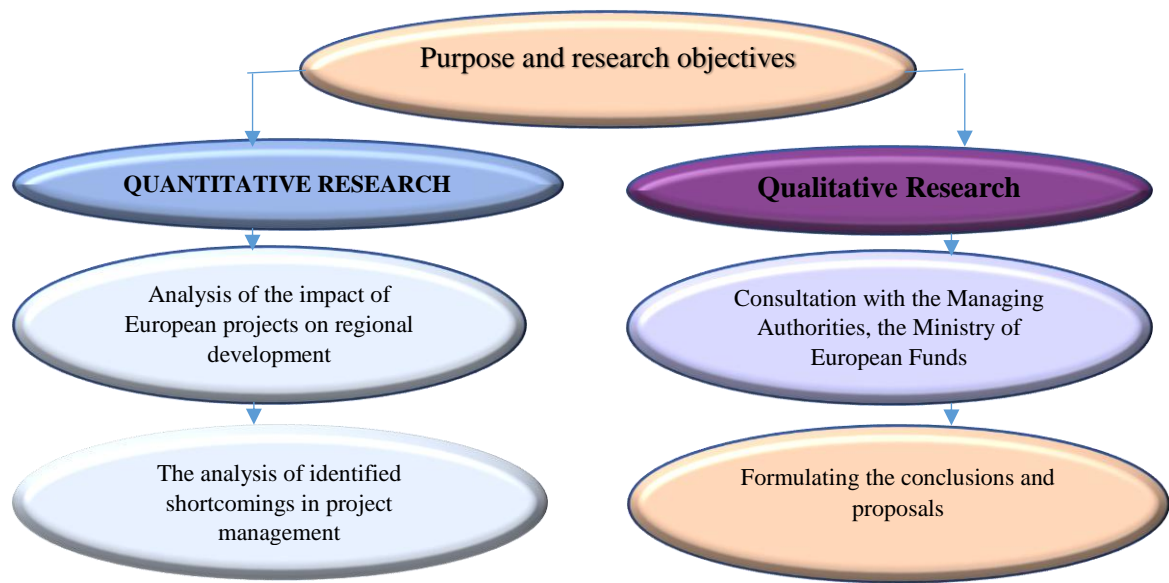
Research methodology

The theme proposed for this research initiative is part of the economic theory and applicability as a result of the impact assessment, which is why work structure looming in a theoretical part and a part devoted to a case study at a microeconomic level. PhD thesis scientific support is provided through methods, techniques, procedures and tools related to the subject and the type of research.

To meet the objectives of this doctoral thesis I used qualitative and quantitative research methods, which are complementary and useful in order to improve management of projects and increase the impact of EU funds on the development of national and regional from an economical and social point of view.

The qualitative study as part of the work has features which start from the effect to cause because of the fact that the research methodology documentation emerges from, data collection, observation, historical analysis, systematization of sources and data processing that underpinned the development of theoretical concepts.

Figure 1.1. Research Methodology



Source: Personal contribution

In order to obtain the data needed for the analysis I used specialized books published within my country and abroad; articles published in international databases and publications of national and international institutions; data transmitted by the management authorities of the ministries managing structural and cohesion funds and documents their implementation framework for 2007-2013; statistical publications of the Romanian National Institute of Statistics and Eurostat, and their online databases; progress reports and evaluation for operational programs concerned; database Ministry of European Funds on projects contracted in the period 1.01.2007 - 31.12.2014.

As a quantitative / empirical research method to test the hypotheses I have chosen instruments drawn graphs, tables and statistical calculations. Referring to the case studies were used method factor analysis (analysis of the main components - linear regression multiple) for measuring absorption and method of analysis of performance indicators of investment projects necessary to identify how all the main indicators of economic efficiency -financial act on potential investment financing. Methodologies were used in financial analysis or cost-benefit analysis with all its components: financial analysis, economic analysis, sensitivity analysis and risk analysis in order to grasp the impact of European funds on growth.

Making an empirical analysis on the impact of European funds on economic and social development nationally and in the region of Southeast includes: exposing the ideas of project managers, study the impact of implementing the projects, establishing methods used to analyze the impact, finding deficiencies project management welcomes the proposal of recommendations, establishing tools that could improve the impact of projects on the basis of expertise in the field.

Personal contributions are present on field research throughout the scientific paper. Thus, I aimed to clarify conceptual issues addressed, identifying the main theories on economic growth in line with the major objectives and priorities of regional development policy by using a considerable volume of data.

The work is rationally structured, and covers five chapters, preceded by introductions and conclusions completely correlated with the subject and the objective proposed.

Chapter I

Regionalism, regionalization and regional development policies

The first chapter of the thesis includes concepts, events, advantages versus regionalization limits, new approaches to regional policy and regional policy. This chapter highlights regional imbalances in the development potential of the regions to produce and sell goods and services and thus the potential for income population. The first part of the chapter presents the concepts of regionalization and analyze the evolution of this process in terms of time, giving the determinants and implications for global economic development. After a brief overview of the main economic integration organizations at continental level were studied trade policies and practices of key blocks in the global economy integration: EU, NAFTA, APEC, etc. with the main characteristics of each group.

Regionalism and regionalization depict changes at a regional level, being interdependent. The only difference is that regionalism as a concept discovered in exposures political lead to federation (a system space based on consolidating various autonomous states with a similar history and culture in an unique organization status) and regionalization is an administrative process that sets out new administrative units in order to establish areas of cooperation.

According to some theories, regional development represents the potential of regions to produce and sell goods and services, and thus the potential of population for income. A particularly important concern for regional development is reflected in the metrics, the most representative being: the total output of the region to quantify the total gross production of a region, the region's GDP and NDP, output / employed person, output / capita. Using these measures of regional development dynamics is extremely useful because their selection is correlated with the objective quantification and conditions the development of different results on the current state of regional disparities.

The contradiction between economic growth at the country level and reduce the gaps between regions is one of the most significant confusion in regional development. How to support the convergence with other Member States but at the same time to argue and reduce regional disparities?

In overview the regional policy objectives can be reduced to:

- maximizing economic growth at the country level (efficiency);
- reducing the gaps between regions (equity).

Why should we worry about the problem of disparities? There are scholars who argue that the development gap between different regions appear as the economy grows, and the causes increasing regional disparities are the same as those induced growth. These gaps represents the price paid in order for a state to be able to develop.

I believe that the best approach in order to support a policy of reducing the gaps between regions is that the population is concerned about the disparities. Most cultures and religions of the world mentioned provisions relating to disparities.

