

**The European Union's IPA 2008 Programme
for the Republic of Croatia**

**Ex-ante evaluation of programming
documents and strengthening evaluation
capacity for EU funds post-accession**

(EUROPEAID/130401/D/SER/HR)

**SF OP HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT 2007-2013**

Ex-Ante Evaluation Report

Croatia

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AP	Accession Partnership
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation
CBS	Central Bureau of Statistics
CFCA	Central Financing and Contracting Agency for EU Programmes and Projects
CODEF	Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds
DG	Directorate-General
EC	The European Commission
EPOP	Environmental Protection Operational Programme (IPA)
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
EU	European Union
EUROSTAT	Statistical Office of the European Communities
EWG	Evaluation Working Group
FB	Final Beneficiary
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GoRC	Government of Republic of Croatia
HRD OP	Human Resources Development Operational Programme
IB	Intermediate Body
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPARD	IPA Rural Development Programme
ISPA	Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-accession
KE	Key Expert
MA	Managing Authority
MC	Monitoring Committee
MoA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoE	Ministry of Economy
MENP	Ministry of Environmental and Nature Protection
MFEA	Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs
MFIN	Ministry of Finance
MIS	Monitoring Information System
MoC	Ministry of Culture
MRDEUF	Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds
NAO	National Authorising Officer
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIPAC	National IPA Coordinator
NKE	Non-Key Expert
NPIEU	National Programme for the Integration of the Republic of Croatia into the European Union
NSRF	National Strategic Reference Framework
OP	Operational Programme
OPE	Operational Programme Environment
PA	Priority Axis
PD	Project Director
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PSC	Project Steering Committee



RCOP	Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme
SAPARD	Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development
SCF	Strategic Coherence Framework 2007 – 2013
SDF	Strategic Development Framework for 2006 – 2013
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SF	Structural Funds
SWOT	Strengths – Weaknesses – Opportunities – Threats
TAT	Technical Assistance Team
TP	Technical Proposal
TOP	Transport Operational Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme



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PROJECT SYNOPSIS

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Ex-ante Evaluation aims to review and improve the quality and relevance of the programming of ESF funds under OP Human Resources Development 2007-2013. In particular, the **purpose of this assignment** as per Terms of Reference is to perform the following seven core analytical tasks, forming the basis of the evaluation approach and method that we adopted:

1. Analysis of the implementation of pre-accession Programmes (components III and IV of IPA) in Croatia.
2. Analysis of existing administrative capacity, in the bodies designated for the management of the OP.
3. Appraisal of the socio-economic analysis in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and the relevance of the resulting needs assessment.
4. Appraisal of consistency of the strategy and of the rationale behind the Priority Axes and their operations.
5. Identification of relevant indicators in order to appraise the potential impact of Programme strategy on the achievement of the objectives.
6. Analysis of the expected impacts and of the allocation of financial resources.
7. Assessment of the quality and appropriateness of the programme management structures and monitoring arrangements foreseen for the OP.

The evaluation cut-off date has been set at the month of May 2012.

The following methodology informed the development of this Ex-Ante Evaluation Report:

- Desk-based review of background literature, Programme texts, other documentation, including policy documents (Appendix C outlines the main documents reviewed);
- Data analysis of Programme performance indicators, along with wider labour market and socioeconomic data;
- Strategic consultations with each of the key stakeholders. Consultations were undertaken with officials from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Croatian Employment Service, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education and National Foundation for Civil Society Development through a mix of individual and group meetings. (Appendix B identifies the participants in these consultations);

As a backdrop to the Ex-ante Evaluation, the **analysis of the existing situation** in the socio-economic environment and the labour market in the beneficiary country has been updated. Following are the **data highlights**:

- The total number of inhabitants in Croatia in 2011 reached 4 290 612 persons. It is 3.31% less than in 2001 (4 437 460 inhabitants) and 10.32% less than in 1991 (4 784 265 inhabitants).



- After years of constant growth, GDP has decreased by 6,0% in 2009 and 1,2% in 2010.
- Due to economic recession in 2009 and 2010, the unemployment rate increased from 8.4% in 2008 to 13.9% in 2011.
- The at-risk-of-poverty rate of 17.4% in 2008 was identical to the rate in 2007, but increased to 18% in 2009 and to 20.6% in 2010.

The **main findings per Evaluation Question** are the following:

Rationale & Consistency of Intervention Logic

Considering the broader picture drawn by the financial and economic crisis that has seriously affected Croatia, the relevance of the OP Human Resources Development in addressing the social and economic challenges remains high and in particular the labour market interventions are more important than before. Interventions in the field of education are targeted on meeting the labour market needs. However, at the time being there is no analysis that would systematically examine the responsiveness of the education system to the labour market needs. Although there is a lack of systemic analysis which would enable long-term planning of educational offer, several IPA service contracts addressed this issue already. As a result, certain tools for examination of the responsiveness of the education system to the labour market needs have been developed. However, recent developments underlining the relevance of the interventions in the field of education are not included in the OP document. Attracting and motivating junior and young researchers is a relevant response to the negative trends in the total number and aging of researcher population.

