S. P. E. R.

Stop Prejudecăților despre Etnia Romă!

Monitoring and Evaluation System

For Interventions Focused On Roma In Romania

Handbook For Implementation

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human dynamics

public sector consulting

This Handbook has been prepared to support the implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation System (M&E System) for interventions focused on Roma in Romania. The M&E System has been designed within the framework of the PHARE project 'Strengthening Capacity and Partnership Building to Improve Roma Condition and Perception' implemented by the General Secretariat of the Government and the National Agency for Roma (NAR), between October 2006 and April 2008. It was one of the activities of the project under Component One, Institutional and Capacity Building in Public Sector and Roma Civil Society.

This M&E System is a result of an extensive consultation process involving the NAR, representatives of different institutions and Roma communities. It will be coordinated by the NAR in close collaboration with the stakeholders at central, regional and local level.

The project is part of the multi-annual PHARE Programme 2004-2006 'Accelerating the Implementation of the National Strategy for Improving Conditions for the Roma' and was intended to promote the social inclusion of Roma by strengthening the capacity and readiness of public institutions at national, regional, county and local level to work together with Roma representatives to solve specific problems faced by Roma communities.

The Technical Assistance (TA) for the project was provided by a consortium, led by Human Dynamics and including two Roma NGOs as partners, Agentia 'Impreuna' and Romani CRISS.

This M&E System and its accompanying Handbook were developed by the M&E experts Ralitza Sechkova and Laura Marin under the coordination of Fernando Villarreal, Head of Component One of the project, and Nigel Shakespear, Project Team Leader.

Bucharest, February 2008

Abbreviations

ARD	Agency for Regional Development (Agenția de Dezvoltare Regională - ADR)
APH	Authority for Public Health (Autoritatea pentru Sănătate Publică – ASP)
BJR	Romanian abbreviation for County Office for Roma (Biroul Județean pentru Romi)
CALFE	County Agency for Labour Force Employment (Agenția Județeană de Ocupare a Forței de Muncă - AJOFM)
CCSI	County Commission for Social Inclusion (Comisia Județeană de Incluziune Socială – CJIS)
GD	Government Decision
GSG	General Secretariat of the Government (Secretariatul General al Guvernului – SGG)
IDF	Institutional Development Fund
JIM	Joint Inclusion Memorandum
LRE	Local Roma Expert (Expert Local pentru Romi – ELR)
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (Ministerul Agriculturii, Pădurilor şi Dezvoltării Rurale – MAPDR)
MIAR	Ministry of Interior and Administrative Reform (Ministerul Internelor şi Reformei Administrative - MIRA)
MCR	Ministerial Commission for Roma (Comisia Ministerială pentru Romi – CMR)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDPWH	Ministry of Development, Public Works and Housing (Ministerul Dezvoltării, Lucrărilor Publice şi Locuințelor – MDLPL)
MERY	Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (Ministerul Educației, Cercetării şi Tineretului - MECT)
MJ	Ministry of Justice (Ministerul Justiției – MJ)
MLFEO	Ministry of Labour, the Family and Equal Opportunities (Ministerul Muncii, Familiei şi Egalității de Şanse – MMFES)

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1 In this Handbook the authors have used English abbreviations for the names of the Romanian public institutions with a few exceptions (such as BJR). To avoid confusion, the original names of the Romanian public institutions, authorities and structures are given in brackets (as at February 2008).

MEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance (Ministerul Economiei şi Finanţelor – MEF)
MPH	Ministry of Public Health (Ministerul Sănătăţii Pubilce – MSP)
Municipality	The Romanian 'primaria' is translated in the Handbook by 'municipality'
MWG	Mixed Working Group (Grup de Lucru Mixt – GLM)
NAA	National Antidrug Agency (Agenţia Naţională Antidrog – ANA)
NACRP	National Authority for Children's Rights Protection (Autoritatea Naţională pentru Protecţia Drepturilor Copilului – ANPDC)
NAEOWM	National Agency for Equal Opportunities of Women and Men (Agenţia Naţională pentru Egalitate de Şanse între Femei şi Bărbaţi – ANESFB)
NAFP	National Agency for Family Protection (Agenţia Naţională pentru Protecţia Familiei – ANPF)
NALFE	National Agency for Labour Force Employment (Agenţia Naţională de Ocupare a Forţei de Muncă - ANOFM)
NAPD	National Authority for the persons with Disabilities (Autoritatea Naţională pentru Persoanele cu Handicap – ANPH)
NAR	National Agency for Roma (Agenţia Naţională pentru Romi – ANR)
National Strategy	National Strategy for Improvement of Roma Conditions (GD 430/2001 and GD 522/2006)
NCCD	National Council for Combating Discrimination (Consiliul Naţional pentru Combaterea Discriminării – CNCD)
NCRC	National Centre for Roma Culture (Centrul Naţional pentru Cultura Romilor - CNCR)
NCSI	National Commission for Social Inclusion (Comisia Naţională pentru Incluziune Socială – CNIS)
NHHI	National House of Health Insurance (Casa Naţională de Asigurări de Sănătate – CNAS)
NHPOSIR	National House of Pensions and Other Social Insurance Rights (Casa Naţională de Pensii şi Alte Drepturi de Asigurări Sociale – CNPADAS)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PPI	Programme for Priority Interventions
RSDF	Romanian Social Development Fund (Fondul Român pentru Dezvoltare Socială - FRDS)
SIU	Social Inclusion Unit (Unitatea de Incluziune Socială – UIS)
SOPHRD	Sectoral Operational Programme Human Resources Development (POSDRU)
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference
WGPPR	Working Group for Public Policies for Roma (Grup de Lucru de Politici Publice pentru Romi – GLPPR)

Contents

Introduction

About The Handbook

Why is this Handbook needed?

The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) System covers the National Strategy and mainstream Social Inclusion measures influencing the conditions of the Roma in Romania. It is operated by the National Agency for Roma (NAR), based on inputs from national, county and local level stakeholders.

This Handbook presents the M&E System to its implementers, translating the concept into practical guidelines for action. It is intended to help the M&E Units and their partner institutions understand the basics of the Monitoring and Evaluation processes and to apply them in practice.

In addition, this Handbook aims to promote consistency and clarity of approach to Monitoring and Evaluation, this being a crucial condition for the success of the M&E System. The task of monitoring and evaluating the many and different programme measures influencing the Roma situation is assigned to a network of M&E units, subordinated to different institutions and including people with different experience, professional skills and educational background. The Handbook aims to standardise the approaches and the working methods of all actors involved in M&E tasks.

The unified work methods and formats will ensure:

- Firstly, the compatibility of the data collected by all implementers and partners throughout the country;

- Secondly, the coherence of the findings and conclusions that will be identified during the Monitoring and Evaluation actions at national and local level;

- Finally, the smooth process of data collection, keeping to the schedule of activities and attaining the selected M&E targets.

The purpose of this Handbook is to support the practical implementation of the Monitoring and Evaluation System for the targeted and mainstream interventions focused on the situation of the Roma in Romania.

The Manual is designed to:

▶ Translate the concept into practical guidelines for action;

▶ Ensure consistency and clarity of approach to monitoring and evaluation.

Who is the Handbook for?

In the first place, the Handbook is addressed to the M&E Units who will apply the M&E System at central, regional and county levels.

Secondly, the Handbook clarifies issues of interest for their partners. On the one hand, these are the state institutions and local authorities, responsible for the performance of the National Strategy. On the other, these are the M&E units assigned to monitor and evaluate the Social Inclusion measures, which will need to collaborate with the units implementing this M&E System. Other stakeholders and civil organisations can also use the Handbook to understand the functioning of this M&E System.

The targeted audience and users of this Handbook include:

▶ The implementers of the M&E System involved in the network of M&E Units;

▶ The partners who will support the implementation of this M&E System.

How is the Handbook Organized?

The Handbook has three parts, each covering a specific topic of interest:

Part One: Introducing the Monitoring and Evaluation System - Concept and Methodology. This part presents the concept of the M&E System: the scope, objectives, proposed methodology and key activities, responding to the needs of M&E System managers. It also provides an overview of the implementation mechanism for the effective functioning of the M&E System.

Part Two: Operational Guidelines for the Monitoring and Evaluation Units. This part covers the division of responsibilities and tasks within the network of M&E Units, and provides instructions on the implementation of the M&E activities assigned to each level of the network of M&E Units.

Part Three: Annexes and Templates. It includes two main packages of information. Firstly, additional information on specific topics is provided in annexes to the main text. Secondly, there are various supporting technical documents, templates, samples and formats, elaborated for the use of the M&E teams in their practical work.

The explanations of the key concepts and M&E activities in the Handbook follow the logic of the implementation process. Practical examples illustrate the instructions on the implementation of M&E activities. The Operational Guidelines propose good practices in M&E management, guiding the M&E teams along the road step by step.

A Guide to the Contents of the Handbook

Concept Level

Part One: Concept
Introducing the Monitoring and Evaluation System

The Concept:
Objectives and methods

Benefits and beneficiaries of M&E System

The Actors:
- **M&E network**
- **Partners and supporters**

Operational Level

Part Two:
Operational Guidelines for the M&E Units

The Tasks:
- **Central M&E Unit**
- **Regional and County M&E Units**

Planning procedures

The action:
- **Data collection**
- **Monitoring**
- **Evaluation**

Part Three:
Annexes and Templates

How to use the Handbook

First and foremost the Handbook is a guideline for action. Initially, reading the text will provide a basic understanding of the concept and functioning of the M&E System. Later, after the actual work has started, the Handbook can be used by M&E Units as a resource book to check on approaches and to clarify the work methods and the logical steps of the practical implementation of the M&E System. Following the proposed instructions and rules will make the implementation process feasible and user-friendly for the participants.

At the same time, the Handbook is not a substitution for self-reflection, creativity and common sense on the part of the M&E teams. Rather, it aims to provoke the participants in the M&E process to:

• **Internalise the self-learning approach** and reflect carefully on the progress of social change inside Roma communities;

• **Be creative in finding flexible and feasible ways** of considering the specific features of particular counties or Roma communities, while gathering data or getting feedback from Roma beneficiaries about selected concrete programme interventions.

This Handbook has been tested by using it as a training tool in a series of training courses for building practical skills in M&E of the Regional and County M&E Units all over Romania (November 2007 – February 2008), and some important topics have been extended with inputs from the participants. The Handbook is still open for updating and developing additional instructions, explanations and templates when the users find it necessary and when profound changes appear in the situation of the Roma.

From a technical point of view, some clarifications need to be noted:
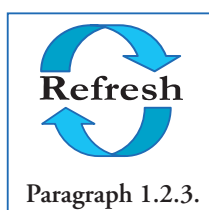
Reference notes and signs are used in order to reduce the text repetitions in the Handbook. The **'Refresh' sign** highlights previous parts of the Handbook. On reaching the 'Refresh' sign, the reader is expected to check the relevant text (if missed before), as this will be vital for an understanding of the logic of the activities currently described.
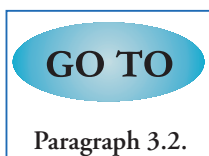
The references marked with the **sign 'Go To'** highlight the cases when important M&E issues are elaborated in more detail on the following pages. If the reader is interested in a particular M&E topic, he/she can get more information on this before completing the reading of the entire Handbook.

This sign highlights the practical instructions for the implementers of M&E activities and some specific blocks of information, provided to clarify the practical aspects of the M&E work.

References are also made to supporting technical documents, templates and formats while presenting the tasks of the M&E Units.

Part One: The Concept

Introducing The Monitoring And Evaluation System

Objectives and Methodology

M&E Results – Benefits and Beneficiaries

Implementation Mechanism

Social Policies and Programmes

Requirement to measure results and assess achievements of strategies and projects

Defined M&E Tasks

Selected scope of the M&E System

M&E Goals and Objectives Methodology

Transparency Accountability of Public Policy

M&E Activities

Act. 1
Act. 2
Act. 3

Implemented by:
- Network of M&E Units
- Functional partnerships

Common methods and tools applied

M&E Results: Reports, Conclusions and Recommendations

Chapter 1. The Concept Of The M&E System

1.1. What Is Monitoring And Evaluation?

Monitoring and Evaluation has now entered the ordinary vocabulary of social policies and strategies. M&E is no news. Experts and researchers have produced piles of papers discussing the theory and practical aspects of the monitoring and the evaluation process. Case studies sharing various practical experiences are published; and even jokes about evaluations have appeared.

Since this Handbook is focused on the practical application of M&E and its desired benefits we can illustrate in a few words what Monitoring and Evaluation means. Socially oriented policy measures and programmes are intended to change the social environment by launching new opportunities for development. Other projects aim to improve the access to adequate public services, to change the attitudes of people in need, and so on.

The processes of social change involve many participants, state institutions and civil organisations, with a variety of visions and interests. Foremost of course, it involves the communities themselves, targeted to have their lives and way of thinking changed.

