



WORLD BANK GROUP

Annual Progress Report on the Reimbursable Advisory Services Program in Romania January 1 – December 31, 2016



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Abbreviations

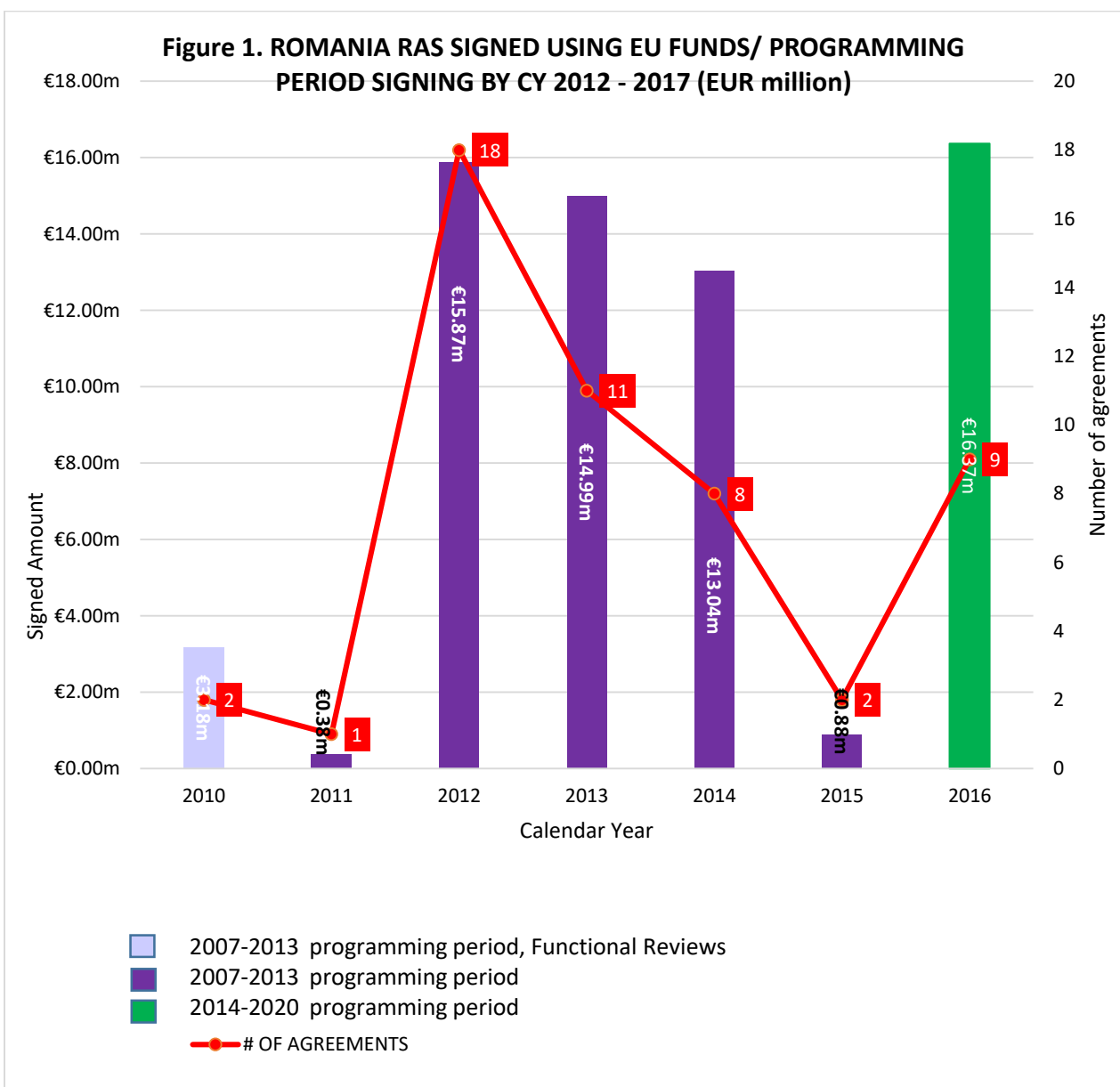
ANAP	National Public Procurement Agency
CPF	Country Partnership Framework
CPM	Chancellery of the Prime Minister
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Commission
EIB	European Investment Bank
ESCF	European Structural Funds and Cohesion Funds
ESIF	European Structural Investment Funds
EU	European Union
FY	Fiscal Year
FRs	Functional Reviews
GoR	Government of Romania
GSG	General Secretariat of the Government
IFI	International Financial Institution
MA	Managing Authority
MAP	Modernization of Administration Program
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEWF	Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests
MESR	Ministry of Education and Scientific Research
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoPF	Ministry of Public Finance
MLFSPEP	Ministry of Labor, Family, Social Protection and Elderly Persons
MDRAPFE	Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds
MoT	Ministry of Transport
NACLR	National Agency for Cadaster and Land Registration
OP	Operational Programme
POAT	Operational Programme for Technical Assistance 2007-13
POCU	Operational Programme for Human Capital
PODCA	Operational Programme for Administrative Capacity Development 2007-13
POR	Regional Operational Programme 2007-13
POSCCE	Operational Programme for Increased Economic Competitiveness 2007-13
POSDRU	Operational Programme for Human Resources Development 2007-13
RAS	Reimbursable Advisory Services
RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
RCC	Romanian Competition Council
SCD	Systematic Country Diagnostic