Social inclusion indicators focusing on income inequalities and poverty have mostly remained the same, or inclined mildly, and thus require further long term assistance. The same applies for social services that are still facing substantial regional differences. The usefulness of new interventions focused on social dialogue and civil society is clearly reasoned in the OP, but their contribution to the fulfilment of the Programme's framework objective is not clear. Neither enhancement of the social dialogue quality nor support of the civil society has a direct impact on creation of more and better jobs.

In terms of internal coherence, the rationale and intervention logic of the Programme are consistent and clearly rooted. The Programme document starts with the description of context at national and EU level, followed by socio-economic analysis and SWOT analysis. The strategic priorities resulting from the analysis cover a wide range of interventions focused on human resources developments. They are broken down into 5 Priorities and 13 Key Areas of Operations covering all identified weaknesses.

Strategy's External Coherence with other Policies (national, NSRF, EU)

Since the beginning of the implementation of OP HRD there have been several relevant national strategies adopted. The priorities/goals of the new strategic documents are corresponding with the priorities of OP HRD. On one hand this confirms the continuing relevance of OP HRD, on the other hand it means that the new priorities/goals can be financed also under IPA and ESF. New fields of interventions introduced by IPA OP HRD 2007 – 2013/2 (Social dialogue and Civil society) and by ESF OP HRD 2007 – 2013 (Entrepreneurship and R&D) have been prepared in line with the recent sectoral strategies.

Adequacy of System of Indicators



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Concerning the set of indicators the following remarks might be made:

- The number of indicators and their distribution over the five Priority Axes is appropriate. Most of them are clear and well defined.
- The assignment of each indicator to one specific objective is a good approach. However, it was not consistently applied in Priority Axes 3, 4 and 5. The formulation of specific objectives in the indicator table within the Priority Axis 4 does not correspond with the formulation in the text.
- Indicators are targeted on all major operations.
- All indicators have a measurement unit, initial value, review frequency and source of verification. All indicators except one have a target value.
- There is no typology of indicators specified (output, result, impact).
- Most of the indicators proposed are referring to immediate outputs of the projects. Additional indicators monitoring achievements from a longer perspective (i.e. result and impact indicators) should be specified.
- There are no descriptions of unclear indicators. Relevant definition, assumptions, explanation and/or guidance on collecting data are required, in order to raise and standardise the understanding of indicators among users and increase the accuracy of monitoring.
- In order to ensure correct monitoring data, measures should be taken to avoid multiple counting of persons participating in more than one project/activity (i.e. database of participants, preferably integrated into MIS).

Considering the above, the set of indicators needs further improvement.

Main Findings with regard to Expected Outcomes & Impact

The expectations regarding socio-economic impacts of employment interventions underwent significant changes in the course Programme implementation and shifted from further reduction of unemployment to the recovery of labour market. In terms of entrepreneurship it is expected that SMEs and crafts owners and employees will have more theoretical knowledge and better practical skills for successful conduction of their business. Another expected impact is the reduction of mismatch between the education system and labour market. In the field of research and development it is expected that the Programme will contribute to turning the negative trends in the total number and aging of researcher population by attracting and motivating junior and young talents. Expectations of the social inclusion intervention are focused on better social inclusion of people at a disadvantage, or, at risk of social exclusion. Emphasis is being placed on the specific problems of the long-term unemployed with low levels of qualifications and skills, as well as minority groups and people with disabilities.

The main anticipated impact of the intervention focused on civil society is overcoming the limitations faced by the civil society in Croatia today, in particular, lack of capacities, information and financial sources. Social dialogue intervention is expected to contribute to strengthening interaction between the government and social partners and the partnership between employers and trade unions, as well as in enhancing social dialogue at the local level, and in developing sectoral dialogue and collective bargaining. Capacity building of



both Management structures and beneficiaries is another important impact of OP HRD.

The added value of the Programme is the high number of Grant Schemes that are the most efficient tendering method for educating final beneficiaries in the regions.

Programme Governance, Management and Systems

The transition process from IPA management to ESF management should be smooth given that Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds and the Ministry of Finance have been ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach in setting up the relevant institutional framework for the implementation of the EU post-accession funds. Although some progress in meeting the requirements towards EDIS (and thus to waive ex-ante controls) has been achieved, there are still bylaws and internal procedures for ESF missing. On the other hand, the transition from IPA to ESF is an opportunity to improve existing procedures which are too complicated, particularly with respect to Grant Schemes. A helping hand reducing the risk of delays in the first months of ESF is the Article 105a of the Treaty Concerning the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union, giving the possibility to prepare Calls for proposals and tenders that will be financed under ESF budget line, but implemented under PRAG.