Another argument is that the inter-regional social economic inequalities reproduce over time.

Last but not least disparities may have an adverse impact on productive investment and on labor force. Different potential to invest in capital and labor in effect on the degree of differentiation of incomes. The inequalities are greater, the needy citizens discouraging economic growth, supporting the development raising the costs in developed regions.

Selecting indicators for quantifying regional development (gross domestic product of the region's total production, employment of labor, etc.) must be correlated with objective measurement to drive to draw conclusions in the actual context of regional disparities.

However, we should consider other indicators (standard of living, infrastructure, etc.) to quantify inequality of regional development to ensure progress of a region.

Expanding regional trading blocs may cause diminishing the authority of the World Trade Organization, because they are deviations from rules, regulations and principles of trade liberalization.

However, no sanctions are provided for the organization of regional blocks that do not comply with WTO provisions relating to tariff and non tariff imposition.

Regional development and competitiveness components are interdependent in close relation with local and national circumstances, with specific regional policy and macroeconomic policy, mentors and the correspondence with the phenomena that occur in national and global context. In order to ensure the success of regional policy must take into account the macroeconomic parameters: solid infrastructure, diminished degree of regulations, massive investment in education and research, a stable currency, tax system ordered on the level and structure of taxes, social climate stable mobilization training, management and control imbalances.

Chapter II

European Union regional policy

The second chapter reflects regional imbalances at a Community level, a main component of the regional policy dedicated to Romania. This chapter is divided into several subsections: regional construction, objectives and principles of regional development policy, regional development stages, regional development in the context of international coordination structure, euro and cross-border cooperation. The major objective of this chapter is to shade Fundamentals and characteristics on the stages and elements of the trend of development of EU regional development policy. Regional development can be defined as a dynamic phenomenon in order to reduce social disparities and economic development at the local level while simultaneously streamlining its potential. They are highlighted current principles and objectives of regional development policy, meanings and dimensions of the *acquis communautaire* whose assimilation was a condition of EU accession sine qua none of any new candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe.

This policy is one of the most recent Community policies, making their appearance at the same time conducting the enlargement process and is responsible for directing resources towards disadvantaged regions, its implementation is monitored to ensure efficient use of funds, application of effective measures at Community level policy coordination as a Member State actions can impact others.

According to some authors regionalism certainly represents the present and future evolution at European level, being considered as an expression of disagreement event where citizens from culturally found elsewhere in than in the historical belonging. Since there is a statement established by law the concept of region is difficult for a clear explanation of that concept, this is largely due to different perceptions and particular features of the Member. Regional development address all the challenges occurring at national or European level, the effects of the reorganization, the ultimate goal regarding economic and social cohesion, mitigating intra- and inter regional disparities.

According to Jozsef Benedek, there are several ways of characterizing regionalization: regionalization symbolic level informal spiritual group and individual according to the anatomical and physiological regionalization normative formal the regionalization institutional and address the concerns of states to distribute territory Administratively positive scientific and regionalization, which is the method of dividing the territory in accordance with economic, cultural, political, social, etc. Also in Jozsef Benedek's opinion, there are three levels of regions: micro, meso and macro. At the micro level we can distinguish small regional entities, undifferentiated unit - regionalization symbolic informal meso level is differentiated level, including continental and subcontinental entities, state, administrative units - regionalization normative-formal and macro level comprises global geographic establishments, economical and political - positive scientific regionalization.

One can talk about a growing imbalance between Member States emphasized the northern and southern Member States, which starts to lose confidence in the European Union. The boundary between the West and the East has become history, the true political Geographical actually lead to other truths

and divisions in the economic, social, political, cultural sedimented in terms of competitiveness, quality, accuracy, another configuration geopolitical Europe is the Nordic model of those who are able and popular southern periphery of those who are unable, with discrepancies and sensitivity.

The inequalities in terms of unemployment, demographic, human potential, infrastructure, investment in research and development, renewable energy, etc., between northern countries and southern countries of the EU are much higher than the differences between non euro-zone countries. Economic differences between Northern and Southern Europe is mainly due to underdeveloped infrastructure, even if financial difficulties were resolved. In Southern Europe prevails the evolution of unemployment, corruption and poverty, and in Northern Europe economic growth, being noticed in especially competitiveness discrepancies.

Starting from the particularities of founding regional trading blocs as an important feature of international relations, it is estimated that the effect of regional integration on all states regardless of whether they are member states or not depends on the type of agreement (free trade area, customs union or market Community) and the degree of freedom of intra-regional trade.

Many researchers are trying to prove that there is a big problem in terms of legal treaties border cooperation between regional or local authorities subordinate to different states, due to border agreements concluded between local authorities in different countries, have not been validated by the end of this effect of a treaty between states. The notion of Euroregion is defined as a shorthand for the concept of European regional, and that type of collaboration within international, who has been present in the European having as the main foundation collaboration of civil society and achieve economic benefits, social policy and common because such the future of Europe is a Europe of the regions concerned with economic, social, political and military worldwide.

The issue of preserving the 28 member states is more important than the temptation of sketching the outdated geographical, cultural, economic, social and political territories and intangible.

There are studies that questioned the administrative reorganization of the territory in the case of Romania, on the assumption that outside "local" and the "county" might establish a level "regional" process determining improvement of territorial administrative organization, preserving the two-tier administrative structure, but counties are organized into larger administrative units, such as the current development regions, regardless of the name "counties", "regions" or "provinces". At the political level, in terms of absorption of European funds, interest has become particularly important at national and regional level, particularly where they consider a reorganization at the local level based on objective, scientific determined, measurable, common to all general and administrative territorial units of the same level, which excludes subjective assessments, interventions, etc.

Chapter III

Instruments and programs for regional development

This chapter highlights the operation of tools and regional development programs and how they are fulfilled. Regional development is addressed in broader circumstances of ensuring a stable macroeconomic policy is complemented by horizontal in order to ensure a favorable environment for economic and social development. This process is ensured by developing programmatic planning documents Structural Fund assistance in the pre and post. The study undertakes translating the pre-accession funds after Romania joined trying to evidence the consequences and potential. Study of the main objectives of operational programs and priority axes and key areas of intervention has allowed a tabloid on financing opportunities at the macroeconomic level, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and challenges related to absorption of structural funds in 2014-2020.

Among the fundamental instruments of regional policy of the European Union are notable structural funds, cohesion financial instruments, financial instruments of the European Investment Bank, Community Initiatives.