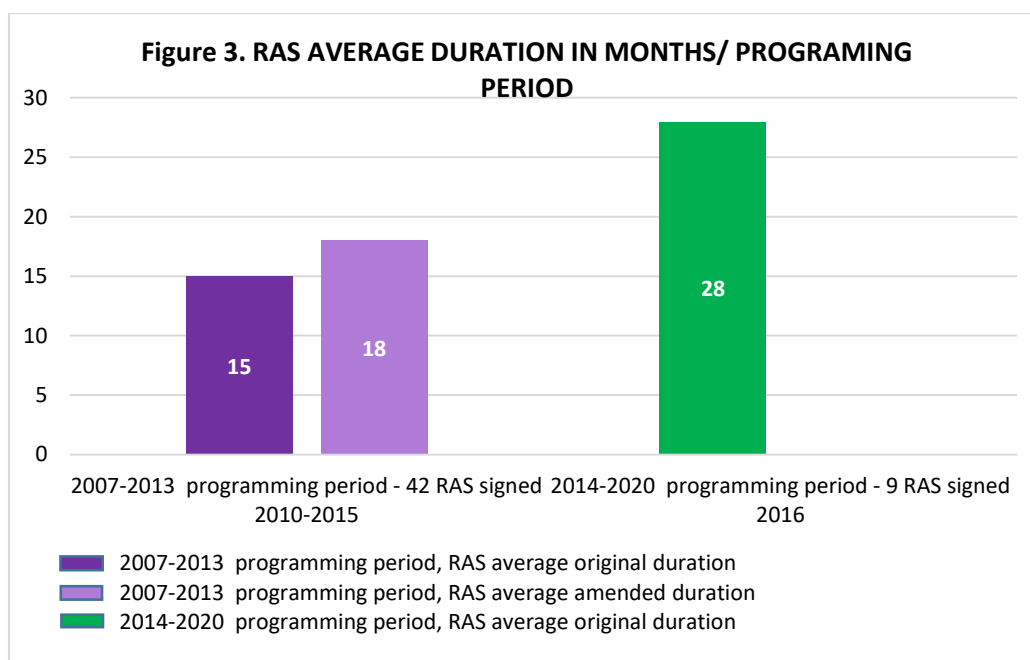
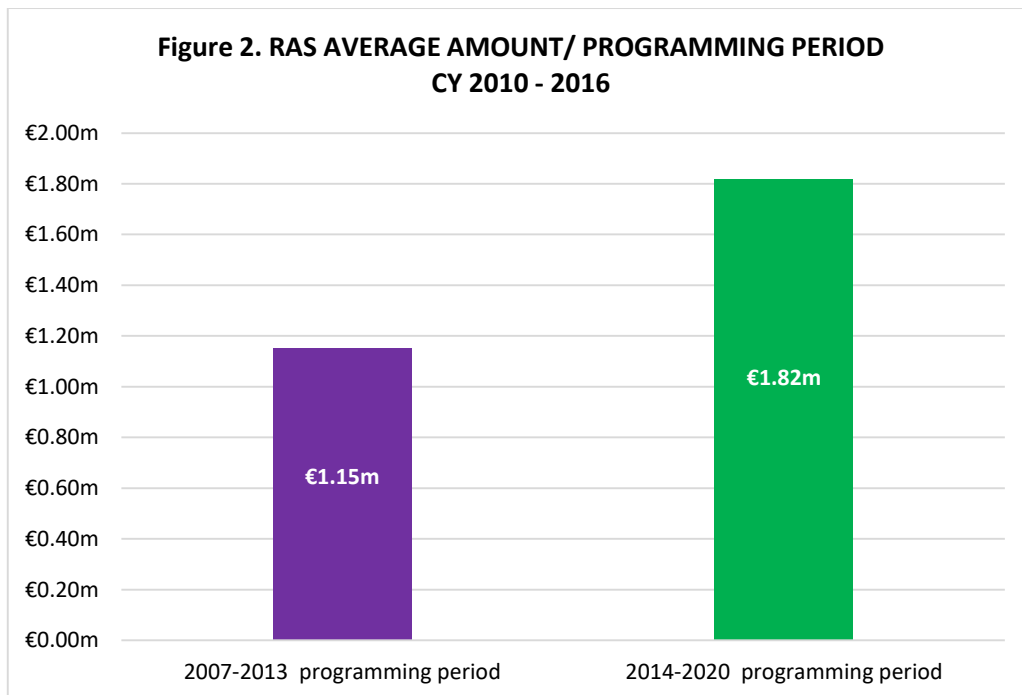
Introduction