In spite of increasing capacities at all levels, there is still a need for systematic capacity building in terms of staffing and enhancing of skills. Present employees are overloaded and do not have enough time for trainings nor for mentoring of new people. Moreover, there is no training plan aiming on the preparation for ESF in place. Improvements in motivation and retention of civil servants across the state administration have been already achieved. Civil servants responsible for IPA receive a bonus of 30% of wage. In comparison, public servants (employees of Croatian Employment Service and Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education) are still waiting for a similar regulation in the frame of the Law on Public Services that is being prepared.

The Management Information System for IPA is in place and fully operational. A more complex monitoring information system for future ESF interventions system is currently under preparation.

The main **conclusions** of the Ex-ante Evaluation are presented below:

Conclusion 1. The OP HRD is a unique OP document in terms of repeated programming and dual implementation. As a result of the postponed accession to the EU, the pragmatic decision to continue supporting HRD priorities set by IPA 2007 – 2013/2 led to elaboration of a unique OP document covering the whole 2007 – 2013 period, including both IPA and ESF budget lines. Thus the implementation of the OP HRD will constitute a significant challenge for Croatia, applying at the same time different procedures for similar projects within a single programming framework.

Conclusion 2. The March 2012 draft of the OP HRD may be qualified as a document that meets the EU standards:

- It contains an extensive analysis on the Croatian labour market, on its educational system, on the position of vulnerable groups and on civil society.
- The strategy is translated into a proposed set of Priority Axes and key areas of intervention which will tackle the weaknesses of the Croatian human resources development identified in the analytical part of the document.



- The strategy and interventions are coherent with EU and national policies, including complementarity with the other Operational Programmes.
- There is a set of quantified indicators attached to each of the Priority Axes.
- The OP HRD also contains the main outlines of the implementation.

However, improvements of the intervention logic and the system of indicators are still required.

Conclusion 3. The OP HRD exhibits a strong European added value. In the Evaluator's opinion, the OP HRD is generating added value due to:

- helping to address long-standing, structural problems and gaps of Croatia in the field of employment, education, social inclusion and civil society.
- providing access to both IPA and ESF programming and procurement procedures, which by itself is a major step towards successful utilisation of 2014-2020 assistance.

Conclusion 4. The strategic approach adopted by the OP HRD is an improvement compared to previous EU-funded interventions. The OP HRD is a more comprehensive intervention that combines institution and capacity building with policy change in human capital investment leading to more sustained outcomes.

Conclusion 5. New challenges facing human capital in Croatia. The continued high levels of unemployment and inactivity, especially affecting the women, the switch to continuing and adult education, as well as the advent of the Civil Society are the main current trends in the labour market and socio-economic environment, requiring a modified policy response to which the OP HRD should contribute.

Conclusion 6. Mitigate risk factors in transition from IPA to ESF. Staff shortages in combination with work overload, unjustified remuneration differences between civil and public servants, and delays in preparation of ESF procedures and bylaws constitute risk factors that must be handled to enable smooth implementation in the immediate future.

On the basis of the above conclusions, the Evaluation Team proposes the following **recommendations**:

1. In order to avoid confusion among public beneficiaries it is recommended to add a short explanatory section describing the development of OP HRD in the light of the postponed EU accession and clarifying differences in terminology, objectives, indicators and procedures between IPA and ESF.
2. Further development of methodology and establishment of the system for regular measurement of the mismatch between the education system and the labour market needs is necessary. It is an important supporting tool for employment and education policies at national level as well as for future monitoring and programming of EU assistance. On the other hand, respective sections of the OP document need revision and update focused on recent developments in education sector as well as results achieved by IPA service contracts.
3. Corrective actions should be taken regarding the intervention logic of the proposed Priority Axis 5 'Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance', in order to explain its contribution to the fulfilment of the Programme's framework objective.



4. The system of measurable indicators requires further improvement:
 - a. Typology of all indicators needs to be specified (output, result, and impact).
 - b. Additional indicators monitoring achievements from a longer perspective (i.e. result and impact indicators) should be specified.
 - c. The assignment of each indicator to one specific objective should be consistently applied in Priority Axes 3, 4 and 5.
 - d. The formulation of specific objectives in the indicator table within the Priority Axis 4 should be unified with the formulation in the text.
 - e. Description of unclear indicators needs to be introduced. Relevant definition, assumptions, explanation and/or guidance on collecting data is required, in order to raise and standardise the understanding of indicators among users and increase the accuracy of monitoring.
 - f. In order to ensure correct monitoring data, measures should be taken to avoid multiple counting of persons participating in more than one project/activity.
5. Missing bylaws and internal procedures for ESF have to be elaborated and adopted. At the same time use this opportunity to improve existing procedures which are too complicated in particular in Grant Schemes:
 - a. Reporting on quarterly basis and requiring extensive supporting documentation constitute the main administrative load for both Contracting Authorities and Beneficiaries. However, despite frequent and work-intensive reporting, the information collected on qualitative achievements of the projects is insufficient. Simplification of reporting procedures and enriching the limited qualitative data on project progress remain a challenge.
 - b. Project management costs should become eligible expenditure under ESF. Equally important, control mechanisms should be established to avoid overlapping in wage reimbursement of persons working in more than one project.
 - c. Sophisticated control mechanisms should be established to avoid multiple reporting and overlapping in reimbursement of costs for persons participating in more than one project/activity. For the start, Final Recipient Identification Forms collected under IPA projects are waiting to be processed into an electronic database format and verified.
 - d. In order to increase Programme efficiency, a list of maximum eligible unit prices for the most frequent budget items should be developed (e.g. hourly fees of project managers, hourly rates for different trainings, rates for renting training rooms, prices for IT equipment etc.). Obviously, the unit prices should reflect current market prices and enable procurement of high quality services and supplies.
 - e. Procedures for Direct Award operation need to be established as this type of operation has not yet been implemented through IPA in Croatia, outside the Operating Structure.
6. Accelerate preparation of tenders and calls to be financed under the 2013 ESF allocation. If published in the Official Journal of the European Union before the date of accession, they will be