Following the comments made, the European Union found that the major instrument for supporting regional programs is Regional Development Fund (RDF) established at national and / or regional level. Co-financing or implementing cooperation programs are provided from government, private and international sources. Potential sources of FDR are participating in the formation of a central government, local budgets of the regions, and private sector bodies / international institutions. Share of the establishment FDR is varied in the first phase of implementation framework - be the major contributor to the national government. FDR provides useful levers to ensure local economic development, supporting programs and projects clearly defined and identified on the basis of specific procedures.

The implementation of regional policy is based on the Structural Funds considered to be the most valuable instruments with the help of contributions from Member States, their relative economic strength. European Commission outlines the main directions of the regional policy objectives for each stage of programming. Member States formulate regional development multiannual programs able to attract financing by means of Structural Instruments.

Structural and Cohesion Funds are financial instruments through which the European Union intervenes to help Member States to reduce economic disparities, social interregional. Structural Funds and implementation procedures have the concentration principles (collaboration, coherence and internal programming), programming, partnership, additionality (the contribution of Member States to financial assistance) and monitoring and control (responsibility of the Member States).

Operational Programmes (OPs) are regional and sectoral policy documents approved by the European Commission developed by each member country with a series of targets financial support from the Structural Instruments. The financial support received as a member by Romania from the European Union in order to promote economic growth and development consisted of pre-accession instruments (until 2009), Transition Facility (until 2010), the structural instruments cohesion and complementary funds (Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy). Program implementation of cohesion policy covered the period 2000 - 2020 of 3 ranges: from 2000 to 2006, 2007-2013 and 2014-2020.

In Romania, the Development Plan 2007 - 2013 was intended mainly to eliminate inequalities in economic and social development of Romania and other member states of the European Union with the following objectives: raising the standard of living, productive investment, public investment in infrastructure, environmental quality, employment, sustainable integration in the labor market.

Chapter IV

Methods of evaluating the impact of Structural Instruments

The fourth chapter examines methods for evaluating the impact of Structural Instruments at a macroeconomic and microeconomic level. Establishing strategies to attract European funding through the Structural Funds and Cohesion is imperative to be the most valuable interests of key stakeholders in the context of increasing real and nominal convergence and reducing the effects of the international financial crisis level of Romania.

According to some authors, the assessment is to systematize information on the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs in order to be used by stakeholders to reduce deficiencies, increasing the effectiveness and optimum decision on those programs. Creating macroeconomic models took as a starting point type connection aggregate macroeconomic established between GDP or GNP and other external factors. Over time there has been an increase in the number of models applied and the number of variables used.

At the EU level, the regulatory bodies responsible for managing Community funds have developed and improved macroeconomic assessment models based on systems that interrelate with current data on development policies. The institutions responsible for management of EU funds in the EU have designed and implemented macroeconomic models based assessment systems. Macroeconomic models are mathematical tools designed to address the reality of the economy, calibrated on a blend of assumptions and techniques. Extrapolation superior to the use of these models has been driven by the spread of information and communication technology (ICT), which resulted in improving tools for quantifying the variables and improvement potential and speed of data processing.

Various macroeconomic models were studied, impact assessment of Structural Instruments on sustainable development such as HERMIN model, HEROM, ECOMOD The QUEST model. These models take into account historical data for long periods of time and have role models to compose configurations tailored development restructured. Macroeconomic models take into account changes made in social and economic whole. These models in Evidence remove their ability to conceive using systems development based on statistical information in order to determine if and to what extent the projects and programs have been implemented as intended and whether they have achieved their objectives.

Based on growth theory, the model HERMIN study impact a broad horizon of time of Cohesion Policy in the Member States, starting from the basic idea that technical progress is determined by external factors being expelled control economic policy are therefore difficult to study long-term effects in the context of accepting the possibility of increasing the productivity of factors. The Quest's main aim to study long-term effects of the convergence criteria of Maastricht on economic growth and has been designed to simulate and study the changes of macroeconomic induced by European integration including: uniform VAT reforms of taxes, reducing spending government etc.

The consequences of using economic models to estimate effectiveness are inconclusive macroeconomic objectives of Cohesion Policy, thus demonstrating their ability to use statistical data and process statistical series based on econometric tools. The benefits of using macroeconomic models is to offer the possibility of estimating costs and benefits at the sectoral level, the social and economic global level, may be separately analyzed several institutional and economic sectors and the effects of economic policies.

The deficiency of these models is the necessity for high volume and high quality database, assumptions and variables difficult validated because most parameters depend on the amount of resources used. The limits of these models should be viewed with caution, especially in the Romanian economy, where statistics are insufficient or inappropriate econometric evaluation, given the specificity of the transition period and the interval reduced the time series for essential variables such as those relating to capital and types investments.

At a microeconomic level the evaluation method used in projects and programs financed from structural funds is the cost-benefit analysis, which consists of comparing costs and benefits, risk assessment and sensitivity analysis. As a tool for analyzing performance indicators of investment projects, cost-benefit analysis is a quantitative method to estimate the feasibility of a project based on evaluation of the costs and future benefits brought by the implementation of a project. Include impact assessment analysis of the results arising from a project, and the knowledge acquired through impact assessment can improve the results of projects under implementation or future projects.

Frenchman Jules Dupuit argued feasibility of public investments by using the model type analysis cost - benefit. The purpose of cost-benefit analysis is to achieve a rational allocation of resources, to an extent of which a project or program provides maximum benefits with minimal investment / costs. Sven Ove Hansson Swedish researcher in "Philosophical Problems in Cost - Benefit Analysis" is largely philosophical problems affecting the practical performance of the method.

Cost-Benefit analysis is based on a cost-forecast profit structured on a limited number of indicators holding into account the influence of the time factor. This analysis reporting of costs to benefits derive the economic and financial performance, and sensitivity analysis and risk assessment is the most commonly used method of assessing the level of projects and programs financed from

structural funds. Cost-benefit analysis is a tool that is commonly used in the utilitarian school of thought. For utilitarians, the consequence of an action can be considered ethical if it generates more good than harm or more revenue or costs. As business ethics, utilitarianism encourage efficiency and long-term stability of economic activity, productivity and maximize profit, boosts economic performance, leading to the assessment of cost-benefit analysis concept.

The main purpose of cost-benefit analysis is to allocate resources rationally, quantifying the contribution of a project or a program. This analysis ensures maximum benefits with minimal investment otherwise helping the investment decisions. In evaluating a project must take into account the fact that there are intangible costs and benefits which can not always be quantified.

Cost-benefit analysis should assess both the costs and benefits expressed in financial terms and the monetary and non-quantifiable. The impact is evaluated according to certain predetermined targets. By evaluating a project against microeconomic indicators, CBA can assess the extent to which they comply with specific macroeconomic objectives.