What is Monitoring	**A**s in life, the results of any activity of people are measured and assessed by themselves and/or by the others. Firstly, there is a need to verify whether the project activities are actually implemented in accordance with the original plan. Then, there is a need to check who the partners were, which target groups were involved, and what resources were spent. Monitoring is a continuous process that goes on throughout the project implementation in order to provide regular feedback on the progress of the project, and to warn of any emerging problems that need to be immediately solved.
Why Evaluation is needed	**O**nce a project is completed, evaluation is carried out to measure its actual successes and/or failures and to highlight whether the project initiators have kept their promises to the people in need. Generally speaking, the evaluators assess what has actually been achieved and to what extent the promised benefits have specifically reached those target groups for whom the project was initiated. Evaluation gives the answer to whether the project results make a difference, changing the lives of the target Roma communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation is an indispensable part of project cycle management	**L**ooking ahead, M&E findings and conclusions can then be used to improve the quality of future social programmes and projects. In this way the monitoring and evaluation makes sense as an indispensable part of the management cycle of any strategy or project, aimed at changing the social environment.

Setting up an effective and functioning System for Monitoring and Evaluation of improvements in Roma conditions is an essential task in the general context of the public policies for Roma and for social inclusion of vulnerable groups in Romania. Such an M&E System calls for accountability and transparency and, indirectly, stimulates institutions to accelerate the practical implementation of initiated pro-Roma policies and strategies.

1.2. What Will Be Monitored And Evaluated?

1.2.1. Comprehensive Scope Of The M&E System

Currently there are two main types of policies and programme interventions addressing the problems of Roma in Romania: Firstly, the policies and programmes targeted at Roma issues. Secondly, the mainstream policy measures for social inclusion which also affect Roma as part of the disadvantaged communities and excluded groups.

This M&E System is designed to be as comprehensive as possible in terms of scope and capacity to monitor and evaluate most of the existing measures influencing Roma communities. Accordingly, it covers the following targeted and mainstream lines of intervention, influencing Roma communities:

• The National Strategy for Improvement of Roma Conditions and General Plan of Measures (2006 – 2008);

• Measures planned within the framework of the Decade for Roma Inclusion (2007 – 2015);

• Other projects and measures targeted at Roma, planned and/or implemented by the ministries and institutions at central and local level, but not included in the National Strategy document;

• The most important mainstream Social Inclusion measures addressing Roma issues, planned within the framework of the Joint Inclusion Memorandum (JIM), National and Regional Plans for social inclusion and employment and for example the Programme for Priority Interventions (PPI), implemented by the Romanian Social Development Fund (RSDF).

The comprehensive scope of the M&E System ensures the:

▶ Potential to cover all important lines of intervention focused on Roma;

▶ Basis to compare the effects on the Roma of targeted and mainstream policies and projects;

▶ Relevant and useful recommendations for future pro-Roma measures which are embedded in the larger context and not on one single programme (policy) only.

A comprehensive list of these interventions needs to be elaborated and continuously updated. At a more advanced stage of implementation the M&E System may also try to cover the contribution of

the Roma movement itself (Roma organisations, NGOs, community initiative groups) as well as important projects of civil society organisations in general.

> **+ + +**
> **Information Plus**
>
> **A few words about terms**: In listing pro-Roma programmes, we can see various terms used for the different types of interventions, depending on their scope, initiators, implementation mechanism, type/source of funding, etc.
>
> **Public Policies** and **National Strategies** summarize the targeted effort of the State to solve certain serious problems of national interest; these include many components and concrete **measures,** more or less interrelated and structured. **County and Municipal Strategies** address similar issues, but at local level.
>
> The **Action Plans** present the practical steps, activities and timeline for how the strategies or measures will be implemented. **Programmes** usually have broad goals and comprise many **projects** and **interventions**. However, multiple interventions of different types aim to influence the Roma situation and the M&E System is expected to measure their achievements.

1.2.2. Roma Targeted Interventions

The most important Roma targeted intervention is the National Strategy for Improvement of Roma Conditions and General Plan of Measures, as formulated in the GD 430/2001 and GD 522/2006 (hereinafter as the National Strategy) and assigned for implementation to ministries, state agencies, county and local authorities. The M&E System also covers other projects and measures targeted at Roma, planned and/or implemented by ministries and institutions at central and local level, but not included in the General Plan of Measures (such as some programmes of the Ministry of Education, Research and Youth (MERY) – Phare Programme Access to Education of Disadvantaged Communities, Early Education programmes, etc.).

Programmes and measures are elaborated also within the framework of the Decade Roma for Roma Inclusion and foreseen to be implemented in the long term. National and county action plans for Roma Inclusion are developed in four priority domains – education, employment, health and housing. Although formulated as mainstream, most of the included measures have a specific focus on Roma.

During the preparation phase of the M&E System, the M&E Units need to collect detailed information about Roma targeted interventions and then summarize the data in a table, with the name of the programme, who is implementing it, period and deadlines, etc., including a breakdown of domains and problems addressed. (See Template B.7)

> **+ + +**
> **Information Plus**
>
> **What are the differences between TARGETED and MAINSTREAM measures?**
>
> **Roma targeted programmes and/or measures** are focused on various aspects of the integration of Roma communities. The activities aim to solve particular problems of Roma communities in different domains. The Roma are explicitly defined as a target group and as the intended final beneficiaries.
>
> **Mainstream measures** are focused on the social inclusion of vulnerable target groups, determined not by ethnic origin (like Roma), but according to their specific problem, such as: extreme poverty, unemployment, people with disabilities, school abandonment, etc. Indeed, most of these vulnerable people are of Roma origin. Although not defined as the only one specific target group, the Roma are one of the

priorities for the Social Inclusion Policy in Romania, as stated in approved policy documents.[2]

For instance, there are mainstream measures that aim to involve 'X' number of long term unemployed without a breakdown by ethnicity. As long term unemployed, Roma should also become beneficiaries of these measures. (Assessing how many of these beneficiaries are Roma is an important M&E task.)

1.2.3. Mainstream Social Inclusion Measures And Roma Problems

Looking at the larger perspective of future pro-Roma policies, the mainstream measures initiated under the National Social Inclusion Policy of the Romanian Government are also expected to make an increasing contribution to solving Roma problems. With regard to this issue, it should be emphasized that the scope of initiated social inclusion measures and that of the National Strategy are closely linked but they do not fully coincide. Various approaches are used to define social exclusion/inclusion based on broader or narrower interpretations of the issue.

! ! !
Just a reminder

In the context of this M&E System, we refer to 'social inclusion measures' as those being formulated and actually implemented under the current National Social Inclusion Policy of the Romanian Government.

In order to avoid misunderstanding of the concept of the M&E System, certain clarification is needed about the meaning of the 'social inclusion policies and/or measures' and the 'social inclusion indicators' used in the Handbook. Within the context of this M&E System, the scope and the contents of the 'social inclusion policies/measures' (and the 'social inclusion indicators') are referred to exactly as they are formulated in the concrete national programmes and measures, approved and currently implemented by Romania.

+ + +
Information Plus

Mainstream measures of national interest are funded by the state budget[3] to support the social inclusion of vulnerable groups such as disabled people, the homeless and victims of domestic violence.

Another current measure is the **Social Inclusion Programme in Romania**, supported by a loan from the World Bank. This has 4 components:

1) Programme for priority interventions (PPI) in the field of community development, implemented by RSDF;

2) Inclusive Early Education, implemented by Ministry of Education;

3) Social Assistance Component, focused on children in institutions, (deinstitutionalization) implemented by the Ministry of Labour, the Family and Equal Opportunities (MLFEO);

4) Capacity Building for Social Inclusion of the Roma (TA for NAR).

NAR is included as a partner in these programmes.

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2 Such as the Joint Inclusion Memorandum, signed by the Romanian Government and EU in 2005, the National Government Programme for Social Inclusion and relevant operational programmes for the Structural Funds.
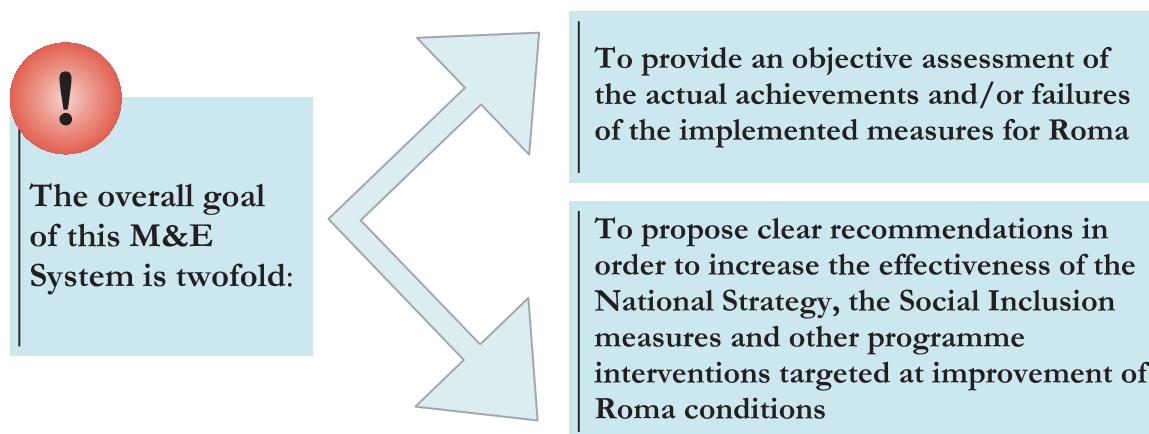
3 See GD No. 197/9 February 2006.

In fact, differences appear not only in approaching the target groups, but also in the problems and domains addressed by current targeted and mainstream interventions.

The National Strategy covers additional domains and issues not included in current mainstream Social Inclusion measures. The National Strategy is focused on, but not confined to, measures for socially excluded Roma. Roma targeted interventions address other issues as well, such as the Roma representation and participation in the decision making process, consolidation of Roma civil society, investment in a future highly educated Roma elite and the promotion of the Roma culture. All these issues are essential for the integrated development of the Roma communities.

1.3. Goals And Objectives Of The M&E System

First and foremost Monitoring and Evaluation serves as a tool for development, a tool for self-learning and the improvement of policies and programmes at all levels – from decision-making and programming to the practical implementation of activities.

The overall goal of this M&E System is twofold:

To provide an objective assessment of the actual achievements and/or failures of the implemented measures for Roma

To propose clear recommendations in order to increase the effectiveness of the National Strategy, the Social Inclusion measures and other programme interventions targeted at improvement of Roma conditions

To achieve this, the M&E System proposes consistent, systematic and coherent actions, aiming to achieve several **concrete specific objectives,** these being:

1 **To evaluate the achievements of implemented measures** and projects and to estimate whether the interventions have achieved their stated objectives and whether the expected benefits have been provided to target beneficiaries.

The M&E System aims **to assess to what extent:**

- the National Strategy measures have contributed to improving Roma conditions and in which domains;
- particular mainstream social inclusion measures have managed to reach the Roma beneficiaries, identified as an essential part of the vulnerable target groups;
- the other Roma targeted projects have succeeded in promoting structural and sustainable changes inside the Roma communities.

2 **To measure the progress of current strategies,** programmes and projects and to provide early warning of emerging problems that could hinder the practical implementation of the programmes.

In order to do this the M&E System needs to:

- Verify the actual implementation of on-going activities and outcomes through direct monitoring (during the activity implementation);

- Compare achieved direct results with the initially planned results by applying tangible monitoring indicators for the current status of the programmes;

- Give early warning of emerging problems in current projects and propose possible solutions.

3 **To identify good practices and lessons learned** at national and grassroots level in order to provide a basis for the improvement of Roma targeted and mainstream policies and projects by:

- Analysing good practices and lessons learned;

- Providing feedback from the beneficiaries on achieved results/effects.

4 **To provide objective baseline information** about the situation in the Roma communities and to update the picture on a regular basis following selected key indicators which describe the dynamics and trends of the changing conditions in Roma communities.

Therefore the M&E System is intended to:

- Collect and aggregate baseline data about Roma conditions at national level;

- Describe the profiles of particular Roma communities at grassroots level.

1.4. Guiding Principles

The effective functioning of this M&E System depends on following several guiding principles. These principles underpin the overall frame of the implementation process and determine how the M&E System works. The most important of them are:

Participatory approach

To create conditions for direct involvement of Roma beneficiaries in the M&E process by on-going consultations, and by sharing ideas and feedback about findings and recommendations directly with the Roma communities and with all stakeholders involved. This bottom-up approach is preferred to the top-down style of M&E. The Roma communities should participate not only in the implementation of the programmes but also in the monitoring and evaluation process.

Ownership

To promote the ownership of the Roma of the M&E System and its products and to ensure that the Roma themselves can take initiative in pushing through the M&E process. A feeling of ownership is built through fostering the direct participation of Roma representatives in all the stages of the M&E process – from priority setting to reformulation of strategies and programmes in response to identified M&E findings and recommendations.

In broader terms, ownership means responsibility and motivation of Roma to reach valid results, with a potential to make a difference in implemented policies and programme success.

Partnership Cooperation Networking

Monitoring and evaluation is not a one-man show. M&E is a collective effort, relying on:

- **Partnership and cooperation** between the institutions and stakeholders at national and local levels;

- **Open communication and mutual support** between the teams involved in the M&E Units and the representatives of the Roma communities;

- **Correlation and complementarity** with social inclusion structures and other M&E systems involved in data collection and monitoring of similar and/or related processes – exchange of information and findings, common methodology, sharing resources and expertise.