implemented under PRAG which will reduce the risk of delays and decommitments.

7. Financial motivation of the public servants within the Operating Structure needs to be provided by a quick adoption of the new Law on Public Services regulating their remuneration in a similar way as it is regulated for civil servants.
8. Further capacity building in terms of staffing and skills enhancement is of utmost importance. Moreover, as a part of preparation for ESF, a realistic training plan should be developed and brought into effect across Operating Structure.
9. Final revision of the Programme document focused on typing mistakes is needed.



2. INTRODUCTION

“The purpose of ex-ante evaluations is to optimise the disbursement of resources according to the Operational Programmes and to improve the quality of programming. The evaluation establishes and assesses the medium and long-term requirements, the objectives to be achieved, the anticipated results, the measured objectives if a compliance of the proposed strategy is necessary for the region, the Community value-added, the extent of abiding by the priorities of the Community, the new knowledge gained from the previous programming and the quality of the implementation, monitoring, evaluation and financial management”¹

Based on the requirements of the Financing Agreement for the Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007 – 2013 (OP HRD), the Contracting Authority (Central Financing & Contracting Agency - CFCA) launched the Ex-Ante Evaluation of the OP as part of Project EuropeAid/130401/D/SER/HR, seeking to provide independent analysis of the programming document and to formulate recommendations for adjustments in order to ensure good Programme performance and optimise the impact of Structural and Cohesion Funds absorption and management.

The **overall objective** of this Project is to contribute to the effective implementation and management of EU Cohesion Policy funds in Croatia, in line with the EU requirements.

The **purpose** of this Project is to undertake evaluation activities for the purpose of programming EU assistance, in line with Council Regulations No. 1083/2006, 1698/2005, 74/2009 and 1198/2006, and to establish capacity for evaluation of EU co-funded Programmes on Croatia’s EU accession.

The Ex-Ante Evaluation is compulsory for every OP according to the regulatory framework for the period 2007-2013. This Report satisfies this requirement and has been prepared as an output under Component I of the Project.

In particular, Component I delivers ex-ante evaluations of NSRF and related Cohesion Policy OP’s and programming documents under the EU Fisheries Policy and Rural Development Policy, by performing as follows:

1. Ex Ante Evaluation of the SF Operational Programme Transport 2007-2013;
2. Ex Ante Evaluation of the SF Operational Programme Environment 2007-2013;
3. Ex Ante Evaluation of the SF Regional Competitiveness Operational Programme 2007-2013;
4. Ex Ante Evaluation of the ESF Operational Programme Human Resources Development 2007-2013.
5. Ex Ante Evaluation of the SF Operational Programme Fisheries 2007-2013.

¹ Council Regulation (EC) on the general provisions on the European Fund for Regional Development, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund (Article 47).



Thus, the scope of the particular Report covers the support provided by the Project to the MRDEUF through the prospective appraisal of the SF Human Resources Development Operational Programme 2007-2013, aiming to optimise the allocation of budgetary resources under the OP and improve programming quality.

Another part of Component I has assessed the implementation progress of counterpart IPA 2007-2013 Operational Programmes, by providing separate evaluations during the period of implementation linked to the monitoring of OPs under IPA Components III and IV. A preliminary review of Programming documents indicates that the IPA and respective SF OP present many similarities in strategy and content of interventions, mostly as a result of the specific situation of Croatia in terms of timing of the EU accession procedure.

Thus, the findings and the recommendations of the current Report – besides being considered as essential inputs of the planning process aiming at the finalisation of the Structural Funds OP – draw lessons learned from the effective and efficient use of IPA funds. This way the strong connection between the Interim Evaluation Report and the Ex-ante Evaluation Report of the Human Resources Development Operational Programme funded by the 2013 allocations of ESF becomes evident.