In this sense, I have conducted a case study in the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013, Priority 4 "Supporting local and regional business environment"; Area of Intervention 4.1 "Development of sustainable business support structures of regional and local importance".

Cost-benefit analysis was based on the working document 'Guidance on the methodology for cost-benefit analysis' of the EC and the Guide to cost-benefit analysis of investment projects. The purpose of this analysis was to determine the extent to which the proposed project contributes to the development policy of the county of Constanta in the regional context and national level, by improving the business environment, attract investment and enhance competitiveness of the region and determine the extent to which the proposed project needs co-financing to be financially viable.

From this case study I have showed that investment is timely. The effects are direct and concern: positive influence on the local community (local community will benefit from the collection of taxes due to the implementation of this investment), reducing disparities social rural-urban and local community will benefit from the absorption of labor (providing new jobs during project implementation for the local population).

Chapter V

The impact of structural and cohesion funds on the Romanian economy

Chapter Five provides an analysis of the absorption rate of EU funds in 2007-2013, the comparative approach to the study of the impact of Structural Funds between Romania and the European Union on the convergence criteria. Also in this chapter it is presented the report of implementation of ROP, a brief analysis of the South - East Region and new challenges within 2014 - 2020 on absorption of Structural Instruments in Romania. It was analyzed and regional distribution capacity of absorption of financial support in Romania, especially in the Southeast region. Quantifying the absorption was done through multiple linear regression, using specialized software SPSS.

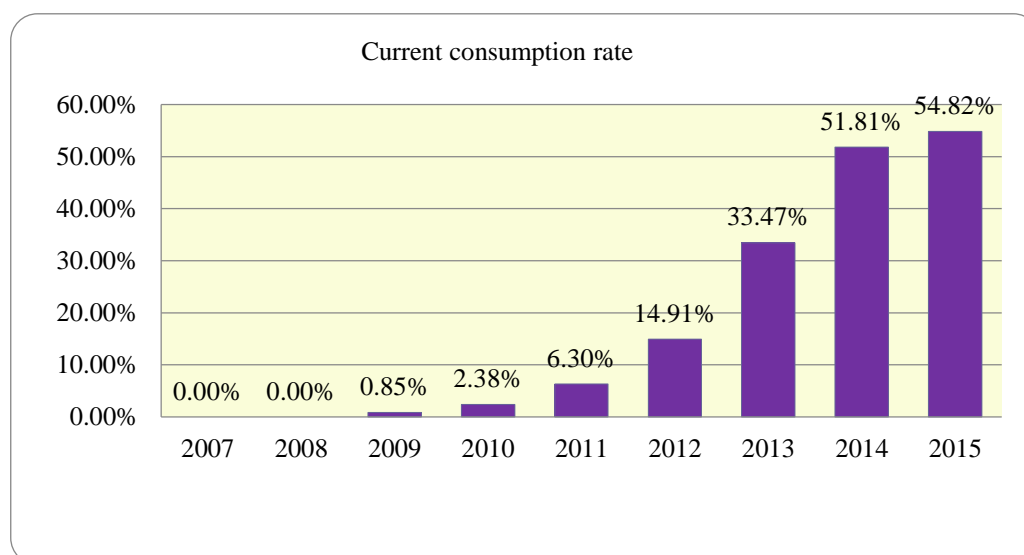
The last part of the study captures some of the characteristics of the Romanian economy in terms of competitiveness criteria formulated by specialists and international economic organizations, examines how Romania has failed after a decade and a half of transition to a market economy to effectively integrate the new regional economy and global and due to the benefits of regionalization and the steps that has to be taken in this direction.

The impact concept aims at the overall benefits of a project on a larger number of individuals than the main beneficiaries of a particular department, regional or national level. Ex-post evaluation study the impact of programs to the needs identified by reporting programs and show whether the positive effects are sustainable after program implementation. Loss of opportunities for achieving the objectives of

economic competitiveness, creation of jobs and the efficient use of human resources, using partial and ineffective funds for SMEs involves maintaining economic competitiveness reduced, lack of jobs and the continuation of labor migration work.

In terms of the real convergence, estimated by the differences from the EU average GDP / capita expressed in purchasing power standard, Romania has progressed significantly in the last two years, hovering now at about 54% of the average UE28 compared 52.9% in 2012 and 51.2% in 2011.

Figure 5.1 - Current consumption rate between 2007-2015



Source : Personal contribution

The internal absorption rate of European funds is assessed against two indicators, namely: domestic payments made by MAs to beneficiaries (funds sent in advance to start projects and reimbursements for expenses incurred) with respect to European allocations 2007-2013 (national plan absorption).

Table 5.1. – Project status on 31.07.2015

Submitted Project	45.174
Contracts signed	15.534
Domestic beneficiary payments	58,94% (2007-2013)
Payments reimbursed by the E.C. (total)	62,17% (2007-2013)
Current absorption rate	54,82% (2007-2013)

Source:: <http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/>

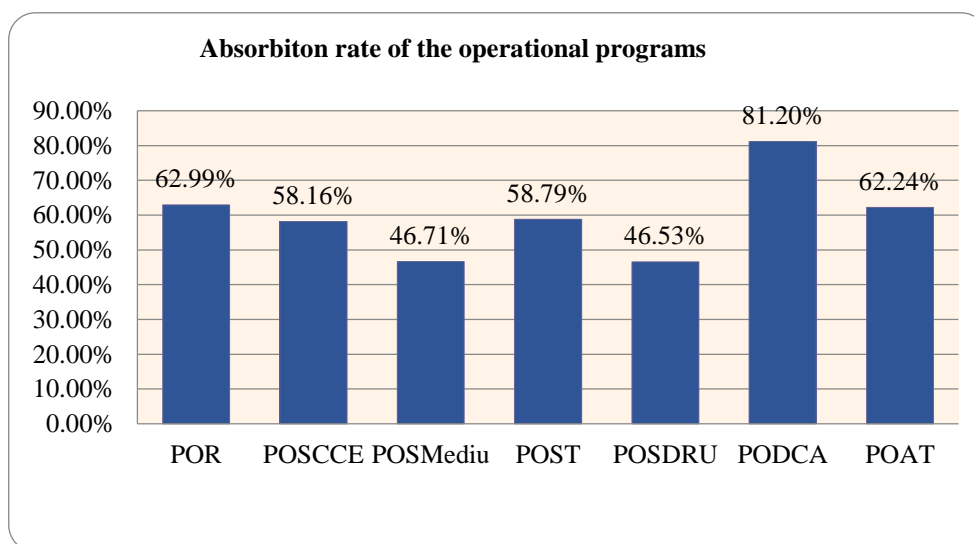
Absorption of European funds for Romania represents a chance to recover from the economic and social disparities to become a competitive country compared with the rest of EU Member States. Romania has on 31.12.2015, approved 96 major projects (about 12.22 billion euros) by the EC 70 the environment; 24 transport; 2 on Economic Competitiveness - research and the information society.