- 1. In January 2016, the Government of Romania and the World Bank signed its second Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), “Partnership for the Modernization of the Public Administration and Support to Structural Reform.”** The MoU defines the partnership as a strategic engagement in line with the Romania Partnership Agreement, 2014-20, and the Bank’s Country Partnership Strategy, FY2014-18. As a principle-based framework, the MoU is meant to be flexible, responding to the country’s priorities as they evolve, but providing an operational framework for the Bank’s provision of Reimbursable Advisory Services (RAS) to Romanian public institutions through 2023. The partnership between the Bank and client institutions aims to support Romania to converge to EU standards, deepen structural reforms, modernize its public administration and pursue smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- 2. Through Bank RAS, the Government of Romania accesses international experience and global best practice in pursuit of strengthening Government capacity in policy and strategy formulation, analysis, diagnosis, sector and project/program planning, design, and implementation.** The MoU acknowledges the value of the Bank’s knowledge and advice as an important element to effectively implement the priorities, strategies, and projects financed by the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) under the 2014-20 period, totaling €43 billion. The MoU facilitates access to a large pool of technical assistance funds—the European Fund for Regional Development, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, and for the first time, the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development and the European Maritime and Fishery Fund.
- 3. As part of the reporting activities agreed with the Government under the MoU, the Bank prepares an annual progress report on the RAS program.** This is the first progress report on the RAS program paid by the Government under the 2014-20 EU programming period, but the fourth since 2013. It presents the RAS program and its progress in implementation and touches upon some implementation challenges and early lessons learned. This progress report is intended for Government beneficiaries and managing authorities. This includes the Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds as coordinator of the Bank’s RAS activities under their mandate to coordinate advisory services provided by all international financial institutions. Other ministries, Managing Authorities and Intermediary Bodies should be interested in this report. The European Commission is also considered an important audience for this report, as well as other government institutions. These services have been financed by client institutions (i.e. line ministries and public institutions) mainly using funds from ESIF available under the 2014-20 programming period.
- 4. The new MoU builds on the lessons learned and experience accumulated since the RAS program began in 2010.** Although the MoU was signed on January 11, 2016, the preparations for the engagement framework under the current programming period started in 2014 and spanned the mandate of three ministers.

Overview of the World Bank RAS Program in 2016

5. Following the 2016 MoU signing, the RAS portfolio increased rapidly reaching a total of nine agreements for EUR16.37 million (data is as of end of 2016). The first RAS agreement was signed by the end of February 2016, and the program grew rapidly thereafter: by the end of the third quarter of 2016, nine agreements were signed. The RASs signed in 2016 focused on continued institutional capacity building in areas of previous engagement, and to support the Government further in preparing for the management and prioritization of investments in key areas. The program reached the regular size of an active program in the past MoU years, with an average duration of 28 months compared to 15 months original average duration and 18 months average after RAS were amended in the previous MoU and an average size of EUR 1.82 mil. compared to EUR 1.15 mil. under the 2012 MoU. The volume of active RAS program has been maintained at similar levels to the previous years, the number of projects decreased as the Bank consolidated the program to focus on key areas of Bank's comparative advantage. The Bank engaged now in longer-term activities, including for strengthening the administrative capacity in beneficiary institutions, where the Bank can maximize its knowledge and role.





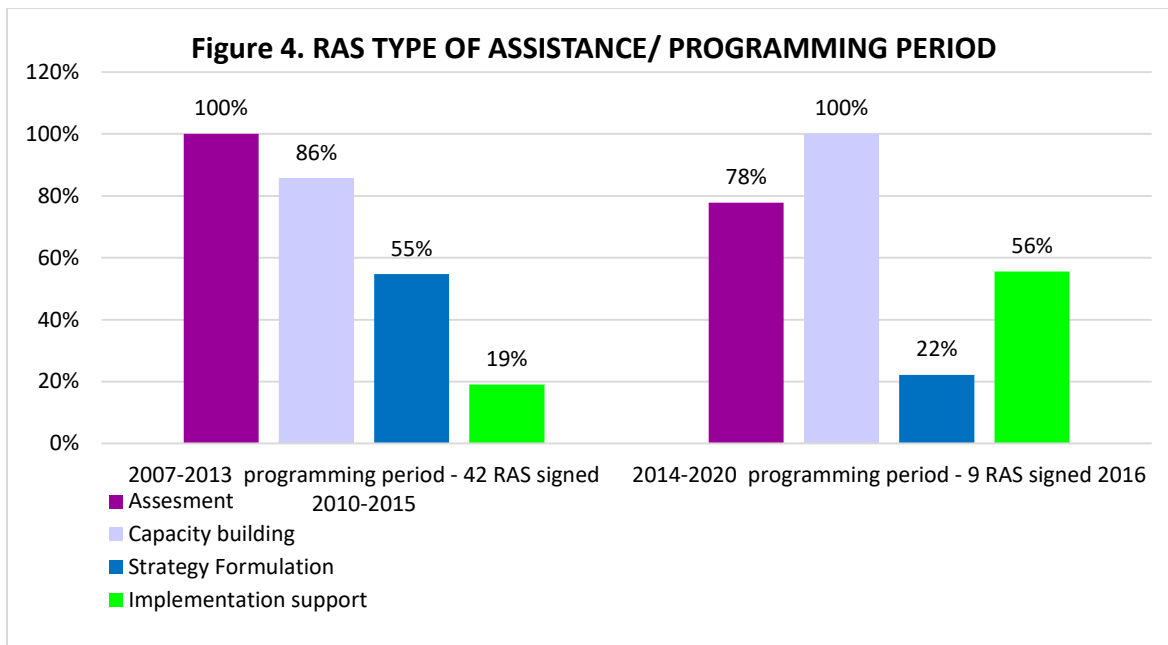
6. **Line ministries and agencies remained the main beneficiaries of advisory services in 2016.** Agreements were signed with seven public institutions, four of which were past RAS clients: (i) the General Secretariat of the Government; (ii) Ministry of National Education; (iii) Ministry of Public Finance; and (iv) the former Ministry of European Funds (now MDRAPFE). The Bank engaged three “new” RAS client-institutions, which signed a RAS with the Bank for the first time: (i) National Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development; (ii) National Authority for Children Rights Protection and Adoption; (iii) National Authority for Public Procurement.