Implementation of evaluation activities have been carried out in accordance with the timing and other arrangements set out by the Terms of Reference and the provisions of the approved Inception Report of the Project. Evaluation took place between March 19 2012 and June 11 2012. Current report has been drafted by Jan Helbich, as a non-key expert employed by the Contractor, supervised by the Team Leader and Key Expert, responsible for Component I., Dr. Anthony Mousios.

The main text of this Report contains six Chapters, including the Executive Summary. In particular, the subsequent Chapters of this Report are structured as follows:

- in Chapter 3 we elaborate on the applied Evaluation methodology.
- in Chapter 4 we outline the objectives of the OP HRD, describing the organisation and structure of the OP around the Priority Axes and the Measures.
- in Chapter 5 we assess the foundation of Programme strategy and appraise the coherence between identified needs, Priority Axes, activities and allocation of financial resources, assess the relevance of the system of indicators, analyse expected outcomes and impacts and review the quality of management structures, implementation procedures and monitoring arrangements foreseen for the OP.
- in Chapter 6 we present our conclusions and recommendations.



3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS & CONTENT OF EX-ANTE EVALUATION

3.1 OBJECTIVES & SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

According to the methodological working paper² that focuses on the content and organisation of Ex-Ante Evaluation of Operational Programmes for the 2007-2013 programming period, the Evaluation should answer the following questions:

- Does the Programme represent an appropriate strategy to meet the challenges confronting the region or sector?
- Is the strategy well defined with clear objectives and priorities and can those objectives be realistically achieved with the financial resources allocated to the different Priorities?
- Is the strategy coherent with policies at regional, national (including the National Strategic Reference Framework) and Community level? How will the strategy contribute to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives?
- Are appropriate indicators identified for the objectives and can these indicators and their targets form the basis for future monitoring and evaluation of performance?
- What will be the impact of the strategy in quantified terms?
- Are implementation systems appropriate to deliver the objectives of the Programme?

The conclusions of the Ex-Ante Evaluation must provide a response to these broad questions.

Within this context, however, those responsible for drawing up Programmes are encouraged to develop detailed evaluation questions to be answered in relation to the national, regional or sectoral strategies to be evaluated. As such this Project's Terms of Reference reflect the status of the Report as an Ex-Ante Evaluation of the OP HRD. It sets out the following seven core analytical tasks which must be performed as part of the Evaluation, forming the basis of the evaluation approach and method that we adopted:

1. Analysis of the implementation of pre-accession Programmes (components III and IV of IPA) in Croatia.
2. Analysis of existing administrative capacity, in the bodies designated for the management of the OP.
3. Appraisal of the socio-economic analysis in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and the relevance of the resulting needs assessment.
4. Appraisal of consistency of the strategy and of the rationale behind the Priority Axes and their operations.
5. Identification of relevant indicators in order to appraise the potential impact of Programme strategy on the achievement of the objectives.
6. Analysis of the expected impacts and of the allocation of financial resources.
7. Assessment of the quality and appropriateness of the programme management structures and monitoring arrangements foreseen for the OP.

² EC, DG Regional Policy. "The New Programming Period 2007-2013. Working Document No 1: Indicative Guidelines on Evaluation Methods: Ex-Ante Evaluation. (August 2006)".



3.2 EVALUATION PROCESS

The Ex-Ante Evaluation of the SF OP Human Resources Development 2007-2013 is performed before Programme implementation which takes place after Croatia's EU accession on July 1st, 2013, lasting till the end of that year. The Evaluation's objectives are to assess whether planned interventions are consistent with regard to identified needs (of the particular sector and its beneficiaries), as well as coherent with reference to planned aims and the ways these will be implemented. It also includes the assessment of context, the identification of potential difficulties, as well as the diagnosis of target group needs and expectations, taking into account the programming and implementation experiences gained and lessons learnt from the IPA counterpart OP. It is noted that particularly in SF OP Ex-Ante Evaluation, the issues of consistency, policy complementarity, and relevance in strategy development, prospective Programme implementation efficiency and prior assessment of impact on gender, minority and environment are emphasized.

Usually an Ex-Ante Evaluation is elaborated in parallel with the respective OP, involving the sequential provision of interim appraisals and recommendations per OP's section by the Evaluator to those who are responsible for the preparation and elaboration of the programming document. In this case however, the assimilation of IPA-funded activities by the SF OP underscores the relevance of the Interim Evaluation of the IPA counterpart OP, as it provided the setting for the cooperation between the Ex-Ante Evaluator with the management/programming team in a couple of ways. In particular, the Ex-Ante Evaluator participated in key meetings with the management/programming team dealing with implementation experiences as well as with programming decisions, and passed over to the management/programming team written recommendations on Programme improvement through the Interim Evaluation Report.