Some of the main reason for the low rate of absorption of financial resources are determined by the lack of a coherent vision in the long term the authorities, inadequate resources for co-financing, low administrative capacity at central and local level, lack of institutional coordination failures Public Partnerships -private and a low degree of qualification of human resources.

Studying the cause due to failure of some projects through desk research, analyzing audit reports or concerning irregularities discussions with beneficiaries, auditors and project officers, can thus identify difficulties and can configure the assumptions to be tested on the issues

identified. Quantifying the absorption was performed using multiple linear regression through specialized software SPSS. The first factorial axis shows a positive correlation between all variables: the budget allocated to projects submitted, approved projects, contracted projects, payments to beneficiaries. We have no negative correlation.

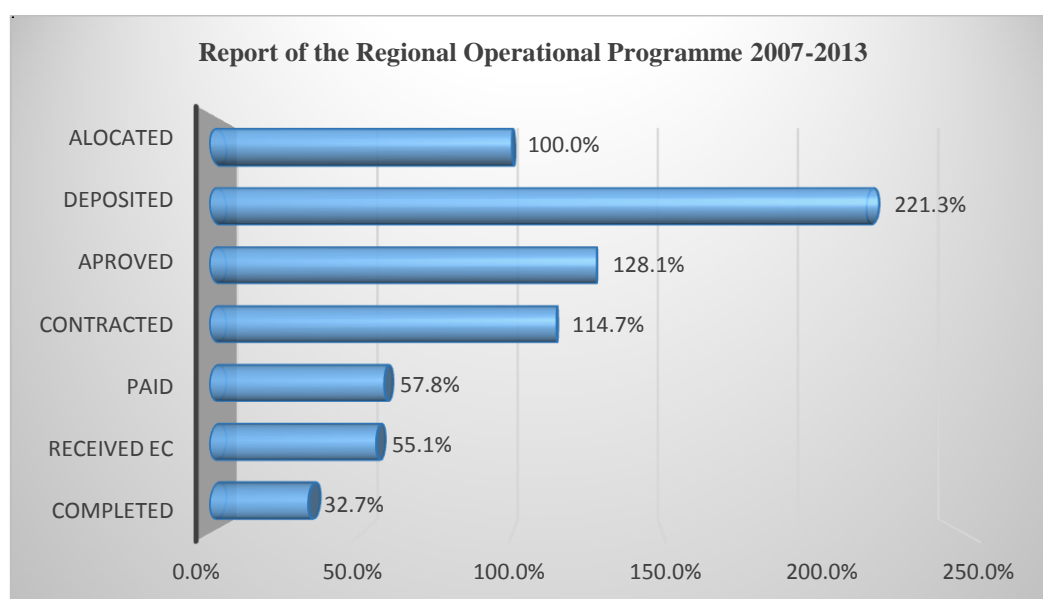
Figure 5.2 – Absorbition rate of the operational programs



Source : Personal contribution

This chapter is an implementation report of the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013. The value of EU funds from the European Regional Development Fund ROP for 2007-2013 was EUR 3,966,021,762. Through the implementation of 2,027 projects completed by 31 December 2013 have created 9739 jobs approximately 64.9% of the total target indicator program proposed for the creation of new jobs.

Figure 5.3 - POR implementation status



Source: Report of the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013

POR implementation status on 31.12.2013 according to data from the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration, is as follows: total allocation of ROP is 4.66 billion euros, of which the value is 3.96 billion euros ERDF, 8.595 requests secured financing totaling 13.23 billion euros, of which 8.06 billion Euro represent the contribution of ERDF (203.4% of the ROP ERDF allocation) being approved 4128 applications for funding totaling 7.26 billion euros contribution ERDF represent 4.48 billion euros (112.9%). 3694 were signed financing agreements totaling 6.68 billion euros, of which 4.15 billion euros represent ERDF contribution (104.7%).

The study report on the differences between the region's most developed and least developed regions in terms of GDP / capita shows a steady increase of up to 1: 4 in the period up to 2008, followed by some stagnation in the range 1: 3.8 to 1: 3.9 in the period after 2008 due to the global financial and economic crisis on regional economies manifested after 2008 in Romania. During the period July 2007 - December 31, 2013 Pre-financing granted to beneficiaries of grant contracts signed MAROP was Euro 553 million, representing over 1/4 of total payments made to beneficiaries, of which 45% for contratele signed to finance road infrastructure projects. The largest volume of payments from Community funds (ERDF) were performed in the North East region, of which more than 50% for road infrastructure projects and the urban development.

The main weaknesses identified in ROP were reduced degree of attractiveness of some categories of projects proposed for funding, imposing correlation with the strategies and projects implemented by other institutions, difficulties in guaranteeing amounts to cover their own contribution for private beneficiaries, the absence financial flows in order to implement the public beneficiaries of projects financed from EU funds, difficulties identified MAROP in public procurement proceedings on the provision of technical and financial evaluation of project applications under the priority axes 1 to 5 etc

It was further conducted in a study based on capacity and distribution absorption of financial support in Southeast region. Counties ingredients are Braila, Buzau, Constanta, Galati, Tulcea and Vrancea.

Regional Development Agency Development Region Southeast (ADRs) aims at regional development by creating and maintaining institutional partnerships intra-regional, inter-regional and international. Headquarters Regional Development Agency South East is in city of Braila.

In the South – Eastern region stands accumulation gaps in industrial and tertiary activities (Brăila - Galați; Constanța - Năvodari), complex industrial centers, seaside, Delta and areas of crops and vines (Buzau, Focsani). The economy of this region is made up of sectors such as agriculture, trade, tourism and services, port activity and shipping, and industries developed in the '65 and '70s of the last century. The region is a region with a share of agricultural employment in 2007 of 31.6%. Industry and construction have 28.3% and services 40.1%. Agriculture, industry, services-based tourism potential of the region, the Romanian seaside, the Danube Delta, and develop other types of activities, such as computer and related activities, banking and insurance, etc., making a contribution to building regional economic growth.