Table 1. World Bank - Romania Advisory Services Agreements, signed in 2016

	Agreement Title	Government Institution	Source of EU Funds
1	Assistance for Establishing a Strategy Unit	General Secretariat of the Government	POCA
2	Development of the Capacity of Central Public Administration to Carry out Impact Studies	General Secretariat of the Government	POCA
3	Assistance on Informed Decision-Making on Investments in Infrastructure	National Center for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development	POCA
4	Development of Plans for Deinstitutionalization of Children Deprived of Parental Care and their Transfer to Community-based Care	National Authority for Children Rights Protection and Adoption	POCA
5	Assistance on Strategic Planning and Budgeting Capacity	General Secretariat of the Government	POCA
6	Assistance for Capacity Development for Monitoring and Evaluating the Implementation of Education Strategies (ex-ante conditionalities) & Improving Education Policies	Ministry of National Education	POCA
7	Support to the Implementation of the Public Procurement Strategy	National Authority for Public Procurement	POCA
8	Establishment of a Framework for using Derivatives and Executing Swap Transactions	Ministry of Public Finance	POCA
9	Informing Project Evaluation	Ministry of European Funds (currently Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds)	POCU

7. **The areas covered by RAS reflected a further evolution of Government needs in core priority areas:** education, strategic planning, impact assessments, children rights, public procurement, use of financial instruments and project evaluation. While the previous RAS program under the 2012 MoU supported heavily the strategy formulation and prioritization of investments with a view to support Romania meet ex-ante conditionalities to allow access to ESIF funds, much of the current assistance aims to support the Government in the implementation of strategies and priorities. Some of the new RAS continue to assist the line Ministries on policy formulation, strategy development and capacity building, as it is the case for informing decisions in education infrastructure and for children deinstitutionalization.

8. **The Bank activities now concentrate more on capacity building and implementation support, compared to the assistance provided before.** The Bank support before 2016 focused on supporting the Government prepare for the 2014-20 period, in particular assessments, strategy formulation. All such RAS included assessments, analyses and 55% had a strategy formulation or planning activities embedded. The RAS program under the 2016 MoU went one step ahead to build on the support provided before and support enhancing further the institutional capacity, in particular in working together with and advising the Government on implementing the strategies and priorities adopted by the Government. Now 78% of the RAS include assessments and only 22% still support strategy formulation at the request of the selected ministries in order for the Government to be able to meet some delayed actions related to ex-ante conditionalities and unlocking access to EU funds under the 2014-20 period. Hence, more than half of the RAS program focuses now on implementation support compared to 19% under the RAS program before 2016. The capacity building elements remain at the core of the RAS programs, with intensified activities under the 2016 RAS program. The graph below shows the percentage of RAS out of the RAS program – number of RAS signed (paid under different programming periods) in terms of type of assistance provided by the Bank.



9. **The RAS agreements signed in 2016 are paid by the client institutions using EU funds through two Operational Programmes (OPs) under the 2014-20 programming period.** During 2016, the Operational Program for Administrative Capacity 2014 – 2020 (POCA) launched the majority of calls in administrative capacity. Thus, eight out of nine agreements were signed in 2016 using European funds through POCA, amounting to the total of EUR 16.33 million. One RAS was signed using European Funds through Operational Program for Human Capital 2014-2020 (POCU), for the amount of EUR 0.04 million.

10. **The first year of RAS implementation focused on initiating activities and mobilizing resources needed, however, 12.5 percent of the total outputs in these RAS were delivered.** The Bank mobilized more than 180 experts to carry out activities under these nine agreements. During the 2016 calendar year, six contractual outputs and four progress reports were submitted to the client institutions. Some outputs continued to support the Government in meeting actions related to access to EU funds under the 2014-20 programming period, although not constituting ex-ante conditionalities per se. More than 30 events (workshops, trainings, etc) and 35 missions took place during 2016 in order to consult and inform the preparation of outputs or to contribute to institutional capacity building.

11. **Eight invoices were issued in 2016,** out of which seven have been paid by the end of the year. The invoices are issued upon approval of corresponding outputs submitted by the Bank and in line with the timeline agreed in the RAS agreement. The reduced number of invoices is the result of moving from time-based agreements to output-based agreements. Under the 2016 MoU, invoices will be less numerous compared to the arrangements under the 2012 MoU, under which invoices were issued quarterly. Overall, invoices were issued and paid on time, except for the case of the Procurement RAS where it was agreed with the client to delay the issuing of the first invoice until the signing of the financing contract between ANAP and the Managing Authority (the invoices were issued in 2017).

12. **Additional requests for RAS under preparation.** During 2016, a number of requests for technical assistance were received by the Bank covering a range of Government priorities (table below). At the end of 2016, RAS pipeline consisted of 10 requests which are listed in the table below. Due to shifts of the Government priorities, only two of the requests were developed to the point of signing: Supporting the Implementation of Romania's Human Development Operational Programme (POCU) 2014-2020 and Assistance to Enhance Quality Assurance in Higher Education System in Romania, while several of the requests were dropped: Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation System for the Strategies Coordinated by the Ministry of Labor, Assistance for the Magurele Laser Valley, Assistance on Land Administration, Assistance for Civil Service Reform, Assistance to the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration. Such requests are expected to be paid by client institutions using EU funds.