Flexibility and openness

Allow for flexibility and openness: This M&E System is not a closed one. Its elements are not frozen statements, taking no account of likely changes either in the general social context or in the situation of the Roma. The system can be broadened and updated. In fact, it is designed to allow the incorporation of new programmes and the updating of tools and techniques.

Self-learning

Encourage the self-learning approach, focused on continuous capacity building of the M&E teams. The implementation mechanism of this M&E System is designed to stimulate the self-learning process and the exchange of information and experience among policy makers and various project implementers.

Creative input by the M&E teams is encouraged. There is no one 'best' approach for any situation – there are various ways of making an evaluation. The M&E Units are expected to creatively contribute to this process, making choices based on the particular objectives of each specific case.

Pragmatism

Be pragmatic: Monitoring and Evaluation activities should address real Roma issues. The M&E Units should base the selection of priorities and immediate tasks on the actual needs of the targeted Roma communities as well as on emerging opportunities for the improvement of pro-Roma policies (at programming and management levels).

Grassroots based approach

Keep the focus on the grassroots community level: Last but not least, the M&E System is not limited to assessing the achievements at the 'high' national level only, but is focused on the grassroots level, measuring what benefits and results have actually been delivered in the Roma communities.

In other words, this is a locally oriented M&E System, helping to understand how all initiated programmes and measures have changed the everyday life of the ordinary Roma living in detached communities and what kind of new perspectives are opened for them now or for their children in future.

1.5. Key Methods And Tools

Monitoring and Evaluation is mainly an analytical task – collecting data and analysing the processes of change using this information. The methods and tools applied in M&E activities fall into two major categories:
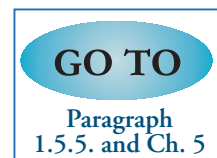
Analytical methods and tools	Analytical methods and tools are used to assess the social context and the processes of change provoked by a project. Later, analytical methods help to make use of the collected information: to understand why and how it has happened and to formulate and launch practical recommendations for future programme interventions.
Techniques and tools for data collection	Specific techniques and tools for collecting the necessary objective information contribute to a clearer picture of real issues. Only the most important of these methods are briefly introduced below, and the details are included in the description of M&E activities.

Effective M&E systems do not usually give preference to one technique only. Practical experience confirms that multiple approaches and interdisciplinary methods provide better results.

GO TO

Paragraph
1.5.5. and Ch. 5

1.5.1. Applying The Logical Framework Approach

The key analytical method applied by this M&E System is the Logical Framework (Logframe) approach, with its proven advantages in the analysis and evaluation of intervention logic, the setting of priorities, the development of indicators, the understanding and clarifying of linkages between objectives and direct results.

Existing publications propose many definitions of the Logframe approach – some of these are too simplified, others too complicated. In essence, the Logframe approach is a way of thinking about and analysing the logic of programme (and project) interventions. It clarifies how the logical correlation between stated objectives and actions is built up – how the activities reach the desired results, and then how these direct

The M&E Units use the Logframe approach for:

▶ Structural analysis of the linkage between the stated objectives, the action and its direct results;

▶ A way of thinking while monitoring and evaluating programme interventions;

▶ A way of thinking while outlining recommendations for redesign and/or revision of programmes and measures.

results succeed in bringing actual benefits for the target group. No effective action is initiated without a definite aim. The Logframe approach requires logical links between the social contexts, stated objectives, direct results and conducted activities:

• Project objectives are formulated in response to identified problems in disadvantaged Roma communities.

• Estimated direct results of a project envisage bringing benefits to these targeted Roma communities that should contribute to solving the detected problems.

- Activities are planned and implemented and resources are invested in order to deliver concrete direct results, products and services.

The Logframe approach is an effective analytical and management tool. It allows analysing and organising the information in a structured way. During the planning process and then during the implementation stage, the Logframe approach supports the formulation and application of an appropriate plan with clear objectives, concrete measurable direct results; success and performance indicators at each level of the intervention logic.

Figure 1: Applying the Logframe approach in the elaboration of programmes and in the M&E of these programmes
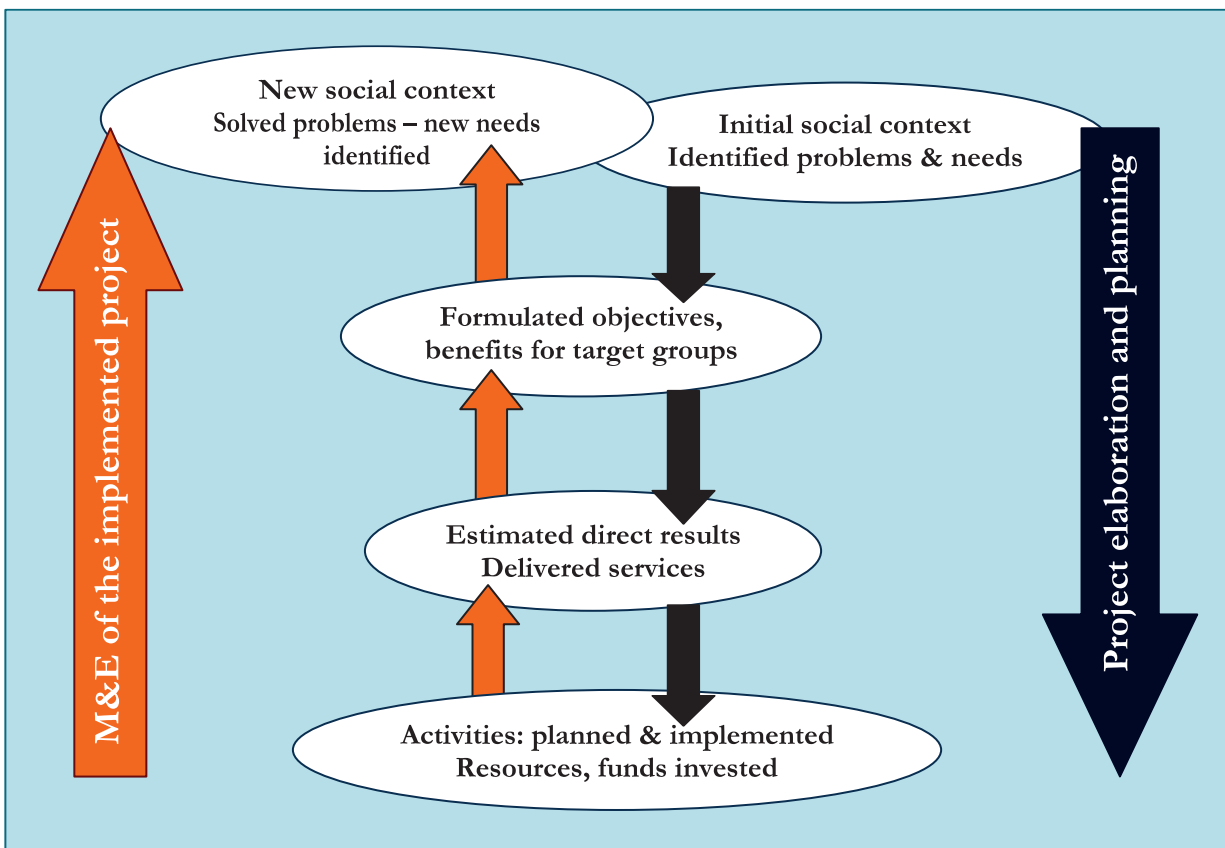
Figure 1 clearly illustrates how the Logframe approach is applied during the initial formulation of projects/interventions, as well as during the monitoring and evaluation of these implemented projects/ interventions. The planning process line in Figure 1 shows the logic of the project elaboration which starts with analysing the social context and identifying problems/needs, and goes on to the formulation of objectives, direct results and activities necessary in order to deliver these results.

Opposite, the logical line of M&E analysis (see the bottom-up line) starts from activities to results, looking for answers to the questions: Have the planned activities actually been implemented? Did these activities bring about the direct results as originally estimated? The M&E logical line then continues to objectives: Do these results contribute in achieving the stated objectives and estimated benefits for the target group? Finally, it arises at an analysis of the 'new' social context at project impact

level: Have these benefits contributed to sustainable change and to making a difference in the life of the target groups?

Applying the Logframe approach helps to better understand the project logic, its intended objectives and the means by which the objectives and benefits are achieved. It provides the tools for analysis of the processes and programme achievements in the context of the M&E tasks.

1.5.2. Key Tools: How To Use Logframe Tables

Each programme and measure is formulated (or should be) with its logically linked objectives, activities and estimated results: these elements are monitored and evaluated. This logic usually is presented as a Logframe Table (horizontal or vertical, depending on the style selected by the managing authority). This makes it easy to understand the project logic – how the objectives are linked to the benefits, and how the activities should produce the direct results for the target groups.

> **This M&E System uses two types of Logframe tables**:
> - The Overall Logframe Table for Interventions Focused on Roma, elaborated especially for the M&E System (See Annex A.3);
> - The individual Logframe tables for individual projects / particular measures selected for monitoring and evaluation.

The Overall Logframe Table of the Interventions Focused on Roma has been elaborated as a tool for implementing this M&E System. It provides a type of menu to choose projects for evaluation in the course of activity planning. It shows the logical links, coherence and interdependency between different interventions.

Using this table, the M&E Units can find structured comparative information about the objectives, expected results and planned activities of these interventions. It demonstrates the likely complementarities of projects. The evaluators and monitors should use the Overall Logframe Table to analyse how several projects, addressing similar problems, can contribute to achieve common objectives.

In practice, using this table, the M&E Units can compare the objectives of different projects with specific objectives in the domain. They can look for other projects in the same field, compare the project data with the specific indicators for qualitative change in the selected domain, and assess to what extent the evaluated project contributes to this change.

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Information Plus

For example, we can take several early education measures and projects, implemented by the Ministry of Education as part of the Social Inclusion policy at national level in the domain of education. As far as the early education measures are intended to improve the access to education of vulnerable groups, including Roma, they can be assigned for monitoring and/or evaluation to the M&E teams.

When the data on these measures is inserted into the Overall Logframe Table, the M&E teams will easily see the complementarities and/or contradictions between the measures carried out in the same location, with regard to their objectives, approaches, complementarities or overlapping of activities and target beneficiaries.

While implementing the monitoring or evaluation tasks, the M&E Units need to have a clear overall picture of what has already been achieved. For this reason they

will have to compare the results of several similar individual measures with the specific objectives in the particular domain.

In this way a conclusion can be drawn as to what extent these various measures have succeeded together:

i) in enrolling a significant percentage of Roma children in school (if each measure has addressed/reached different beneficiaries in the same location), or

ii) in bringing only some change, (if implemented in the same location and involving the very same target beneficiaries).

A similar type of analysis can be applied also for the programmes of the Ministry of Health (MPH) and of NGOs for the training of health mediators.

Hence, the Overall Logframe Table is used to highlight similarities and/or contradictions of approach between different interventions addressing a common problem of several Roma communities (such as unemployment, health, etc.).

The M&E System is designed to provide an overall assessment of the beneficial changes brought about as a result of interventions (projects and measures) in each key domain. Community development requires an integrative approach. While assessing the progress in community development, the M&E Units need to see how different projects in different domains fit together when applied in one Roma community. During the evaluation process, the M&E teams can use the information in the table to compare the results achieved in the same field but with different methods.

GO TO

Paragraphs
7.2. and 7.3.
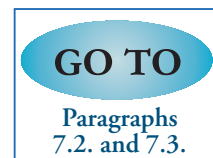
In addition, this table supports the work of M&E Units with information about interventions that have influenced a particular Roma community (the same target group) while addressing different issues/domains. This information enables the monitors and evaluators to understand and explain which factors have contributed to or impeded the improvement of Roma conditions in this particular community.

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Information Plus

To give an example, while assessing the domain of income generation it is important to compare the results achieved by two different types of projects – the first one providing grants and the second one providing micro-credits for starting up small community businesses. The application of these two types of projects in one Roma community could hamper the motivation of the beneficiaries and lead to a failure of both projects.

Another example might be an assessment of the 'joint' influence of two projects in different domains implemented in one community. The challenge is to assess how an educational and an income generation project together can increase the motivation for education of Roma parents and improve the educational results of Roma pupils.

There may be negative 'side effects' too. For instance, the Roma beneficiaries of a project focused on access to employment may not succeed in keeping their jobs and could lose their health insurance as well. As a result, this could damage the achievements of a healthcare project, implemented in the same community.

The Logframe Table of each individual project is an important tool in M&E work. These Logframe tables should have been drawn up by the implementing organisations as part of the initial project application. In particular, the monitors and evaluators will use it for:
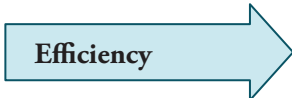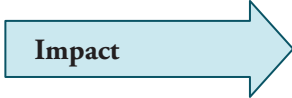
i) Understanding the logic of the initial project design;

ii) Comparing the expected results with the actual delivered project outcomes;

iii) Concluding whether the project activities were implemented exactly as planned;

iv) Demonstrating if the achieved project benefits have brought the expected improvement in Roma conditions.

Within this framework, the individual Logframe tables provide the basic information needed to apply the evaluation criteria given below.