In essence, the Evaluation has examined each of the Priority Axis and Measures in the SF OP HRD Draft version March 2012, in terms of the evaluation questions specified above. The Evaluation activity has been designed to prospectively justify the proposed Priority Axes, assess their efficiency and the likely impact of the OP HRD in the beneficiary country. The Evaluation activity also provided an opportunity to:

- Assess the extent to which the Programme is achieving alignment between the SF Framework and domestic (national) policy priorities
- Utilise any lessons learnt and opportunities for improvement to inform future provision of ESF
- Assess Programme sustainability in the light of future resource constraints

Further, the Terms of Reference note that conclusions and recommendations must be underpinned by the analysis and findings of the Evaluation. This is a particular challenge for the OP HRD given the number and range of stakeholders and beneficiaries involved in the Programme, coupled with the number of evaluation issues raised by the Terms of Reference. To ensure that we achieved this requirement we adopted the following approach:

- we took the analytical tasks as set out in the Terms of Reference as the key Ex-Ante Evaluation issues;
- we translated the tasks in the Terms of Reference into evaluation criteria, against which the OP and



its contents were systematically assessed;

- we fine-tuned the criteria as a series of relatively standardised Questions to be asked about each individual Measure;
- we utilised the work programme to systematically provide the basis of an assessment in relation to each criterion.

The evaluation process has had four stages: planning and structuring; obtaining data; analysing information; and evaluative judgement. During the four stages, the following methods and techniques have been used (for more details see Appendix A. Key Analysis Instruments):

- Use of secondary source data;
- Use of administrative data;
- Stakeholder consultation;
- Logic models.

The following methodology informed the development of this Ex-Ante Evaluation Report:

- Desk-based review of background literature, Programme texts, other documentation, including policy documents (Appendix C outlines the main documents reviewed);
- Data analysis of Programme performance indicators, along with wider labour market and socioeconomic data;
- Strategic consultations with each of the key stakeholders. Consultations were undertaken with officials from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, Ministry of Labour and Pension System, Ministry of Social Policy and Youth, Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs, Croatian Employment Service, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education and National Foundation for Civil Society Development through a mix of individual and group meetings. (Appendix B identifies the participants in these consultations);

In closing, the Ex-Ante Evaluation was to a large extent based on information and opinions provided by the interviewed stakeholders. Its quality depends also on the scope and reliability of Programme data. All significant findings have been double checked and verified by referring to both secondary data and additional interviews. At the end it can be stated that all consulted stakeholders had an open and positive approach towards the evaluation. The reliability of findings is underlined also by the fact that there have been no essential discrepancies identified between the views and statements of the stakeholders.



4 PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION & AND VALUE ADDED OF THE EX-ANTE EVALUATION

4.1 CONTEXT & BACKGROUND OF THE OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME

Croatia applied to become an EU Member State in March 2003 and in June 2004 officially received a candidate country status. The EU accession negotiations with Croatia started in October 2005. On 30 June 2011, the negotiation process between the EU and Croatia was concluded and the Croatian accession to the EU is foreseen for 1 July 2013. Until then IPA funds will be available for Croatia.

The country started building its own institutional system for the receipt of EU funds at the beginning of 2001. The system has been evolving over time, in line with EC requirements for the management of different programmes open to Croatia – CARDS in the period 2001-2004 and of pre-accession programmes (Phare, ISPA, SAPARD) in the period 2005-2006.

Since 2007, the single integrated 'Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance' (IPA) provides assistance to building institutional capacity for efficient implementation of the acquis and prepares for the management of Cohesion and Agricultural Policy instruments. For the use of components III and IV of IPA instrument, Croatia has prepared the Strategic Coherence Framework document ("mini" National Strategic Reference Framework) and four Operational Programmes (OP Regional Development, OP Transport, OP Environment Protection and OP Human Resources Development).

The overall objective of pre-accession assistance is to support the beneficiary country's efforts to comply with the Copenhagen accession criteria and to help prepare the country to meet the challenges of future EU membership. These comprise the political and economic criteria, as well as the ability of the country to assume the obligations of EU membership, which involves preparing for the implementation of the Community's Cohesion Policy by introducing strategic planning and management principles which guide the implementation of EU Structural Instruments.

The programming of IPA and ESF OP HRD in Croatia was influenced by the postponed accession to the EU:

- The first Financing Agreement for the IPA OP HRD 2007 – 2009 (based on the presumed accession to the EU in 2010) was signed on December 4th in Brussels and on December 5th, 2008 in Zagreb. After entering into force on March 27th, 2009 the implementation of the OP HRD started.
- The second Financing Agreement (based on the presumed accession to the EU in 2012) was signed in Brussels on December 7th, 2010 and in Zagreb on December 17th, 2010. Following adoption by the Croatian Parliament on February 4th, 2011, the second version of the OP HRD for 2007 – 2011 is in force since March 25th, 2011.