The significant gaps in development between the industrialized areas of Constanta, Galati and Braila and areas which exploit local resources, such as the counties of Buzau, Focsani, Tulcea. A strong development gap between urban and rural areas. In rural development deficiencies are due to shortcomings of infrastructure facilities and migration of young people in urban areas or abroad. At the end of 2013, the Regional Operational Programme is financed Region Southeast, namely the counties of Braila, Buzau, Constanta, Galati, Tulcea and Vrancea, 417 projects worth over 513 million euros, representing about 96% the amount allocated to the region, ie EUR 534.82 million.

According to the list of European projects, accessed and implemented by the end of last year, the Development Region Southeast Regional Operational Programme, Constanta County stands out with 131 projects in 417, Galati 65, Buzau 64, Vrancea 59, Braila 49 and Tulcea 44 projects implemented. Of the 131 projects already completed 74 Constanta County, the other being in the implementation phase.

From this analysis, it is noted that the South-East region fails to advance the development gap relative to the national average, the region is unevenly developed, like Constanta and Galati counties

than in other counties in the region and due to lower demographic fi, recording a decline in educational and health systems.

The main relevant differences are dependent on the quality of the environment, the differential income, size and variety of the business environment, infrastructure, workforce training, the Gross National Product (GNP), the level of technological equipment etc. These aspects of solidarity is based on instruments defined as "structural instruments", which consist of funds used in order to meet the objectives aimed at alleviating disparities between regions. In these circumstances, the policy of economic and social cohesion lies in a pool of targeted measures to mitigate development disparities between regions and harmonize living standards of the population through initiatives targeted at developing regional competitiveness, create new jobs.

An important part of the funds can not be raised at national level and return to the EU budget, with the risk that our country has become a net contributor (to provide more money to the EU budget than it receives) and even if you are absorbed in lack of coherent strategies, their impact on the country's development and reduce regional asymmetries to be lower than targeted

The main reason for the beneficiaries waive financing is represented by the difficulties in the contribution required to cover eligible costs and ineligible project, due to tighter credit conditions in the financial market amid the degradation of national economic context determined by the effects of the global economic and financial crisis.

The measures taken to counteract these deficiencies were the reallocation of funds from sectors less attractive to sectors with additional requests to the initial allocation, organization of coordination meetings between the parties to correlate different interventions, reducing private beneficiaries, the establishment of a mechanism relating to settlement payment applications to ensure financial flows needed to implement projects with public beneficiaries, the acquisition of technical and financial evaluation services by IBs etc.

Shortcomings structural funds absorbtion rate low and its causes have led to a series of controversies and discussions in all environments, materialized in the development of several studies that highlight the existence of obstacles, described in official reports submitted by the European Commission. One of the issues considered significant and necessary to be thorough program evaluations and invoked is the lack of consistency of the legal framework that allows fast operation, efficient and effective management and control system implemented in Romania.

The failure of the current regional development policies of the current organizational structure and institutional instruments, it is necessary to reorganize administrative-territorial optimization of regional development to increase capacity to absorb EU funds.

The current development regions are ineffective imbalances is increasing the need for new laws, new institutional structures, new regions administrative-territorial decision makers. In order to establish new regions would be considered criteria like historical, cultural, demographic, economic and social efficiency, efficient management of resources, proximity levels of development of the regions.

The study based on subjective observation of developments at inter and intra-imbalances in Romania, the work tries to capture the effect on regional development policy implementation and the differences between them. What is the starting point of regional imbalances? What is the dynamic over time? That was how regional planning policy to reduce these gaps? What is the current size of the phenomenon of imbalance in regional development? - Are questions to which solutions were sought in order to guide the ultimate goal of the thesis, to identify an approach to regional policy from the perspective of Romania for the period 2014-2020.

The conclusions of this chapter are the challenges and opportunities for absorbtion of EU funds in Romania between 2014-2020.

Solutions identified for increased absorbtion could be: better information among stakeholders, enhance ease administrative procedures change mitigation within regulated, better management, eliminating corruption, reducing bureaucracy, maintaining the requested documentation and data deposit accelerearea and simplifying procurement procedures, further simplify and streamline the implementation of programs and projects, standardization of documents, reducing the number of

documents required when submitting projects, shorten the periods of evaluation of projects, involving the banking system in the accession and implementation operational programs, administrative and institutional capacity by stimulating motivation of well-prepared by an appropriate salary system, attracting a body of experts, outsourcing to private organizations for project evaluation and redemption requests.

To improve absorption should be made macro and micro economic simulations to register the potential impact of EU funds in convergence and growth at national and European level.

Conclusions

The research paper was completed by elaborating general conclusions, issuing research proposals tailored to this research, the result evaluation representing my own contribution.

The conclusions and personal contributions summarise the most important consequences of this research, such as the need for enhanced awareness and the use of EU financial support.

The results of this analysis could enable further improvement of project management programs for the following stages of development. The evaluation of the structural instruments identify steps that can be eliminated or takes too long, unnecessary activities, recommendations, optimizing processes and procedures. The evaluation process could be divided into several stages, such as evaluation planning, configuration assessment, implementation, development and use of evaluations recommendations to the interpretation and quantification of structural instruments impact on economic and social development.

This paper intends to bring a contribution to the current state of knowledge through personal contributions related to the theme to complement the studies and comes in response to the current need, unable to meet the need for community management SUPPORTED 2007-2013 and potential in the 2014-2020 period.

To evaluate the confirmation of the assumptions mentioned conclusions developed through the interpretation of data obtained from the empirical research.

1. The first hypothesis is related to the conceptual definition of regional development concept and location accurately theorizing the discipline gives a greater justification phenomenon. Regional and cohesion policy objective is to reduce regional asymmetries between EU regions and within Member States. The general role of regional policy and cohesion is indeed the one mentioned above and is rooted in the Treaty of Rome, which Member States bear the promise to strengthen the solidarity of their economies and to ensure their development balanced by reducing or even eliminating disparities between regions.

2. A second hypothesis is linked to membership of a supranational structure like the European Union, instigator aspect of economic growth. The starting point in selecting the theme was the assumption that the economic, although the unit is extremely diverse. The actual history of developed countries attest to the fact that economic growth is uneven, this is where there are primary and secondary resources, able to determine knowledge, innovation and development. With increased development and modernization of industrial output, employment, generation of additional investment, innovation and the establishment / modernization of other economic departments. It was found that most of the projects submitted and financed for the beneficiaries government, not from within strategic planning, but because there are funding opportunities, they transformed the priority projects. Therefore projects have not been developed due to the current needs, but have developed projects to be funded by sources of funding made available by the various operational programs. Romania fits into the world economy and the EU as a country marked by the existence of strong economic gaps. The experience of the last few decades in developed countries but also other countries which opted for democracy and market economy, individualized following five broad economic policy objectives: growth, employment, price stability, external balance, control the budget deficit. Achieving these goals simultaneously is not a

rule, since even in the more favorable conjunctures most stable countries, they are at least partially compatible hard.