The Bank has also received requests for assistance from local authorities for assistance to be provided by the Bank and to be paid using local budget funds.

Table 2. World Bank - Romania Advisory Services for which public institutions requested assistance

	Agreement Title	Agreement Client/ Government Institution	Source of Funds (to be confirmed)	EU be
1	Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation System for the Strategies Coordinated by the Ministry of Labor	Ministry of Labor and Social Justice	POCU	
2	Enhancing the capacity of the Romanian National Statistical System	National Institute of Statistics	POCA	
3	Transforming Romania's Competition Architecture	Competition Council	POCA	
4	Assistance for the Magurele Laser Valley	Ministry of National Education	POCA	
5	Assistance on Land Administration	National Agency for Cadaster and Real Estate	POCA/POAT/POR	
6	Assistance for Civil Service Reform	General Secretariat of the Government	POCA	
7	Follow-up to the Digital Agenda RAS	Ministry of Communication and Information Society	TBD	
8	Support to the Municipality of Constanta	Municipality of Constanta	Local budget	
9	Assistance to the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration a) urban development guides; b) follow up to the Housing strategy c) support to implement axis 4 of the ROP – sustainable urban development d) Support for making Romanian secondary cities more competitive	Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds	POCA/POR	
10	Supporting the Implementation of Romania's Human Development Operational Programme (POCU) 2014-2020	Ministry of Regional Development, Public Administration and European Funds	POCU	
11	Assistance to Enhance Quality Assurance in Higher Education System in Romania	Ministry of National Education	POCA	

POAT: Operational Program for Technical Assistance 2014 – 2020

POCA: Operational Program for Administrative Capacity 2014 – 2020

POCU: Operational Program for Human Capital 2014 – 2020

POR: Regional Operational Program 2014-2020

PNDR: Operational Program for Rural Development 2014 - 2020

13. **Leveraging its rich experience, the Bank continued to take actions to increase its ability to respond to intensive client demand and ensure RAS complementarity and synergies.** These include: (i) identifying a series of new international and local Bank experts to lead the RAS program in Romania; (ii) building on the knowledge of the local staff (all new and old staff in the World Bank office are involved in one or more RAS); (iii) increasing the number of international level Romanian staff and experts; (iv) strengthening the RAS monitoring and coordination team in the Romania office and improving knowledge sharing and learning, and (v) revising and improving quality control mechanisms required by Bank management for the RAS, both at entry and during implementation.

Complementary Bank-Financed Activities Carried Out in 2016

14. **In parallel with the development of the new RAS program, dissemination activities for RAS completed before 2016 continued to allow for knowledge sharing within the Government and outside.** Under various RAS assignments, the Bank team jointly with the counterpart engaged in dissemination activities within the country, as well as with the European Commission to inform on progress made. Such dissemination activities started in previous years, and continued throughout 2016.

15. **The Bank-led evaluation of the RAS program in Romania (2012-2015) started in 2015 and was completed in 2016.** Based on the methodology tested through four RAS case studies in 2015, the evaluation is systematically examining the extent to which the Bank's transfer of knowledge to individuals and groups is helping to strengthen the local ownership of and commitment to development objectives, improve the policy environment, and increase the effectiveness of organizations.

16. **The majority of results reported in the Performance and Learning Review, the mid-term report of the Country Partnership Strategy (CPS), 2014-18, were mainly from the RAS program under the 2012 MoU.** In October 2016, the Bank completed the Performance and Learning Report which took stock of the implementation of the CPS and provided an opportunity for adjustments in the country program. The findings of the report relied heavily on the RAS program which was completed in the first half of the CPS implementation and once the 2012 MoU expired. It was an opportunity to highlight RAS results and lessons learned, which have of the various activities carried out.

Coordination Arrangements

17. **The MoU stipulated that its implementation will be monitored through coordination meetings.** Such meetings were expected to be chaired by the Minister of European Funds every six months to discuss the situation of the program and address any specific issues arising in the implementation of this MoU. Such meetings aimed to ensure coordination of activities and enhance synergies and complementarity of projects and/or initiatives financed through similar reimbursable advisory services provided by other eligible international financial institutions. Although such meetings were postponed until the RAS program matured, the Bank kept the Ministry of European Funds and the subsequent MDRAFE informed on the status of the ongoing activities. In addition, the Bank had several coordination meetings with the European Commission part of their partnership activities, as well as with the EIB and EBRD on areas of common interest, in order to enhance synergies and complementarities of activities, and avoid any potential overlaps. The Bank hopes that the coordination meetings under the MoU will be initiated in 2017.

18. **The RAS program is an integral part of the Bank's program in Romania.** The RAS program continues to be anchored in the Bank's CPS and is monitored regularly alongside the rest of the Bank's Romania portfolio.

Implementation Challenges and Other Issues

19. **Frequent changes at management and political level affected ongoing activities.** The beginning of 2016 was marked by the mandate of a new politically independent cabinet with a 12-month governing term. For most RAS signed in 2016, management of the client institution changed at least once. With each change, the Bank had to reengage with the new Government team and explain the Bank's engagement in the country as well as the specific RAS. This has also led to slow feedback of technical teams in the client institutions who sometimes required the management endorsement before communicating feedback. The signing of some RAS were also delayed as the focus of new management was shifting across emergency issues which required immediate attention.