1.5.3. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation methodology is based on the Logframe approach and should follow the standard evaluation criteria. The comprehensive Logframe Table of the Interventions Focused on Roma and the 'individual' Logframe tables of the evaluated measures contain substantial information relating to these criteria.

The evaluation criteria are:

Relevance

Relevance – the appropriateness of the project objectives to the problems to be solved and to the needs and the social environment. This includes an assessment of the quality of the project design regarding the internal logic and coherence, and also of the completeness of the planning process.

Efficiency

Efficiency – an assessment of whether the project direct results have been achieved at reasonable cost; also an assessment of the implementation of activities in terms of quality, quantity and time, and of the quality of the results/products achieved.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness – the contribution of the direct results to the achievement of the specific project objectives, the benefits received and the target groups reached by the project or measure.

Impact

Impact – an assessment of the broader influence of the project on its wider social environment; the qualitative changes achieved, and the contribution to the policy or sector objectives, specified in the overall objectives of each particular project or measure.

Sustainability

Sustainability – the extent to which the benefits produced by the project are likely to continue after funding has ended, with particular reference to policy support, ownership by beneficiaries, socio-cultural aspects, institutional and management capacity and financial factors.

Applicable for projects and complex strategies, these are the standard criteria for evaluation of projects and programmes. They are also given in the European Commission guidelines to evaluation procedures.

Figure 2: Hierarchy of project objectives and evaluation criteria
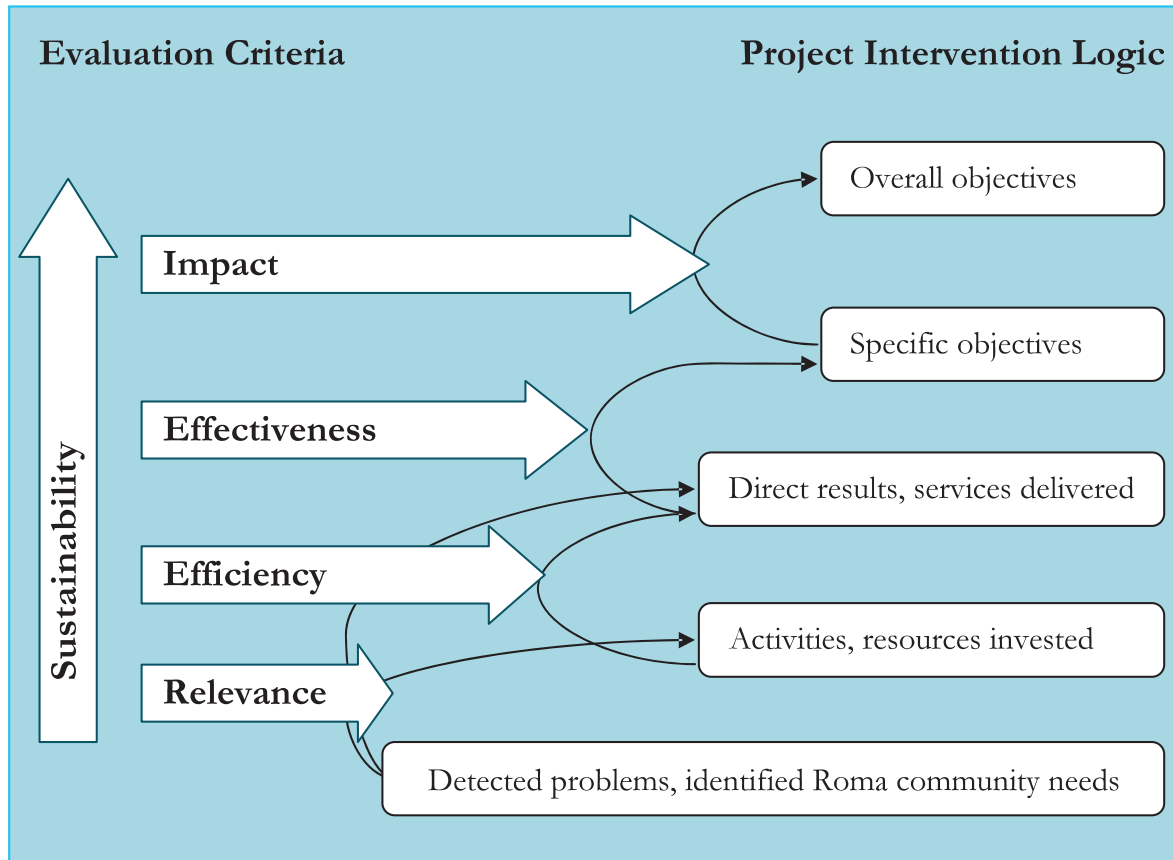
1.5.4. Indicators

How do we know that a programme has met its objectives? To judge this the M&E System has to rely on indicators. An indicator is a characteristic or an attribute that can be measured in order to assess a project in terms of direct results, benefits delivered and long term effects on the initial social context.

This M&E System includes two main types of indicators for measuring the change (improvement or deterioration) in Roma conditions:

- **Progress indicators**, included in the Overall Logframe Table and in the Logframes of each individual project or measure;

- **Status indicators**, included in the Status Indicators Table (Annex A.2)

Essentially, the **progress indicators** are closely linked to a particular intervention or project; they are formulated on the basis of the particular project planning as an inherent part of the project design.

Progress indicators are both **qualitative and quantitative**. They correspond to the intervention levels of the respective project (as illustrated on Table 1).

> **Progress indicators** measure to what extent a concrete programme (or a complex of interrelated programmes) has achieved its stated objectives, expected benefits and estimated direct results.

Table 1: Progress Indicators: Description and Examples

Progress Indicators	Examples
Overall objectives level (impact level)	
The indicators on this level assess the impact and the long term qualitative changes influenced by the evaluated programme.	'Increased school participation of the Roma children in pre-school education and primary school up to the average for the country.' (Strategy level)
	'Increased percentage of Roma children prepared for successful start up at school - ?% compared to ?% for the specified period in community Y.' (Project level)
Specific objectives level (effectiveness level)	
These indicators measure the benefits for the target groups, achieved by the direct results of the project.	'Increased percentage of Roma children enrolled in early education, through Summer kindergarten, with ?% for the project school year in the county Z.'
Direct results level (activities / results implementation level)	
These indicators verify the actual implementation of the planned project activities and the direct results of the particular project being monitored or evaluated.	'Number of Roma children at pre-school age, included in the Summer Kindergarten activity'

Essentially the status indicators are not directly linked to a specific measure or project. In fact, the social context changes also without projects and targeted measures.

Selected status indicators for the Roma conditions in Romania are included in the separate Status Indicators Table. (See Annex A.2 in Part Three of the Handbook.) Some of these indicators correspond to the list of the Social Inclusion Tertiary Indicators, elaborated for Romania (in 2006), with a special focus on Roma

Status Indicators are used to register the status of Roma conditions. They serve to compare the changes reached in different domains for particular periods, and to measure the progress of social inclusion and development in Roma communities.

communities – providing the Roma dimension to some common problems of socially excluded groups and measuring the progress of the Social Inclusion process for the Roma communities as well.

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Information Plus

Three types of status indicators are used here:

The main indicators register the actual status of Roma community development, with regard to living conditions, poverty rates, demographic trends, education levels, income generation levels, etc. The list indicates some specific aspects of the problems, which are:

i) Typical mostly for Roma communities (such as early marriages, teenage mothers, families with many children, lack of identity, civic status and property documents, level of urbanization and regulation of Roma neighbourhoods, etc.);

ii) Considered essential for an assessment of specific Roma targets and for estimating the extent to which structural problems of Roma community development have been overcome during a certain period.

The access indicators assess the extent to which deficits in Roma conditions are being overcome and also how the gap between the conditions of the Roma and non-Roma is being reduced. For instance, these indicators measure the achieved level of access to services, education, employment, health, justice, etc. Specific indicators help assessing gender dimension and the increased (or diminished) access of Roma women to services and the extent of their participation in the decision-making in the community.

The perception/attitudes indicators are qualitative, relative indicators, showing prevailing opinions, perceptions, level of segregation and discriminatory attitudes towards Roma people, as well as the self-perception and self-segregation of the Roma themselves.

The structure of the Status Indicators Table follows the type of the indicators as presented above and where applicable, the indicators are grouped by domains. The M&E Units will use the Status Indicators Table to assess the current status of Roma conditions and the level of exclusion/inclusion of Roma, comparing it to the average level for Romania.

This M&E System is designed to be in operation for a period longer than the life cycle of one programme, or one strategy. The Overall Logframe Table of interventions focused on Roma will needs to be completed and revised when new large scale programmes are initiated. An evolving social context and changing Roma communities necessitate the updating of the Status Indicators Table on a regular basis, in line with detected changes.

! ! !
Just a reminder

An open and flexible M&E System requires regular updating of the key tools used in its implementation.

The regular updating of the M&E tools and other supporting activities are part of the working agenda, helping to maintain the infrastructure for the functioning of the M&E System.

1.5.5. Choosing The Methods For Data Collection

The M&E System requires diverse baseline data on Roma conditions and information about the implemented measures and their results. The data is usually classified as qualitative and quantitative. Representative data presents the general situation and the trends of changes. Data is also said to be subjective when it involves personal feelings, attitudes and perceptions, and objective when it relates to observable facts that, in theory at least, do not concern personal opinions.

The process of data collection and analysis follows several general principles.

In order to be useful, the data has to be collected, aggregated and analysed in a structured way. Presented here are some of the general principles and requirements for the process of collection and analysis of data that should be applied in all cases, in order to ensure the reliability of the information. Furthermore, these principles appear to provide important general criteria for the reliability of aggregated information:

Triangulation

The Triangulation Principle means the checking of information about the selected topic from several independent sources, in order to be sure that collected information is objective, relevant to the actual situation and not distorted on purpose or by mistake by the person/institution that has provided it. This principle of triangulation is applied not only by the monitors and evaluators but also by other experts (such as the programme developers) when they assess the community needs in a particular domain. The collection of data for the monitoring and evaluation tasks should also rely on at least two, and preferably three, independent sources of information on the targeted topic.

Compatibility of methods

Attention should be paid to which data collection methods are applied when the data is collected from different surveys and sources. If the methods are not compatible the analysts should take the differences into consideration in order to avoid distortion.

In some cases, comparing the data on one topic that has been collected with common methods but in different years can indicate the trends of change for a specific period. (For example, showing how the levels of unemployment, school enrolment, etc. are changing in a particular Roma community, county or in general for Roma in Romania).

Considering the time limits of collected data

It should always be kept in mind that society and also Roma communities are continually changing. The M&E Units need to consider the time limits of the information describing the dynamics of social processes and changing communities.

It will often be the case, when the situations in two different Roma communities (locations) are analyzed and compared, that the M&E teams will have data referring to different years. For instance, the available figures for the unemployment rates could refer to 2002 for the first community and to 2007 for the second one. In this case these figures would not be enough to draw conclusions about the differences in the current economic situation in these communities. In order to justify such a conclusion one would have to consider what kinds of processes have influenced the situation in both communities meanwhile.

The implementation of all M&E activities includes collection of different data through making surveys and/or exchange of information with partner institutions. In general, the choice of techniques for collecting data follows the design of particular M&E tasks – it is part of the action planning process. Depending on the objectives and expected products of each M&E activity, the M&E Units can apply one or several of the techniques listed below.

Table 2 gives a brief description of the most frequently used techniques and types of surveys used for data collection, with a special focus on the tasks of the M&E System. It helps to understand when a particular technique is most useful, and who can do the job (for instance, subcontracted experienced organisations, M&E Units themselves, trained and instructed local resource people or NGO representatives, hired experts, university students).

Table 2: Techniques and methods for data collection frequently used by M&E systems

Technique / Brief description	Type of results / Uses	Who can do this?
Surveys: questionnaires, opinion polls, qualitative research Survey information is usually acquired through structured interviews or self-administered questionnaires. There are three main ways of obtaining data in a survey: by mail, telephone and face-to-face interviews.	Surveys produce: • Quantitative and qualitative data; • Representative relative data about the trends in a current situation; • Qualitative data about opinions. Surveys are applicable for all types of M&E activities.	Subcontracted experienced organisations or experts
Door-to-door direct data collection (It is also a survey) A questionnaire is designed, listing the main topics of interest with a template for filling in the data. This helps all interviewers to collect the same data, asking questions in a more or less unified way. (The Census is also carried out door-to-door.)	Door-to-door surveys are used mainly for collecting quantitative data on particular indicators for selected Roma communities. For example, new data from the field about the absolute number of Roma population in the location, the number of Roma pupils, school attendance, housing conditions, etc.	County M&E Units, LRE, Local NGOs People involved in the informal local networks: health mediators, school mediators, local Roma leaders
Case studies are in-depth studies on important phenomena, problems or issues, which have to be analysed from different points of view and from a multiple perspective. The case study issue may concern the development of programmes or of a specific group, like the Roma community.	Case studies produce rich and varied qualitative information about the roots and current trends of a problem – in this way they build up detailed and deep understanding of the real-life processes of change.	Subcontracted experts
Direct observations applying anthropological methods can be conducted in Roma communities, project locations, etc.	Direct observations provide varied data about project events and activities, the participation of different groups and stakeholders and their opinions, the spirit of the community, etc. Direct observation helps to better understand the relationships – inside a Roma community, between partners involved, between institutions and citizens, and so on.	The evaluators and the monitors

Expert opinions are collected through various questionnaires, interviews, meetings, discussions	This method can provide a picture of the specific opinions of experts or responsible officials / institutions.	All M&E Units The evaluators and the monitors
Focus groups are a way of checking the attitudes and opinions about selected concrete issues (for example, the attitude of Roma and non-Roma parents to school segregation). The focus groups represent the opinions of different groups (selected by age, gender, ethnic origin, profession, etc.) on the issue.	Focus groups provide qualitative information, mainly reflecting prevailing opinions. They are very useful for a deeper understanding of arguments that justify these opinions. (Why they think like that and what can make them change their opinions)	Experts with specific skills and experience in conducting a focus group and analysing the results (M&E Units can assist the logistic.)
Desk research – Reviewing the programme documents, the existing surveys, books, reports, etc. This is a given task for the start of any process of data collection or M&E analysis.	Desk research provides a structured and analysed picture of existing data, and initial background information about the project to be monitored or evaluated	All M&E Units, according to their specific tasks

In addition, there is a long list of specific research methods applied by professional research organisations and experts which can be sub-contracted for carrying out particular surveys. The selection of the techniques and tools for subcontracted surveys is usually part of the methodology proposed by the subcontractor and approved by the Central M&E Unit.