3. The third hypothesis assumes that more developed regions and a higher level of competitiveness attract most investment in European support and their impact is more streamlined. A region is more developed than in other regions as a result of its ability to attract new investment, highly qualified human resources and the efficient use of economies of scale and diversity. There is a regional economic activity Romanian economic growth in the past decade was especially manifested in the Bucharest-Ilfov, which reached an important functional market economy with a predominant presence of jobs in manufacturing and services and GDP / capita that is ahead of the EU average. Otherwise, the other seven regions, growth and diversification of economic activity has diminished and forecasts economic expansion units are pessimistic. Although the purpose of regional policy and cohesion Convergence and supporting disadvantaged regions is always watched practice shows that sometimes manifests itself paradoxically divergence, because the more developed regions, localities, organizations and even citizens are financially superior are those who resort to assistance from structural funds, thereby further developing the gap between them and those lagging behind itself. Although this view is a skeptical perspective on the impact of regional policies, the source further development strategies.

4. Ensemble financial nurses from the European Union in Romania and in other Member States is complicated and sophisticated. Due to various OPs priority axes, key areas of interventions and calls for numerous projects, there are cases where funds seem difficult to identify and access for beneficiaries, the key issue being attribution importance of support forgivable. Dissemination of information to the Structural Funds is not necessarily the most appropriate method of informing potential beneficiaries on financing sources, determines expectations but the impact of the funds raised immediately. Chapter III renders information on structural instruments and operational programs during pre and post from Romania. While there are strategic documents in the economy and the level of economic sectors, noted that implementing the priorities set has not resulted in a uniform development, but one of disparity. This was registered because project funding uncorrelated not support each other, unable to focus efforts on priority areas, supported small projects in all areas, not strategic projects large integrated to produce effects on economic development and competitiveness at national or regional level. For this reason, it generated completing a number of projects that did not produce the expected impact in economic and social environment. Stage global competitiveness of the Romanian economy can be optimized if the comparative advantages held by Romania will be transformed into competitive advantages by means of appropriate policies to stimulate research and development and innovation.

5. The fifth hypothesis addresses and employment thresholds in determining EU regions and the territorial reorganization of Romania. In determination and classification of regions at European level must take into account the diversity of regions, specifying their present borders old or new transport European infrastructure, national or local passing them, and major conurbations and development projects that region or country is covered as a whole. To obtain a low uptake of European funds they have contributed to the regionalization structure of Romania, and how to plan a governance of regional development policy. The system consists of 8 regions adopted in 1998, not a formula for success for Romania, these regions being the most stretched EU regions, in close interdependence ensuring a successful management and economic potential repercussions on different levels. Following discussions and recommended solutions on regionalization and administrative-territorial reorganization of Romania, I tried to identify the best solution for ensuring the efficient absorption of EU funds for innovation and in economic and social development at regional level. This solution consists in a reorganization merged into 5 macro regions 15 statistical NUTS I. The major shortcoming is that regional groups in Romania have no functional or taxation authority and discretion. It follows therefore, an imbalance that hampers organizational in optimal implementation of structural funds. Another change required administrative-territorial structure of Romania is the gain legal powers, administrative and fiscal regionally to maximize regional implementation of Community financial support. Current development regions in Romania should be given the status of administrative territorial meso level in the organization without disappearing existing counties, regions independence also based on strategic

planning, setting policy in the region and funding priorities. In order to establish the developing regions, they were taken into calculation as main criteria to correct current imbalances and to register between levels of the development gaps between regions, counties, intercity, regional policy having major objective of reducing regional disparities, current support for harmonious development, revitalization of disadvantaged areas, and the emergence of new gaps, promoting interregional and international cooperation leading to economic and social development. Subsequently, the entry into practice of regional development programs and related developments in European regional policy, Romania has initiated the development of a regional policy that combines components representing regional strategies (supporting disadvantaged areas and financial support) and original component of regional policy dictated by EU residing setting in regions to be competitive potential. As a result, regional policy carried out in Romania goes beyond in regions lagging behind, sustained all regions to maximize and streamline in available economic capacity and enhance the competitiveness. However, in Romania recorded an increase of regional disparities in terms of economic, demographic, structures, innovation, research and development etc., these gaps could be differentiated by the degree of intensity as: small and medium gaps recorded level of unemployment, many doctors, infrastructure, population size, etc., large gaps down after GDP / capita, employees in the research and development, reducing disparities in terms of active and employed population.

6. Although the rate of absorption of EU funds is modest grants are difficult to obtain preferred bank loans and rates and interest-bearing. The proliferation of projects submitted can be assumed that applicants are increasingly decided to apply in order to access for financial support through EU structural instruments. Although attracting European funds is more than a priority for Romania, still shortcomings in this process due to the beneficiaries (failure criteria of the applicant's guidelines and contractual terms, failure of public procurement legislation, reduced ability financing and insurance of cash flows, lack of experience in managing projects financed by European funds, etc.) and structures for coordination and management of funds (sometimes understaffed and unprepared, excessive bureaucracy, failure to comply with the legal requirements for conducting public procurement fraud, corruption, etc.). To these can be added and call advertising project failure, poor involvement of local authorities in attracting investors by offering new opportunities, legislative changes permanent or unclear legislation and interpreters.

7. Projects submitted and approved, are usually concentrated around the developed regions. The highest absorption and best managed Operational Programme in Romania was registered by ROP in due largely regional management of this program. In this recital it was presented and studied in Chapter V Implementation Report ROP 31.12.2013. In this regard, it analyzed the implementation of the program on priority axes and areas of intervention in 2007-2013. Given that the priority axes most accessed ROP were those for businesses and NGOs, and the least visited were those whose potential beneficiaries were public authorities, recommended an allocation focused funding towards axes for businesses, with particular emphasis on funding research centers, development and innovation, clustering initiatives, institutes and technology transfer institutes and research centers that operate in addition industrial parks. The analysis shows that projects submitted and approved are concentrated around the more developed regions. The largest volume of payments from Community funds (ERDF) were performed in the North East region, of which more than 50% for road infrastructure projects and the urban development. In most regions payments for road infrastructure projects represent approximately 40-55% of total payments. It also emphasizes the relatively higher payments for projects to support microenterprises (Bucharest-Ilfov - 26% South - 22%) and for infrastructure projects of education (7%) and tourism facilities (6%). The major intervention areas such, stands to maintaining the highest request rates for educational, business infrastructure, road infrastructure, micro, accommodation and tourism facilities, and the lowest rate for technical assistance. Evolution study the weights of the two categories territorial, urban - rural, underlines the continuing increase in the share of the urban environment, which at the end of 2013 reached approximately 3/4 of total EU funds contracted through ROP, due to the increase in the number of contracts for financing micro and urban development characteristic urban space and reducing the number of new financing contracts county roads - typical rural area.