20. **Working with multiple line ministries and agencies within a single RAS requires thorough coordination and commitment.** For example, the RAS agreements signed with the GSG involve multiple

line ministries as direct beneficiaries, but under the coordination of the GSG. While in some cases this has worked very well, in some instances it has proved to be challenging. The GSG is playing a coordinating role but the priorities and policy decisions are with the respective line ministries and agencies. The effectiveness of RAS has been challenged by the lack of commitment of and/or poor communications and coordination amongst third-party public institutions, the GSG and the Bank. Resolution of issues that arise during implementation are made difficult as the contractual restrictions imposed by the financing contract between GSG and the Managing Authority for EU funds do not allow changes to the scope of work. As a result, under the RIA2 RAS pilot with the National Agency for Public Servants, commitment to the activity analyzing the strategy for public servants waned when the strategy was developed and published before receiving input under the RAS. As a consequence, the RAS report had to be modified to make references to the newly published strategy.

21. **The signature of some RAS suffered delays as new beneficiaries needed to undergo a learning curve for securing funds and going through the process of signing RAS agreements.** It took some time for the new beneficiaries to understand the Bank and its legal, billing and pricing requirements, including the standard clauses, of the output-based RAS agreements. In some cases, a full month was required for the new beneficiary to internalize the Bank's VAT-free status. In other instances, delay resulted from the lengthy process required to secure EU funding to pay for the RAS. The Bank has also needed time to understand and learn the Romanian and EU rules and regulations under which the MAs and beneficiaries operate under the 2014-2020 EU financing period.

22. **In case of new beneficiaries, issuance of first invoices, and especially advance invoices, has been a lengthy process.** Such delays were caused by lengthy administrative and approval rules, special nature of fiscal treatment (VAT), treatment of advanced payments under Romanian law, or the need to provide accurate payment details. Delays with the invoicing and payments of ANAP RAS occurred due to signing a RAS agreement before ANAP signed the financing contract with the Managing Authority. The issue was solved in April 2017; invoices have been issued and are awaiting payment.

23. **Some local public institutions requested Bank assistance and are ready to allocate own resources to pay for RAS.** The MoU was crafted to explicitly provide the principles of engagement for RAS paid by client institutions using EU funds, although not limiting the possibility for such institutions to pay using other resources. Local authorities inquired about the framework of engaging with the Bank and paying using local own resources and have expressed the need to have the engagement options reiterated in formal written communication.

RAS Results

24. **The Public Procurement RAS supported the ANAP in the preparation of a Web-based Guide** (first stage) that included as priority content the description and associated methodologies and tools for the planning of the proc portfolio and proc process as well as the draft standard bidding documents for intellectual services. All these documents and tools were made publicly available at www.achizitiipublice.gov.ro in December 2016 which helped ANAP in providing guidance to the contracting authorities for the planning of their processes. Also this showed progress in meeting the ex-ante conditionality on Public Procurement from Partnership Agreement between EC and Romania.

25. **The Strategy Unit RAS supported the Romanian Government in conceptualizing and establishing a new strategic management system** in the Center of Government. The RAS reviewed the existing framework for strategic planning and implementation and highlighted European best practices for strategic management. The RAS supported study visits to EU countries resulting in recommendations on a new strategic management model for Romania. Through high-level workshops the RAS built awareness and support among civil servants and senior government representatives. The RAS created an inventory of national strategies which is soon to be disseminated on-line. It developed an operational manual and communications plan for the proposed Government Strategy Unit.

26. **The activities under the Education Infrastructure RAS provided the basis for a prioritization criteria and methodology for investments in education infrastructure.**

Lessons Learned

27. **Enhanced public access to knowledge generated under RAS benefit both the direct beneficiaries and the overall public.** The dissemination of reports and recommendations is coordinated with the beneficiaries. The Bank has worked with the relevant line ministries and bodies to organize workshops to present the results of the advisory services. According to signed RAS Agreements, the Bank classifies all outputs “for official use only”. Public access requires client’s approval of content and format. Broader access to this knowledge seems to be desirable. More focus on dissemination of knowledge and extracting relevant lessons learned from the analysis would be needed from both parties going forward.

28. **Advisory Services strengthened the Bank’s engagement with Romania.** RAS allowed the Bank to respond to client requests for advice and support that could not be funded within the existing Bank’s budget. The demand for RAS deepened the policy dialogue and allowed for continuing the support in key reform areas. Weak institutional capacity and practices are among the greatest bottlenecks for more efficient use of EU funds and faster growth. Removing these bottlenecks would lead to convergence with EU average living standards. These would have a potential transformative impact.

29. **Institutional capacity building is a complex and lengthy process requiring long-term political commitment.** The Bank’s knowledge program encourages the Government to focus on long-term issues, sustain reforms and mitigate the backsliding to improve the functions of state. RAS is an integral element of the Bank’s country program, closely related to other activities including the lending and investment operations. The Bank’s policy dialogue and knowledge activities foster change of values, focus on results and modernization of management practices in the public administration.

Going Forward

30. **The Bank-led evaluation for activities under the programming period 2007 – 2013 is soon to be finalized** and will be shared with all beneficiaries and other stakeholder institutions.