Various data collection methods are available for gathering data. The choice depends on the specific tasks and skills of the people assigned to do the job. The most common data collection activities for this M&E System are presented in detail in Chapter 5 of the Handbook.
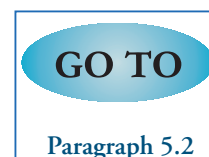
1.6. Who Benefits From An Operating M&E System?

Monitoring and evaluation systems are not an end in themselves. Investing human energy, efforts and emotions, financial resources and time, an M&E System has to be justified in terms of the actual benefits it brings to programme makers and target communities.

!

Only an M&E system that makes a difference to policy and programme success is considered useful and successful.

1.6.1. What Are The Direct Results And Outcomes Of M&E?

The M&E System envisages activities in several main directions, such as: collection of information about the progress of programme interventions and baseline data on Roma conditions; monitoring and evaluations, outreach activities, etc. The hard work of the teams involved is expected to produce particular M&E results – various reports, background analyses, concrete data, completed information sheets, written analytical papers, and recommendations.

The following direct results and products may come out of an operating M&E System:

- Up-to-date objective baseline data on Roma conditions at national, county and community levels;

- Aggregated database of completed, current and future programmes and projects targeting Roma conditions;

- Background information, collected from the field, on a particular topic or domain;

- Monitoring reports with findings on project progress of Roma targeted measures, and on the involvement of the Roma beneficiaries in mainstream Social Inclusion measures;

- Objective reviews of programme achievements and failures, feedback of Roma target beneficiaries;

- Evaluation reports: comprehensive impact reports, sectoral and thematic evaluation reports, evaluation reports on particular individual projects, etc.;

- Written, backed up recommendations on programme design and approaches;

- Analytical reports with recommendations on priorities / objectives / measures in particular domains;

- Practical proposals and recommendations for operational action planning;

- Identified good practices – described and presented;

- Lessons learned, including analysis and description.

Once the direct results and outcomes of M&E activities are produced and correctly disseminated, they should bring specific, long term benefits for the strengthening of current and future policies and programmes.

1.6.2. The Beneficiaries

The **direct beneficiaries** due to utilise the results of the M&E process are:

1) **The implementing organisations**: This is quite a long list, including all the institutions and organisations that are implementing projects and measures, such as: ministries, state agencies, inter-ministerial commissions, prefectures and municipal authorities, national and local NGOs, Roma community organisations and initiative groups.

2) **Programming units, policy makers, and experts** involved in the elaboration, designing and initiating of public policies, mainstream measures and targeted programmes for improvement of

Roma conditions, (such as NAR directorate, the Public Policy Unit to the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG), Structural Funds authorities, the programme writers in Roma and non-Roma NGOs, donor organisations, etc.) All of them utilise the reports and recommendations produced by the M&E teams for further improvement of policy and programme design.

Finally, the **indirect beneficiaries** of the M&E process are **vulnerable Roma communities** who should benefit from improved programmes and policies.

The M&E teams should always remember that this considerable effort is required by the need to find more effective feasible solutions for existing Roma problems. Revised interventions should address more closely the priority community needs, and apply already proven good practices and models.

The M&E findings do not aim to point out winners and losers, but to analyse working models and non-working practices. There is no room for criticism or self-congratulation, but for lessons learned and recommendations for improvement. The only real winners or losers are the target beneficiaries of all these strategies and interventions – the people in detached, isolated communities.

1.6.3. Benefits And Long Term Effects

An operating M&E System can make a difference to policy and programme success in various directions. The results together with the benefits of the M&E System are shown below:
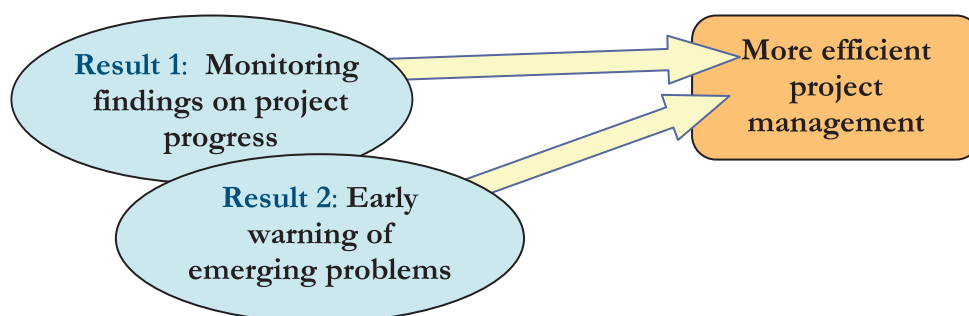
Objective monitoring reports provide a clear picture of the to-date project progress, highlighting the actual achievements and emerging problems, and offering options to improve the project's performance and to make the investments of funds more effective.

Early warning of emerging problems in on-going programmes due to weak planning or to unexpected changes in the social context provides an opportunity to 'save' some risky programmes or measures. When applicable, the early warning can be supported with concrete recommendations and proposed options for reaction.

Monitoring and evaluation is indispensable for good programme management and for a M&E System to succeed, it needs to be driven by the managers' needs for information, their use of information and their will to create a learning environment.
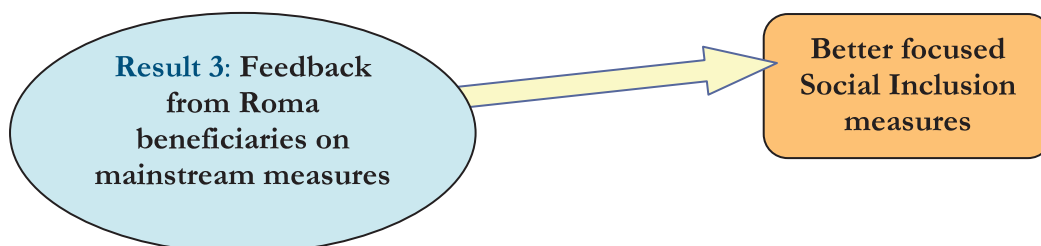
The feedback from the beneficiaries provided during the monitoring of the on-going Social Inclusion programmes is required as good management practice for conducting mainstream measures too. In the broader context of the launched Social Inclusion policies, the M&E System highlights how inclusive the mainstream Social Inclusion measures are for the vulnerable Roma communities, i.e. to what extent they are designed to reach the excluded Roma as well. In this way the M&E System may help to increase the effectiveness of the mainstream measures regarding Roma inclusion.
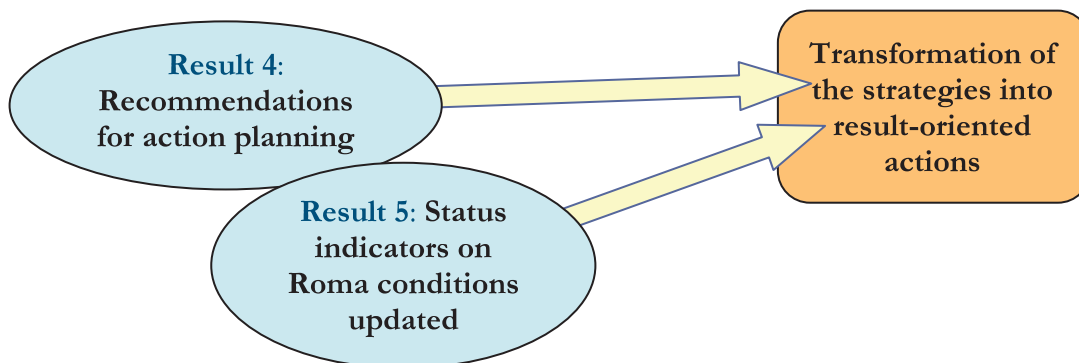

Reviewing work already done for monitoring and evaluation, the M&E analysts provide practical recommendations for budgeted and feasible action planning of current or future projects and measures. They can propose options for the revision of activities as well as concrete indicators, both helping to transform the strategies into result-oriented actions. Public debates and feedback from the targeted communities can also encourage the revision of the policy measures, helping to embed them in reality.
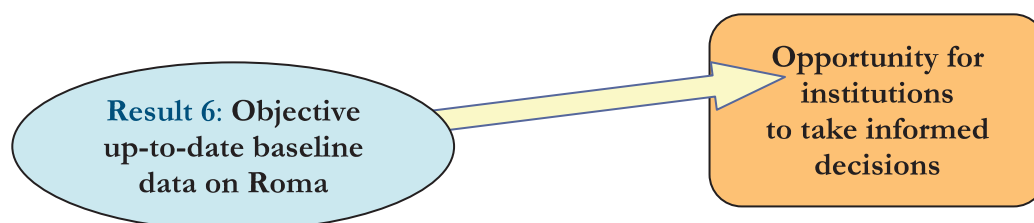
In addition, the objective up-to-date baseline information can be used by the decision makers and the planning officers. In other words, the data collected by the M&E teams serves as solid ground to step on, both for nation wide and county action plans, thus making the operational planning process much easier and more tangible.

Once structured and analysed, this baseline data provides the institutions with broad opportunities to take informed decisions for managing current measures and designing future programmes for improvement of Roma conditions.

Usual products of monitoring and evaluation exercises are the good practices and lessons learned by the project teams during the implementation process. By analysing what really works M&E teams also identify good practices which can then be replicated in other regions or in other domains. In order for this to happen at all, the detailed descriptions of good practices have to include accurate written analysis of success factors and conditions for the applicability of practices which are helpful for the programming process in future.
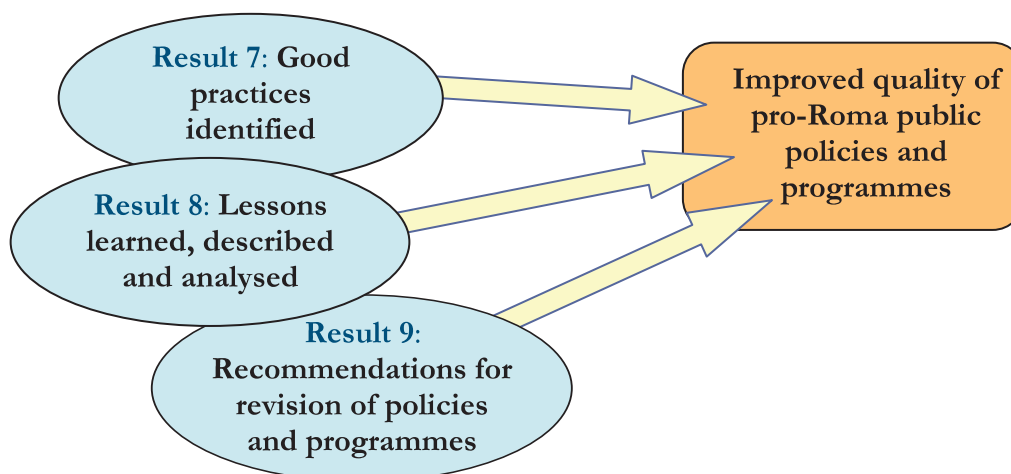
Just as important is the identification of approaches or activities that were ineffective and brought no positive results. Analysis of these lessons learned provides clear practical recommendations on how to avoid mistakes in future.