8. Regarding the impact of EU funded projects on regional development, for the case study as a method of evaluation of projects, we chose cost-benefit analysis, the estimation method desirability of a European-funded project. The project called for co-funding under the Regional Operational Programme 2007-2013, Priority 4 "Supporting local and regional business environment" Area of Intervention 4.1 "Development of sustainable business support structures of regional and local importance". In this study, it was found that the investment is appropriate both economically and socially, the indirect economic results assured degree of sustainable development of the city and the area, alleviate disparities between rural and urban areas.

Project management, because of the frequency of implementation of projects in all areas plays a key role in ensuring competitive advantage in the current economic climate is a relatively new and rapidly growing. To attract long-term benefits projects must adapt to the context in which they are implemented to meet the development needs of organizations that implement them. Common problems identified in the management of European projects grants are exogenous projects. These deficiencies requires a more efficient management of the institutions involved in the management of European funds, by reducing bureaucracy in the application phase and project implementation. It also registered negative consequences due to institutional changes and harmonization responsibilities bodies attracted implementation of regional development policy on the effectiveness of its implementation. An endogenous problems in a project is presented difficulties in supporting the project from its own sources to receive your refund. The proposed solution would be to identify, still at the planning stage of the project, alternative sources of funding.

It stands out that there is an interdependence between the absorption elements economic and financial access, contracting and implementation of investment projects and providing co-financing in this context is imperative to establish a level of economic and financial indicators such a project to be eligible for funding. Risk advancing projects of relevance questionable for beneficiaries who subsequently fails little or no experience in implementing projects or investments, becoming evident that achieving eligibility criteria and a higher score in the evaluation of the project is among the most important concerns to the applicant .

9. Another hypothesis is based on the study of disparities in identification and analysis of the indices of disparity by the example of the South East. It was analyzed based on statistical data, demographic and economic development of cities in the Southeast region. As regards projects in the South-East, most development indicators analysis shows positions less favorable Buzau, Focsani, Tulcea, at which agriculture is economic branch base, unlike these counties Constanta, Galati are characterized by the domination of industry, presents indicators more closely or superior to the values of the country. South East, generally with a low population density, concentrated in a few major urban centers a large number of residents. Local authorities now have budgets significantly affected by the financial crisis and will find obstacles in implementation due to lack of financial contribution. Average income per capita is lower in rural areas than in urban areas, services are underdeveloped. In order to organize and conduct research activities in addition to economic agents in the process of designing a development strategy for South-Eastern Europe, should be straighten, working meetings between hard business representatives to come up with issues of concern innovation characteristic activity of the organization so that research centers will be created consistent with industrial structure and services in the region. Another recommendation would be active involvement of public institutions in the process of attracting European funds, especially county councils whose presence in the Southeast region in 2007-2013 was extremely modest among the beneficiaries, the unfavorable development of the region . Of great importance is infrastructure or in county roads for access, technology transfer and access to specialized human capital. Consideration should in economic capacity, the qualification of the human factor, tourism potential and current resources. Holding into account the location of beneficiaries especially the county seat of South-East region, propose a reallocation more efficient for the development potential of the region locally in so that smaller cities can develop as growth poles local implying areas rural surrounding, identifying development potential of each smaller town and surrounding area, because they are placed in the development strategy of the region. Depending on the

indicators achieved, namely the creation of jobs, income and investment within the region, transport infrastructure and social services through new and modernized roads, created health centers and social rehabilitated and equipped, proposing for the period 2014 -2020 supporting integrated projects, priority and subsequent development strategies regionally harmonized, and eliminate isolated public investment projects, without them being included Internet High - a long-term strategy.

10. The last hypothesis and otherwise important is to improve government capacity to manage EU funds more efficiently. Management structure Operational Programmes in 2007-2013 did not ensure effective policy coordination, which led a slow pace of development. Although, EU funds absorption initiates a long-term process and the impact is lasting. Specialization institutions in the project has the main role to attract European funds, but to raise funds in order to ensure progress. For the period 2014 - 2020 to become more cost effective to Romania a particularly important role of setting an appropriate strategy for allocating financial support is needed. Each Member State will have to correlate all directions of investment in an adequate policy to accelerate the development process through a strategy on a new time and a new vision of spending European money. The state's role is decisive on creating the possibility for all regions to grow, to increase the attractiveness of regions and reduce the gap by means of compensation policies (infrastructure, environmental protection, research, development and innovation, improving services, redistributing income and supporting local projects). Officials responsible for all violations were observed to be charged, the inability and lack of information, which, while being prevented, agreed without taking action or even favored committing reprehensible actions, the influence of corruption. Potential conflicts of interest reported frauds and media investigations of the effects of lack of capacity is exercising effective control over the management of these funds from the institutions responsible.

Among the major deficiencies which affect the monitoring and estimation of use Community support was outstanding as insufficient information, lack of correlation methods for collection and interpretation at various levels, the lack of statistical databases, intertwining Community policies with policies of the Member States.

In 2014-2020 multiannual financial framework in order to increase the EU's productivity has directed a large part of the funds for research. The element of innovation is of particular importance in view to sustainable economic growth and increase competitiveness of the regions, requiring the establishment of indicators features: the number of patents, trademarks, models, designs or number of jobs created in the research, development and innovation , number of research centers, institutes of technology transfer, clusters.

The conclusions in this paper can be used by policy makers deciding factors of development and have the opportunity to use information on the impacts of financial support under the operational programs on output, revenues and occupancy in various fields. The task of quantifying the impact of Community support is quite complex, elaborate why partial results have a significant role, giving an intermediate issue or may be used for future research in the field.

During her thesis, the study results were exploited by publishing about 20 articles in the annals universities in Romania and abroad in magazines and books specialist and works published in volumes of national and international conferences, which increases the level of credibility research.

As future research, will pursue development and validation of methods that allow increasing efficient use of European funds on the regions and other territorial divisions and introducing new variables in the models tested, such as political, social and institutional influencing economic integration and growth, but are harder to quantify.

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