31. **The dissemination of RAS results (both programming periods) will continue in 2017 as well.** Such efforts will be captured in a RAS web-site which will make information available about the past and current RAS programs. The World Bank is in the process of developing a web page on RAS results on its own website which will include links to main outputs and highlight key results.

32. **New RAS agreements are under preparation by ministries, national agencies, and municipal authorities.** Several Government institutions requested Bank’s assistance under the 2014-20 period, as presented in the Pipeline table. A list of activities has already been discussed with the Government and this will be updated regularly based on demand. Several RAS agreements are expected to be signed in the next twelve months, depending on timeline of opening of new calls and the completion of procedural aspects related to beneficiary institutions securing the needed EU funds for paying for RAS activities.

33. **The Bank will coordinate with the Government on options to amend the MoU to allow for local public institutions to benefit from RAS paid with own resources.** The MoU was designed to explicitly provide the principles of engagement for RAS paid by client institutions using EU funds. The possibility of RAS clients to use also other sources of funding other than the EU funds was discussed during the MoU negotiation, but the Government, at that stage, wanted to give priority to accessing EU funds. In view of the demand and interest of local authorities in Romania for Bank’s expertise, we suggest to amend the MoU to explicitly mention that national/ local funds can be used to engage the Bank.

34. **Preparation of the Systematic Country Diagnostic (SCD) will take stock of key development challenges inform the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF).** The RAS program completed before

2016 will help draw lessons and inform the RAS program and priorities going forward. Advisory services remain the anchor of the Bank's engagement in Romania along with investment operations and are expected to continue to feature in the new CPF. Consultations on the new CPF are expected to start in the autumn of 2017 and will allow to prepare new RAS pipeline as well as help identify sector priorities.

35. **The signing of the RAS supporting POCU is time sensitive for advancing the implementation of the operational programme.** The Government continues to require assistance of the IFIs in its endeavor to expedite the implementation of EU funds under the 2014-20 programming period and the Bank stands ready to support Romania in the administration of the Humana Capital Operational Programme 2014-20. This RAS aims to enable the Government of Romania to make more effective and efficient use of resources from the Human Development Operational Programme (POCU). This will be achieved by supporting (i) streamlining the implementation process of the Human Development Operational Programme (POCU) within the managing authority and intermediary bodies, (ii) improvement of the design of POCU calls and (iii) improvements in the appraisal and evaluation of project proposals under calls through clarifying roles and responsibilities. While discussions on the RAS started in October 2016, the signing is still pending. The Bank stands ready to sign.

Annex 1. Summary Description of Each RAS Signed in 2016 Using European Funds

ROMANIA: PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STRATEGY UNIT	
Signed: February 25, 2016 Duration: 25 months Value: RON 6.43 million (US 1.44 million)	Key Partners: General Secretariat of the Government
<p>Project objectives: To strengthen Romania's central strategic planning function. The RAS will help the Prime Minister's office achieve this objective through the establishment of a Strategy Unit and a design of strategic planning and monitoring processes and tools.</p> <p>The project has four main components: (i) design of the National Strategy Management Framework and Procedures; (ii) support for the establishment of the Strategy Unit; (iii) methodology and procedures for preparing strategic documents; and (iv) monitoring and evaluation.</p>	

ROMANIA: DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPACITY OF THE CENTRAL PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION TO CARRY OUT IMPACT STUDIES	
Signed: March 9, 2016 Duration: 25 months Value: RON 12.67 million (EUR 2.84 million)	Key Partners: General Secretariat of the Government
<p>Project objectives: To strengthen the capacity of the Romanian administration for evidence based policy making. The main types of activities to be undertaken in order to achieve the project goal are: impact assessment studies carried out in selected institutions, training modules, the set-up of a community of practice, and advocacy events. Through these activities, the proposed RAS will seek to achieve a set of outcomes, which will be tracked by a number of key indicators. The main goals of this project are to increase administrative capacity required to undertake an evidence –based policy making process, by enhancing relevant knowledge and skills, develop comprehensive impact studies following best practice methodologies, and raise awareness across the political and civil society spectrum regarding the need for evidence-based regulation.</p> <p>The project aims to: (a) create and expand technical capacities within the Romanian administration for the use of RIA by providing best practice examples of impact assessments for relevant legislation through the development of five impact studies in collaboration with selected institutions within the Romanian administration, emphasizing a learning-by-doing approach; (b) strengthen the technical capacities within the public administration through the provision of training, study tours, technical assistance, and knowledge exchanges; and (c) increase public awareness regarding the role and importance of RIA through advocacy and awareness events for universities, civil society, NGOs, journalists.</p>	

ROMANIA: ASSISTANCE TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FOR INFORMED DECISION-MAKING ON INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

Signed: March 30, 2016
Duration: 36 months
Value: RON 7.8 million (EUR 1.75 million)

Key Partners: National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development

Project objectives: To strengthen the strategic and monitoring capacity of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research of Romania to make informed decisions on investments in education infrastructure. Specifically, this RAS will (i) support the preparation of a draft Strategy for Infrastructure Investments in Education Institutions, and (ii) build and enhance capacity within the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research for the preparation and monitoring of the National Strategy for Infrastructure Investments in Education Institutions.