Recommendations for developing and improving further interventions focused on Roma come out of general M&E conclusions and from analysis of good practices and lessons learned. Providing good models for implementation and warnings of risky approaches and actions, the M&E System should serve as a tool for the strengthening of future policies and programmes.
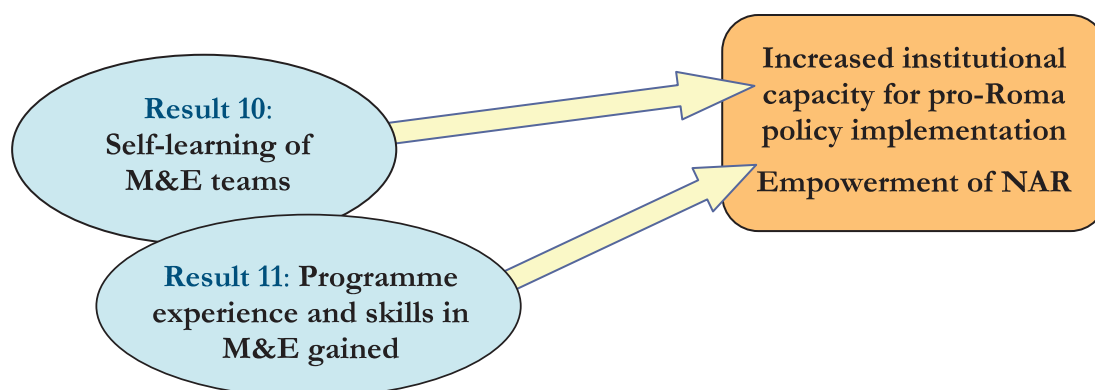
Self-learning is a natural component of institutional capacity building. Findings and conclusions provoke self-assessment by all actors involved in the design and management of pro-Roma policies, stimulating reflection and debate on the factors that determine success or failure.

Self-learning can often become a sensitive issue, but the readiness to face new challenges and accept less favourable feedback on the effectiveness of implemented interventions is a crucial indicator both of the maturity of the institutions/structures themselves, and of the consistency of political intentions to effect real change in Roma conditions.

The ambition of this M&E System is to support the better understanding of the stakeholders for the process of social change inside Roma communities. In addition, it requires functional communication channels and links between the institutions, NGOs and community leaders, involved in M&E. Practical experience gained in inter-sectoral cooperation strengthens the institutional capacity for implementation of the National Strategy itself.

Accurate monitoring and evaluation outlines the real picture of how a programme intervention has influenced the situation in Roma communities. It demonstrates the actual achievements and/or failures of conducted measures and programmes, highlighting the reasons and factors that have influenced the programme performance.
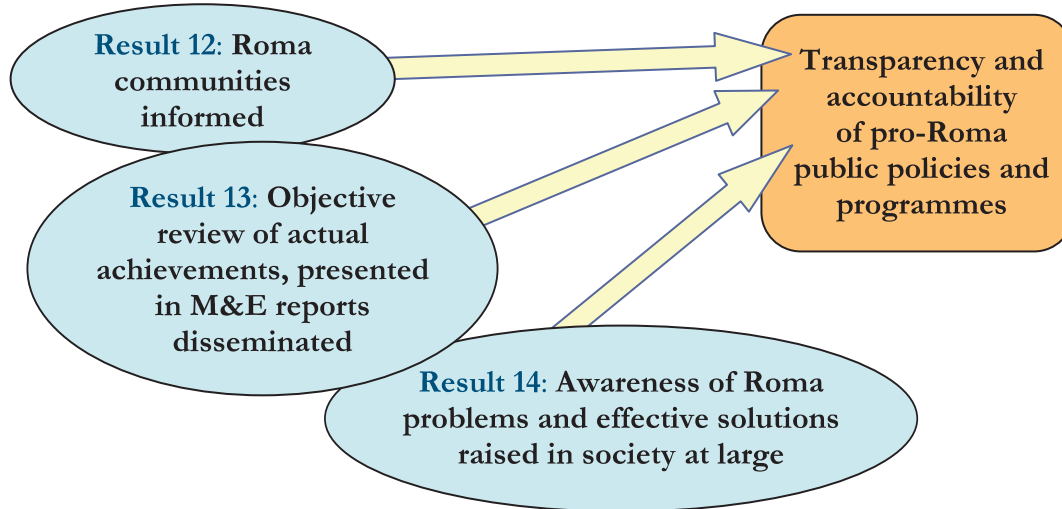
Finally disseminating the M&E results is vital for the effectiveness of the M&E System. It ensures the accountability of all actors involved in the implementation of Roma focused measures and projects. The outreach activities and the initiation of public debate on the key M&E conclusions and recommendations help to ensure the transparency of the public policies for Roma.

It is important to underline that no benefits of M&E can be achieved without transparency. The formulated conclusions and recommendations of the monitoring and evaluation will only be useful when the right institutions and stakeholders are reached.

Chapter 2. Who Will Apply The M&E System?

2.1. Institutional Framework

Who makes the M&E System work? A network of M&E Units at national, regional and county levels implements the M&E System.

The M&E System for the National Strategy and interventions focused on Roma is coordinated by the NAR, based on inputs from national, county and local level stakeholders. The implementation mechanism of the system is based on the structures created for carrying out the National Strategy and on the structures responsible for the Social Inclusion measures. (See Figures 3 and 4.)

> **! ! !**
> **Just a reminder**
>
> The M&E System relies on inputs from stakeholders and institutions assigned to implement pro-Roma measures.

The institutional framework of the M&E System clarifies which institutions are involved, how their involvement is regulated through particular Government and local acts (laws, Government decisions, orders, and task descriptions), and how the introduced M&E activities fit their regular tasks and responsibilities as institutions.

Administrative regulations for M&E System implementation cover:
Responsibilities in M&E Creation of M&E Units Inter-institutional cooperation between ministries and other public institutions **Regulations are based on the GD regarding:**
National Strategy Social Inclusion measures

Setting up the implementation mechanism for this M&E System also requires the creation of some new structures and staff positions. Firstly, this is the network of M&E Units covering the whole country. Furthermore, new opportunities for cooperation between institutions are open for the implementation of M&E tasks.

This M&E System is related to the current National Strategy approved by the Romanian Government,[4] and will utilise the structures created specifically for its implementation.

> The M&E System will involve the structures created for the National Strategy implementation:
> ▶ Working Group for Public Policies for Roma (WGPPR);
> ▶ Ministerial Commissions for Roma (MCR);
> ▶ County Mixed Working Groups (MWG);
> ▶ Reformed County Offices for Roma (BJR);
> ▶ Local Roma Experts (LRE) who are hired by the municipal administration.

4   GD 430/2001, modified and improved by the GD 522/2006

Up until now, according to existing acts and documents, these structures and related institutions (including NAR) are assigned not only with implementing the National Strategy but also with monitoring and evaluation and controlling tasks and functions. So, additional administrative regulations are only needed to enlarge and specify the M&E tasks of existing structures.

! ! !
Attention

Responsibilities of the structures created for the National Strategy implementation (Extracts from GD 522/2006)

In accordance with the established attributions corresponding to the GD. No. 750/2005, the **Working Group for Public Policies for Roma**, coordinates and monitors the implementation of Roma Public Policies, including the activities foreseen in the General Plan of Measures for applying the Governmental Strategy to Improve Roma Conditions.

The **Ministries** involved in implementing the National Strategy are responsible for the organising, planning, coordinating, and controlling of all activities in their field of responsibility, as part of the General Plan of Measures.

Ministerial Commissions for Roma have monthly meetings, or when needed, in order to analyse the phase of activities foreseen in the General Plan of Measures from their own activity sector. The Ministerial Commission has 4-5 members (chiefs of directorates and experts), whose responsibility is to accomplish their tasks from the General Plan of Measures.

The main responsibilities of the **Roma County Offices** are organisation, planning, and coordination of activities that fulfil the aims and tasks of the General Plan of Measures at county level. In the Roma County Office there are 3-4 designated experts, of which at least one must be a member of the Roma community.

County Mixed Working Groups for Roma: Roma County Offices create the Mixed Working Groups for Roma at county level, formed by deputy prefects, representatives of the Roma County Offices and of the Regional Offices of the NAR, representatives of the decentralized public services of the ministries and other central public administration subordinated to the Government, (which have their headquarters in those counties), school mediators and health mediators, inspectors for Roma and Roma teachers, representatives of NGOs and delegated representatives of Roma communities.

The Mixed Working Group meets monthly or when necessary, to **analyse, plan, organise and to implement sector activities** in order to accomplish the aims and tasks of the General Plan of Measures at county level.

Local Roma Experts represent the main mediators between Roma communities and local public administration. They are **responsible** for **organising, planning, coordinating and running different activities** in order to accomplish the aims and tasks of the General Plan of Measures.

Looking to the future, the M&E System is designed to also consider possible modifications in the implementation mechanism of future National Strategy.

At the same time, according to the Government decision for Social Inclusion (GD 1217/2006) NAR is directly involved in the Social Inclusion policies as well. Apparently, these two M&E tasks of NAR do not necessitate the creation of two parallel M&E networks/structures inside the Agency. The monitoring and evaluation of both policy lines is covered by one network of M&E Units assigned with 'doubled' functions and tasks – one network, working in both directions: Roma targeted interventions and mainstream measures.

2.2. Network Of M&E Units

The networking approach is selected as a basis for the structures for implementation of the M&E System. It is a reasonable choice with regard to the need for cooperation with central and local institutions, data providers, and resource people from local and grassroots level. The circle of possible and necessary contributors to M&E is much larger than the staff of the NAR itself. Networking helps the involvement of various actors in joint activities, even if subordinated to different institutions (such as NAR, BJR to Prefectures, LRE to the Mayors), or working as an inter-institutional body like the County MWG.

The main elements of the implementation mechanism are the M&E Units based on the NAR structures, (i.e. the central directorate and the regional offices established in 8 development regions in Romania) and on structures involved in the implementation of the National Strategy, such as the County MWGs and the BJR. (See Figure 3 below.)

The M&E network includes:

▶ 1 Central M&E Unit based in the central office of NAR and working at national level;

▶ 8 Regional M&E Units based in the 8 regional offices of NAR, working at regional level and supporting the County M&E Units;

▶ 42 County M&E Units created alongside the County Mixed Working Groups (MWG) and the BJR, and working at county and local level.

How does the M&E System fit with NAR structures?

The overall network of M&E Units is directed by **NAR**. This M&E System is linked to the **Social Inclusion Unit** (SIU) in the NAR. The operational planning of the monitoring and evaluation activities, reporting, allocations of resources and people, etc. is coordinated and approved by NAR. Naturally, the central directorate of NAR takes the overall responsibility on the general 'policy' decisions in the tasks of the M&E System, such as setting the long term and short term priorities for the monitoring and evaluation actions and dissemination of the products of the M&E System. In addition, there are the responsibilities for supervising the M&E System, supporting and controlling the work of the M&E Units.

The **Central M&E Unit** is responsible for the overall coordination of the network of units at regional and county levels, and for the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation activities. On a horizontal line it maintains negotiated cooperation with the contact persons in ministries and institutions at national level. It also coordinates the information exchange and possible joint activities with other M&E structures, created to monitor and evaluate relevant mainstream policy measures (like the Social Inclusion and relevant operational programmes of the Structural Funds).

The M&E System implementation mechanism foresees mainly **two types of linkage between the M&E Units and institutions involved:**

▶ **On a vertical line** the Central M&E Unit coordinates and supervises the Regional Units, and each Regional Unit coordinates and supervises the County Units from their region;

▶ **On a horizontal line** there are relations between each M&E Unit and their corresponding stakeholders, being institutions on national, regional, county and local levels.

The **Regional M&E Units** work on two axes – vertical and horizontal. On the vertical line they play an important role as an intermediary unit liaising with the Central and County M&E Units. They also provide direct assistance and support to the County M&E units and participate in the implementation of tasks at county level. On the horizontal line the

Regional M&E Units are responsible for maintaining relations with the regional and county institutions who can provide data on Roma conditions.

On the vertical line the work of the **County M&E Units** is supervised and coordinated by the Regional M&E units. At the same time the County Units communicate directly with the Central M&E Unit in NAR. On the horizontal line the County M&E Units maintain relations with the county level institutions, municipalities, mayors, etc.

In addition, the County M&E Units have to develop **informal community-based networks** of resource people (such as Local Roma experts, Roma inspectors, health and school mediators, NGOs, formal and informal Roma leaders) involving them in the M&E activities and data collection at the grassroots level.

Figure 3: Chart of the Implementation Mechanism of the M&E System
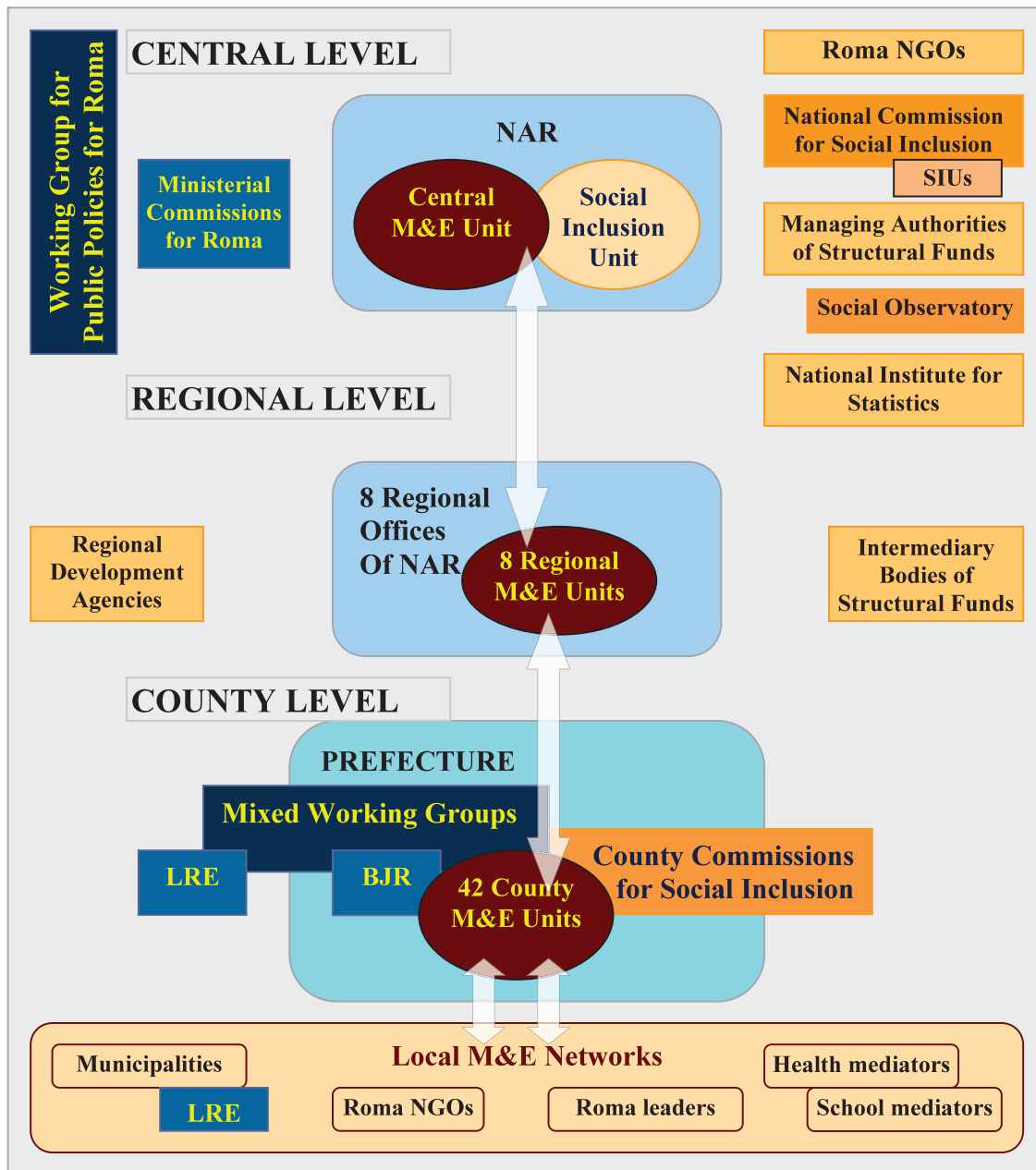
2.3. Linking With Social Inclusion Structures

2.3.1. Emerging Structures For Social Inclusion

Besides the M&E Units of NAR, other new structures for coordination and monitoring of the mainstream policy on Social Inclusion have been designed and established in Romania – the National Commission for Social Inclusion has been set up. (See the attached list of institutions – members of NCSI in Annex A.1) Its local structures – the County Commissions for Social Inclusion are created. At the time of writing (February 2008) the arrangements of the 'Social Observatory' were still ongoing. Large scale monitoring and evaluation activities of the European Structural Funds, of the social inclusion and other mainstream policy measures are foreseen as well.

The M&E System is designed to collaborate with the structures for coordination and monitoring of the Social Inclusion policy:

▶ The National Commission for Social Inclusion (NCSI);

▶ County Commissions for Social Inclusion (CCSI);

▶ The 'Social Observatory';

▶ Social Inclusion Units (SIU).

In line with Government decisions, all the ministries and state agencies involved in the NSCI are establishing social inclusion units within their administrative structures.

! ! !
Attention

Responsibilities of the structures for the Social Inclusion Mechanism in Romania (Extracts from GD 1217/2006)

National Commission for Social Inclusion (NCSI):

Membership: One state secretary or president of each governmental institution (ministry, agency, authority) responsible for social inclusion. The president of NCSI is the minister of MLFEO.

Main tasks: Identifies national priorities in social inclusion, sets the national action plan, approves the monitoring reports, approves the indicators for social inclusion, coordinates and approves the national report on social inclusion.

Social Inclusion Units (SIU):

Membership: Each governmental institution (ministry, agency, authority) responsible for social inclusion has a SIU. The goal of a SIU is to monitor Romania's engagements regarding the social inclusion international documents. Each SIU should have 3 members and the coordinator of the SIU participates in the NCSI meetings.

Main tasks: Coordinates the monitoring of the implementation plans for social inclusion; evaluates the effects of the implementation plans measures; updates the social inclusion indicators; creates the information system for the data regarding social inclusion, and monitors the progress of the SI Annual Report' objectives and indicators.

County Commissions for Social Inclusion (CCSI):

Membership: Created under the Prefecture, its members are: one representative from each county governmental institution (ministry, agency, authority) responsible for social inclusion; NGOs; local councils and county councils representatives.

Main tasks: Sets and approves the County Plan for Social Inclusion; monitors the plans and disseminates the results; informs the NCSI on a regular basis.

As part of the NCSI, the NAR also has a Social Inclusion Unit. As explained, NAR has the task of establishing one integral network of M&E units covering both targeted and mainstream measures.
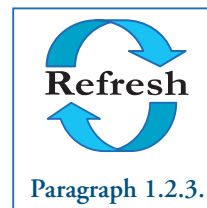
Some of the institutions involved in the WGPPR create two parallel units for implementation and for monitoring of the Roma Strategy and Social Inclusion measures (MCR and SIUs). In either case, these (one integrated or two parallel) the M&E units inside thes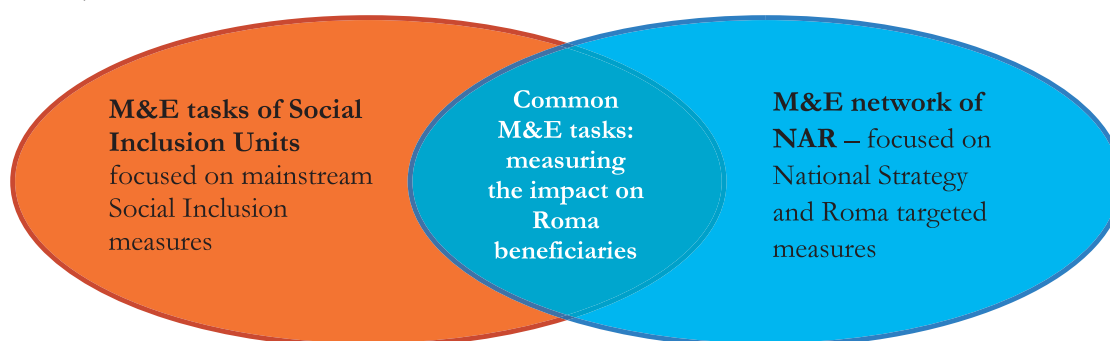e institutions can become the natural partners in the monitoring and evaluation process. If there is no correlation on common issues between both M&E Systems, the participants involved in M&E will have to choose how to communicate.

Both M&E networks have their particular M&E tasks that do not fully coincide in terms of target groups, domains and issues addressed but the measures launched for Roma inclusion create a common ground for joint action.

M&E tasks of Social Inclusion Units focused on mainstream Social Inclusion measures

Common M&E tasks: measuring the impact on Roma beneficiaries

M&E network of NAR – focused on National Strategy and Roma targeted measures

Here we can see **the 'circles' of M&E tasks,** assigned to both structures – the M&E Units of NAR and of the Social Inclusion Units – national and county. The 'circles' overlap in an important part of the M&E issues, thus highlighting the field of common interests and likely complementarities between both M&E Systems.

2.3.2. What Does Synchronising The M&E Systems Mean?

First of all, this means to follow a common road while assessing the progress in influencing the Roma conditions. The administrative regulations provide particular signs indicating that many of the positions/people involved in the structures for mainstream Social Inclusion and for targeted pro-Roma Strategy could be the same. (See Figures 3, 4 and Annex A.1)

Synchronising policies and mechanisms for measuring the effectiveness and structural impact of social interventions has been identified as a need imposed by the situation. There is considerable potential for joint activities (such as joint surveys, regular exchange of information, update of the M&E tools and general concepts and issuing joint reports on topics of common interest) ensuring complementarities of know-how and resources (human and financial) of both M&E Systems.

In practical terms, synchronising requires particular actions (meetings, discussions, research and input of experts) to identify, approve and apply:

- Common approaches for monitoring and evaluation, in particular regarding the involvement of Roma beneficiaries in the M&E process;

- Common indicators for coinciding issues, included in the sets of indicators of both M&E Systems which describe the dimensions of social exclusion of Roma communities;

- Compatible / similar techniques for data collection and surveys for topics of common interest that will allow both M&E Systems to use the data in drafting out analysis, reports, recommendations.

Synchronising the M&E systems of the Roma targeted programmes and of the mainstream social inclusion measures is required in order to achieve coherent conclusions and to make clear policy recommendations.

Correlating the sets of indicators used by both M&E systems is an essential part of the process.

Working together, the Social Inclusion Units and the network of M&E Units for the Roma targeted measures will improve the efficiency of both monitoring and evaluation systems.

Figure 4: Mechanisms for the National Strategy and for Social Inclusion

COUNTY LEVEL

Institution of the Prefect

COUNTY MIXED WORKING GROUP

MEMBERS:
- Representatives of decentralised institutions
- LRE in the municipalities
- Roma NGOs

County M&E Units

County Office for Roma (BJR)

County Labour and Social Solidarity Directorate

Common members

COUNTY COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

MEMBERS:
- Representatives of decentralised institutions
- NGOs
- Local and county councilors

2.3.3. Working Together

The process of establishing the cooperation in M&E between the SIUs and the network of M&E Units for Roma targeted interventions will pass through the **following stages**:

- Negotiation of the parameters of the cooperation and the joint activities with the social inclusion structures, carried out by NAR, and finalized with a framework document, approved by the WGPPR and the NCSI;

- Administrative regulation of cooperation: issuing Government and local decisions and orders, appointing the coordinating structures, and allocating resources for joint actions;

- Setting up the communication channels for the exchange of information; procedures and rules for planning and conducting of joint activities.

At national policy level the agreement with the Social Inclusion commissions and units is within the responsibilities of NAR. The Agency is represented in the National Commission for Social Inclusion. If necessary, NAR can attract additional support of the WGPPR members and 'utilise' its positions in the Ministerial Commissions for Roma as well. Of course, the Central M&E Unit is expected to prepare a draft proposal, justifying the concrete options for joint activities with the SIUs.

Once general agreement is reached, the Central M&E Unit takes over the initiative to specify in detail the joint action and the terms of the cooperation with the corresponding technical experts' level in the Social Inclusion structures.

As a logical next step, information about the agreements effected at national level needs to reach the direct M&E implementers at county level and in this way to open the door for easy working contact

between related institutions. The Central M&E Unit informs the Regional and County M&E Units about negotiated joint activities and explains the details. In parallel, this information is transferred from the top to the county level within the Social Inclusion structures.

Figure 5 outlines the process of coordination of the plans and joint actions between the M&E Units and the Social Inclusion structures. Furthermore, the M&E Units and the Social Inclusion structures can use these coordination channels for synchronising the M&E Systems for Roma focused interventions and for the mainstream social inclusion measures. This process happens in the 'middle row' of the scheme, involving mainly the experts from the Central M&E Unit and from the SIU and the Social Observatory when established.

Synchronising is not a single act, but a process, affecting the concepts, methodology, the sets of indicators used, the approaches of analysis, and even the guiding principles and values. The experts in both systems can make a start by exchanging information, investing time and ideas in discussions and regular meetings. In fact, initiating joint surveys and issuing common policy reports leads naturally to the correlation of indicators, methodology and data collection techniques applied.