The Ministry of Education and Scientific Research will prepare the National Strategy for Infrastructure Investments in Education Institutions (NSIIEI) based on the draft Strategy for Infrastructure Investments in Education Institutions (SIIEI) to be developed under this RAS. The NSIIEI will be fundamental to inform decisions on investments in infrastructure, and to increase the absorption of European Union Structural and Investment Funds for the 2014-2020 programming period.

ROMANIA: DEVELOPMENT OF PLANS FOR THE DE-INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF CHILDREN DEPRIVED OF PARENTAL CARE AND THEIR TRANSFER TO COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

Signed: May 12, 2016
Duration: 29 months
Value: RON 12.38 million (EUR 2.76 million)

Key Partners: National Authority for the Protection of Children Rights and Adoption

Project objectives: To: (a) develop a complex diagnostic of the centers for children deprived of parental care (residential institutions) and of the needs of their beneficiaries, to prioritize the closure of these centers; (b) carry out an inventory of the available alternative care modalities (e.g. foster parents, extended family) and preventive services, as well as the resources available at local, district and national level that could be mobilized to finance the deinstitutionalization process (including here the improvement of services aimed at preventing the separation of the child from his/her family); (c) develop a methodology for the closure of residential institutions for children deprived of parental care; and (d) develop a unitary system to identify and enroll the children and families at risk of separation, to diminish the inflows into the specialized child protection system.

The project has four broad components: a) Prioritization of the process of closing down institutions for child protection, including classic residential units as well as modulated residential units; b) Routes of alternative care for children from classic residential units; c) Methodology for closing down institutions for child protection; and d) Monitoring and evaluation plan of the deinstitutionalization process together with a procedure of identification, registration, referral and support of children at risk of being separated from their family.

ROMANIA: ASSISTANCE ON STRENGTHENING PLANNING AND BUDGETING CAPACITY AND SUPPORTING THE INTRODUCTION OF PERFORMANCE BUDGETING

Signed: June 8, 2016
Duration: 35 months
Value: RON 14.2 million (EUR 3.15 million)

Key Partners: General Secretariat of the Government

Project objectives: To strengthen the strategic and monitoring processes in the Center of Government (CoG), Ministry of Public Finance (MoPF) and line ministries with the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of public spending. Specifically, the assistance will focus on a) further strengthening the existing Institutional Strategic Plan (ISP) development processes of the MoPF and line ministries under the guidance of the Chancellery of the Prime Minister (CPM); b) monitoring ISP updates and implementation with a common IT tool, developed with support from the Bank; and c) developing a central dashboard in the CPM for high level ISP priorities of the selected ministries.

ROMANIA: ASSISTANCE TO THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR M&E IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATION STRATEGIES

Signed: June 29, 2016

Duration: 36 months

Value: RON 6.46 million (EUR 1.43 million)

Key Partners: Ministry of National Education

Project objectives: To build the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research to (i) monitor and evaluate the implementation of strategies for reducing early school leaving, and improving tertiary education, life-long learning and vocational education and training, and (ii) apply an evidence-based tool--the Systems Approach for Better Education Results (SABER) --to key policy areas with the purpose of fostering a structured policy dialogue with decision makers and stakeholders. The MESR will undertake a M&E process of the implementation of four complex education strategies - three of them (ESL, TE, and LLL) developed with Bank assistance under previous RASs and formally approved by the Government in June/July 2015, and one (VET) prepared by the MESR separately and currently processed for final approval. While all these strategies represent ex-ante conditionalities for Romania's access to European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF), resources for their implementation will also incur national budgets as well as other sources of funds. The M&E is expected to be a process of monitoring, learning and adjusting, as necessary, while leading to the achievement of the objectives of the strategies and EU2020 targets. At the same time, the MESR will seek to evaluate and improve key policies against evidence based global standards. This RAS will assist the MESR in the above mentioned process through capacity building activities. The capacity building process is expected to foster a broader policy dialogue with decision makers and stakeholders on how to strengthen the effectiveness of the education system.

ROMANIA: SUPPORT TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PUBLIC PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Signed: September 1, 2016

Duration: 35 months

Value: EUR2.38 million

Key Partners: National Agency for Public Procurement

Project objectives: To support the Romanian Ministry of Public Finance and its subordinated National Public Procurement Agency to reform the public procurement system in line with the PP strategy by transforming the procurement policy and practice into a strategic management function with focus on value for money and integrity in the whole project cycle.

ROMANIA: ASSISTANCE ON INFORMING PROJECT EVALUATION

Signed: September 9, 2016

Duration: 8 months

Value: US\$0.05 million (EUR 0.04 million)

Key Partners: Ministry of European Funds

Project objectives: To provide: (a) support to evaluators of marginalized community analyses under the Operational Program Human Capital by developing a good practices guide in carrying out needs' assessment in marginalized communities (Roma and non-Roma communities); (b) training to evaluators to increase technical capacity; and (c) support to evaluators on technical aspects of methodologies and analyses, as well as input to requests for clarifications.

ROMANIA: ESTABLISHMENT OF A FRAMEWORK FOR THE USE OF DERIVATIVES AND THE EXECUTION OF SWAP TRANSACTIONS

Signed: September 30, 2016

Duration: 18 months

Value: RON 2.6 million (EUR 0.58 million)

Key Partners: Ministry of Public Finance

Project objectives: Help the Ministry of Public Finance (MoPF) develop legal and operational framework (policies, procedures, norms) and provide the necessary training for MoPF staff to use interest rate and cross currency swaps as part of the funding program.