Figure 5: Process of coordination with the Social Inclusion commissions and units.
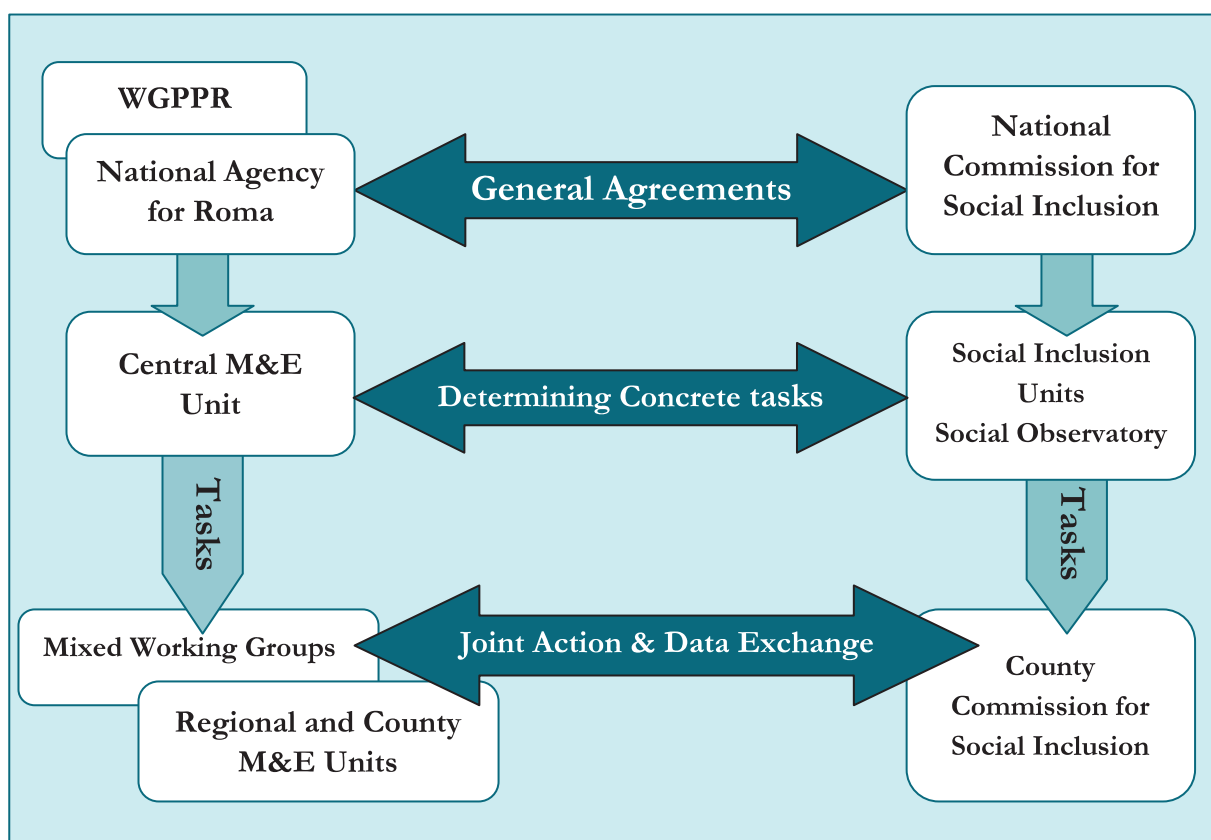
The field of common interests and overlapping M&E tasks determines the scope of optional joint activities and mutual support of both M&E Systems.

The most important **possible joint actions** are:

• **Joint surveys and research** which can be carried out together with experts involved in social inclusion structures for measuring progress in the social inclusion of Roma communities, poverty

levels or other topics of common interest. The findings and results of the joint surveys will be available to both partners for analysis and report writing.

- **Regular exchange of information** on issues of common interest is a considerable opportunity for complementarities of human and financial resources between two M&E Systems. Results of surveys, conducted independently, and the data collected through other sources and processed in their databases can be exchanged. In particular, the 'Roma' M&E Units might rely on the Social Observatory data on the National Social Inclusion Indicators, necessary for assessing the social inclusion levels reached in Roma communities.

- **Updating the M&E tools**, further development of the status indicators and concepts of crucial issues, such as social exclusion, poverty, ghetto culture, etc. can be achieved through meetings, joint discussions and exchange of expert opinions between the M&E System of NAR and the Social Inclusion M&E structures.

- **Issuing joint reports** on the progress of social inclusion for the Roma aiming to address stakeholders and public policy makers.

Proposed joint activities ensure complementarities of resources, human and financial, and allow sharing, instead of doubling (or wasting), the available resources for monitoring and evaluation. As an example, by contrast with the 'Roma' M&E Units, the social inclusion M&E structures are expected to have much larger funds for covering the survey costs, as well as know-how and hired experts for designing the surveys.

At the same time, the M&E Units in NAR are able to contribute real expertise on Roma issues and provide 'entry points' for the researchers in the neighbourhoods – both extremely important for designing and conducting surveys on Roma excluded groups.

2.4. Partners And Their Inputs To The M&E Process

2.4.1. Why Partnerships Are Important

NAR is the key actor in the implementation of the M&E System, but the Agency will not be able to do the job alone, relying on its own resources only. The effective functioning of this M&E System depends on the level of involvement and cooperation with the stakeholders and other institutions at national and local levels.

The implementation mechanism of the M&E System is based on:

i)   Collaboration with the **all actors involved in the implementation of pro-Roma programmes and measures**: ministries, government agencies and commissions, county administration, local authorities, civil society organisations; regional and county structures of decentralized national institutions and municipalities.

ii) Support from the **structures** created specifically for the implementation of the National Strategy: WGPPR, Ministerial Commissions for Roma and County MWGs;

iii) Functional collaboration with **other M&E structures and units** (such as the 'Social Observatory' and the M&E units for the Structural Funds) for synchronising indicators, joint activities and exchange of data;

iv) Setting up close relations with **various data collectors** (such as administrative databases, National Institute for Statistics) for exchange of information.

2.4.2. Identifying Stakeholders And Their Role In The M&E Process

Who is going to be involved in the M&E System? The implementers of M&E need to make a distinction between the 'major' categories of stakeholders, as determined by their different roles and possible contribution to M&E tasks.

Institutions implementing the programmes and measures which are monitored and/or evaluated	All the **institutions involved in the implementation** of the National Strategy and of the interventions focused on Roma are included in the list of potential and necessary partners and supporters. These are:

- **At national level**: all the ministries, national agencies, commissions, and other institutions, responsible for particular measures included in the General Plan;

- **At local level**: Prefectures, BJR, regional and county structures of decentralized national institutions, municipalities.

Supporters – civil organisations, strongly interested in increasing the quality of social policies and pro-Roma programmes

The proposed M&E System relies on the **support and actual involvement of civil society.** It foresees an enlargement of the circle of partnerships through increasing the role and direct participation of the Roma NGOs and organisations at national level, some non-Roma NGOs experienced in Roma programmes, local Roma NGOs, community-based organisations and initiative groups, representing the Roma communities at local level.

Institutions gathering information and baseline data, i.e. so-called data providers

The 'category' of **data providers** includes a list of organisations, exclusively engaged in collection of data (like the National Institute for Statistics, etc.). There are also departments in many central and local institutions (ministries, municipalities, agencies) assigned specifically to gather information and to maintain administrative databases on respective domains and problem issues.

In addition, NGOs and private companies specialized in conducting surveys and research will be contacted to negotiate the terms for provision of data to the M&E Units.

Social Inclusion Units and other M&E structures and units working on similar M&E tasks

Effective collaboration needs to be developed not only with the Social Inclusion Units, but also with **similar M&E units,** assigned with M&E for other programmes. Cooperation with the Managing Authorities and Intermediary Bodies of the Structural Funds, including Operational Programme for Human Resources Development (SOPHRD) is important for this M&E System, because the Roma are included in the priority target groups.

Moreover, in the near future, a significant number of Roma targeted measures planned within the framework of the Decade

for Roma Inclusion and/or in the next National Strategy, are likely to be funded by relevant Structural Funds.

2.4.3. How To Establish Effective Partnerships

The efforts to build a supportive institutional environment for the M&E System can make progress with the support of the NAR and the WGPPR, and through consistent and coordinated actions from the whole of the M&E network. The leading role in the M&E network is assigned to the Central M&E Unit, which will establish partnerships with the central institutions at national level and will assist the Regional and County M&E Units to develop the necessary partnerships at regional, county, local and grassroots levels.

Select specific targets for each partnership

As always, the first step is to define the targets: Why the M&E units need to involve a particular partner? What it can contribute to the implementation of M&E tasks? The answers must be very specific. For instance, if the M&E Units specify that the objective is to receive data, it is obligatory to know exactly:

i) what kind of data can be provided by this partner, and

ii) when the data is needed with regard to the timeline of the M&E tasks.

Specify exactly what terms of collaboration need to be achieved

The M&E Units need to act in a pragmatic way specifying what kind of signed documents or administrative regulations can guarantee the operative collaboration between this institution and the network of M&E units. A variety of forms exists, such as bilateral protocols, general agreements, internal administrative orders, supporting letters, etc., all applicable and helpful for different tasks and for different partners.

In order to be successful in negotiating partnerships, it is vital to understand the institutional background of the counterpart sitting across the table during negotiations (i.e. how this organisation functions, how decisions are taken and by whom). After consideration of all this, the M&E Units will be able to state clearly what they expect from the respective institution.

For instance, 'the County M&E Unit expects that the Mayor will appoint someone from the municipal administration as a contact person for the M&E System who will provide information on the implemented pro-Roma measures every 4 months.' Or: 'The Central M&E Unit needs a supporting letter from institution X for negotiating the collaboration with the SIU in institution Y.'

**! ! !
Attention**

The M&E Units need to know clearly what they expect from the potential partner. At the same time, they should be very careful in formulating their proposals to the related institutions in order to avoid misunderstanding.

When the expectations are made clear, the **M&E Units can offer options for solutions, but not direct solutions, to institutions** they negotiate with. Offering options for solutions does not mean interfering in the decision making of the counterpart institution.

Estimate the interest of the potential partner

In return, defined clear expectations and offered pragmatic options help institutions to estimate their likely involvement in M&E and thus more easily facilitate taking informed decisions.

Next, the M&E Units need to estimate the interests and motivation of the potential partner institution and what the M&E System can propose in response. As a rule, partnerships involve at least two parties and are sustainable only if there is this bilateral process.

Understanding the motivation of the potential partner will help to find the right way of provoking and increasing the interest of the potential partner in collaboration. The M&E Units need to make institutions aware of the benefits they may obtain from an operating M&E System in future. Again, the M&E Units should be very specific in promoting the likely benefits (such as summarized objective data on the topics of high interest for the potential partner institution; baseline information needed for development of programmes and attracting funds; recommendations and support for policy elaboration, etc.) [5]

> **Ideas proposed by the participants in the M&E training***
>
> **What can motivate local stakeholders to support the M&E System?**
>
> Mayors, local and county councillors:
> ▶ Political support from Roma leaders and Roma votes;
> ▶ Better political image;
> ▶ A second mandate for local / county councillors;
> ▶ New opportunities for solving the Roma problems;
> ▶ New partnerships supporting local authorities;
> ▶ Database available for elaborating projects, action plans, strategies; access to funding.

Select the approach

Different partners need to be approached in different ways. Sometimes the M&E Units will have to make the choice between opposite approaches: the 'administrative' one, i.e. relying only on top-down orders or instructions (issued by the WGPPR or NCSI), and the motivating and convincing approach, relying on the commitment of the potential partner (especially important for the relations with the NGOs).

Agreements needed

The functioning of the M&E System requires reaching agreements for the regular exchange of information and establishment of communication channels, regarding priority setting and M&E planning and the dissemination of M&E results.

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5 *The text box includes ideas for how to motivate local stakeholders to support the implementation of the M&E System. These ideas have been identified, proposed and justifies by the participants in M&E training courses. The training courses were delivered for the potential members of the Regional and County M&E Units in November 2007 – February 2008.

With regard to the M&E tasks, practical and useful forms of regulation could be:

- **Signed bilateral protocols** with the key institutions involved in the implementation of the National Strategy (at central, county and local levels), regulating the flow of information about the initial planning and the actual implementation of the measures and projects. Deadlines and formats for presenting the information can be agreed more easily on this basis.

- **Allocated contact persons** in the administration who could become the operational link between these central and local institutions and the M&E Units, assigned to gather the negotiated data, to provide support for organising meetings of the monitors with the implementing units in this organisation, etc.

- **Agreements** with the main implementing institutions of the National Strategy measures, absolutely necessary to ensure the regular access to project documentation (regarding the planning and implementation of this measure) for the monitoring and evaluation tasks of the units.

Before Starting Up: Make a list of the stakeholders and assess their potential roles

Although presented at the end, the identification of the stakeholders and their roles in the M&E System is actually the first task of the M&E Units in the area of partnerships development.

While preparing to start the actual M&E activities, the Central M&E Unit makes a general assessment of the stakeholders, regarding their potential contribution to the M&E process.

The information is organized in a **Table of Stakeholders** with the following columns (See also the templates B.4 and B.5):

- **Category of stakeholder**: Who are the stakeholders as a category – public administration (state institutions, municipal authorities, business organisations, NGOs. (The list of the stakeholders – ministries involved, government agencies and organisations, statistic institutions, municipal administration, NGOs, initiative groups and other grassroots organisations, etc. – has to be structured, according to the broad categories above.)

- **Role**: What are their potential role/roles in the M&E process – as partners, resource persons, or direct implementers of M&E activities. Depending on the potential role and on the type of institution, it is necessary to specify what kind of document /or event can guarantee its involvement – a signed agreement, a supporting letter, an announcement of support for the M&E process made at an official meeting, etc.

- **Level:** Specifying the level of responsibilities and/or involvement of each stakeholder at national, regional, county, municipal, grassroots level.

- **Contribution to M&E**: Why is the stakeholder important for the M&E process? What do M&E Units expect from these institutions regarding their estimated contribution to data collection, monitoring and/or evaluation process? And what can M&E Units get from these stakeholders, such as data, lobbying for other institution, or allocation of human resources or money?

- **Type of motivation**: Include notes on what the motivation of the stakeholders is, specifying their interests in participating in M&E. How it can be convinced /

attracted, including the obligations of each institution for the Social Inclusion policy measures and for the National Strategy.

During the initial planning period the County M&E Units have to complete similar tables in much more detail to assess the stakeholders at county and municipal levels.

Contributions from the Regional M&E Units are needed as well. At regional level there are several more institutions and structures that can be involved in M&E, such as the Regional Development Agencies (ARD), SOFHRD and other institutions involved in the Structural Funds implementation.