- Accession negotiations with Croatia were completed by a Ministerial Accession conference on June 30th, 2011. The Treaty of Accession was signed in December 2011, currently in the process of being ratified by national parliaments of EU Member States. The target date for Croatia's accession to the EU, as agreed by Member States and included in the Accession Treaty, is 1st of July 2013. At this point the ESF allocation of OP HRD will become available.
- The third Financing Agreement for the IPA OP HRD 2007-2013/2 is expected to be signed by mid 2012. This (presumably) last version of the IPA OP HRD will cover the full IPA implementation period from 2007 to June 30, 2013.
- The preparation for ESF has been deferred following the postponement of the accession to the EU. In the course of the accession negotiation, the ESF-funded period has been reduced from the initially expected 4-years period (2010 – 2013) to the last 6 months of 2013. Consequences for Croatia have been twofold: on one hand it brought the necessity of repeated programming under IPA, on the other hand it meant the loss of potential ESF annual allocations which are significantly higher than respective IPA allocations.
- As a result of the short time remaining for ESF within the 2007 – 2013 programming period, a pragmatic decision has been taken to continue supporting the HRD priorities set by IPA. Thus the final OP document that is subject of this Ex-Ante Evaluation covers the whole 2007 – 2013 period of OP HRD, including both IPA and ESF budget lines.

OP Human Resources Development underlines the need to address the low participation in the labour market and high unemployment, in particular as regards long-term and youth unemployment. Attainment of the above is envisaged through interventions that support system actions and pilot projects in the areas of employment, education, training and R&D, social inclusion and civil society. In addition to that, there is a separate Priority Axis for Technical Assistance. The nominal allocations for OP HRD for the period 2007-2013, are presented below:

Year	IPA in euro	ESF in euro	Total in euro
2007	13.384.707	0	13.384.707
2008	14.941.178	0	14.941.178
2009	16.705.884	0	16.705.884
2010	18.470.595	0	18.470.595
2011	18.823.534	0	18.823.534
2012	18.870.590	0	18.870.590
2013	10.588.238	70.588.235	81.176.473
TOTAL	111.784.726	70.588.235	182.372.961

After recent changes in the structure of Croatian ministries in December 2011 and early 2012 (Law on the Structure and Scope of Ministries and other central state administrative bodies, Official Gazette No. 150/11), the Ministry of Labour and Pension System will have the role of the Managing Authority, exercising full authority for the management and implementation of the entire Operational Programme as well as responsibility for certain Priorities/Key Areas of Operation. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports,



the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth and Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs will operate as Intermediate Bodies (level I) responsible for certain Priorities/Key Areas of Operation. Croatian Employment Service, Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education and National Foundation for Civil Society Development will become Intermediate Bodies (level II).



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4.2 PROGRAMME BUDGET, OBJECTIVES AND INDICATORS

The OP HRD covers a period of seven years, out of which six and half years (2007-2013/2) are covered by IPA and 6 months in 2013 are eligible for ESF funding. As a consequence of gap and issues-based analysis conducted by in-house experts, four Priorities Axes (fields of intervention: Employment, Education, Training and R&D, Social Inclusion, Civil Society) besides Technical Assistance and 13 Key Areas of Operations under these Priorities were included in the OP HRD. It integrates different policy instruments (active labour measures, human resource development, social inclusion, etc.) into a single Programme corresponding to policies and activities of the Ministry of Labour and Pension System, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth.

To be financially supported, operations and grant projects are required to be in line with the activities under these Key Areas of Operation defined in OP HRD, as well as their results are required to match the indicators prescribed for each Priority. Table below contains planned expenditure by Priority. It shows that the 2007-2013 Employment Priority accounts for 29.2% of planned spend, Social Inclusion accounts for 25.8%, Education, Training and R&D accounts for 30.5%, Civil Society accounts for 5.2% and the lone Technical Assistance Measure accounts for 9.3% of planned spend. Allocations on the level of Key Areas of Operation are not presented in the OP document.

Priority Axes	Fund	Community funding	National counterpart	Total funding	Co-financing rate
Priority Axis 1: Supporting access to sustainable employment and adaptability of the labour force	IPA + ESF	45.264.000	7.987.770	53.251.770	85%
Priority Axis 2: Reinforcing social inclusion and integration of people at a disadvantage	IPA + ESF	40.062.505	7.069.860	47.132.365	85%
Priority Axis 3: Enhancing human capital in education and in Research and Development	IPA + ESF	47.242.995	8.337.005	55.580.000	85%
Priority Axis 4: Technical assistance	IPA + ESF	14.387.500	2.538.974	16.926.474	85%
Priority Axis 5: Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance	IPA + ESF	8.060.000	1.422.353	9.482.353	85%
Total	IPA+ESF	155.017.000	27.355.961	182.372.961	85%
Total	ESF	60.000.000	10.588.235	70.588.235	85%
Total	IPA	95.017.000	16.767.726	111.784.726	85%

The framework objective defined for OP HRD in Croatia is **“To create more and better jobs. More immediately, to attract and retain more people in employment by increasing human capital investment, reinforcing social inclusion and promoting adaptability of enterprises and workers.”** Each Key Area of Operations has one specific objective:



Priority Axis / Key Area of Operations	Specific objectives
Priority Axis 1 Enhancing access to employment and sustainable inclusion in the labour market	
Implementation of active labour market measures through national and local initiatives	To reduce existing unemployment and the 'threat' of new unemployment and also promote the reintegration of the unemployed by supporting the design and implementation of both active and passive labour market measures that target the specific conditions of the Croatian labour market.
Supporting the effectiveness and quality of Croatia's employment services	To support the development of the capacity of Croatia's public institutions in the employment field by raising quality of CES service.
Supporting the entrepreneurship development and improving SMEs and crafts competitiveness	To increase adaptability of SMEs and crafts by delivering essential professional entrepreneurial knowledge and skills both of employees and owners of enterprises/crafts.
Priority Axis 2 Reinforcing social inclusion and integration of people at a disadvantage	
Supporting access to employment by disadvantaged groups	To promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups through their integration to the labour market.
Supporting access to education by groups with special needs	To promote education of the disadvantaged groups through their integration in the regular educational system.
Development of social services to improve employment opportunities	To improve employment opportunities and promote reconciliation of work and family life by developing of new and improving quality of social services in the community.
Priority Axis 3 Enhancing human capital and employability	
Enhancing the education system	To support the development of the capacity of public institutions and relevant non-government partners in the vocational education and training field and in the field of adult education.
Further strengthening of the Croatian Qualifications Framework	To strengthen investment in human capital and promote greater employability by developing and implementing a coherent HRD policy and national qualifications framework and increase the overall labour market relevance, efficiency and quality of the education and training systems.
Development of human potential in research and innovation	To increase the level of participation in lifelong learning, support availability of lifelong learning and enhance human capital in R&D occupations.
Priority Axis 4 Technical assistance	
Project development and support for preparation of the next programming period	To increase of absorption capacity of the ESF.
Management of the OP and administrative capacity building	To finance the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Operational Programme.
Priority Axis 5 Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance	
Promotion of Social dialogue	To enhance the quality of social dialogue in Croatia.
Strengthening the role of Civil Society Organizations for socio-economic growth and democratic development	To support and reinforce civil society.



The system of indicators in OP HRD encompasses measurable indicators on the level of Priority Axis. It underwent two revisions in the frame of revising the IPA Programme document. At the end, the system of indicators proposed in the ESF OP HRD 2007 – 2013 encompasses 33 indicators. Typology of indicators (output, result, impact) is not provided. All indicators are quantifiable and quantified. For more details see chapter 5.1.3 of this Report.



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4.3 EVALUATION FEEDBACK BASED ON DRAFT VERSIONS OF THE OP

The ESF HRD OP document that is subject of this ex-ante evaluation covers the whole 2007 – 2013 period of OP HRD including both IPA and ESF budget lines. Although the time period of IPA funding is 13-times longer than the time period of ESF funding (6.5 years vs. 0.5 year) and total IPA (Community funding) allocation is higher than ESF allocation (95 million euro vs. 60 million euro), the OP document is based only on ESF terminology and methodology. There are neither descriptive comments, nor explanations on differences and follow up procedures between IPA and ESF. The absence of such explanatory section may cause confusion among public and (potential) beneficiaries who will be the main target groups of this document.

The main differences can be summarised as follows:

- New ESF terminology in particular in the structure of Programme interventions (Measure vs. key area of operations) and in the structure of responsible bodies (BROP vs. Managing Authority, BRPM vs. Intermediate Body level I, Contracting Authority vs. Intermediate Body level II) have replaced the previous IPA terminology.
- New fields of intervention have been introduced under ESF – Supporting the entrepreneurship development and improving SMEs and crafts competitiveness (within Priority Axis 1) and Development of human potential in research and innovation (within Priority axis 3). Both are supported by analyses elaborated in a diligent way and highly relevant.
- Names of Priority Axes remained the same except of Priority Axis 2 that underwent a small reformulation from ‘Reinforcing social inclusion of people at a disadvantage’ to ‘Reinforcing social inclusion and integration of people at a disadvantage’.
- New names of several key areas of operations (ex-Measures) with similar content have been introduced. In most cases the names have been simplified and/or better specified, e.g. KAO ‘Enhancing the education system’ instead of the Measure ‘Supporting quality and effectiveness of the institutions responsible for policy design and provision of education and training’.
- The framework objective remained the same, but specific objectives underwent changes. There are no more specific objectives on the level of Priority Axes as it used to be under IPA. Each KAO has only one specific objective, while several IPA measures have two specific objectives. New names of several specific objectives with similar content have been introduced, e.g. ‘To support access to education for employment by disadvantaged groups through, inter alia, promoting a more flexible policy framework and innovative provision of relevant services’ has been replaced by ‘To promote education of the disadvantaged groups through their integration in the regular educational system’.
- Financial tables in the new programming document cover both IPA and ESF financial envelopes. However, the allocations are presented only at the level of Priority Axis and not at Key Areas of Intervention (IPA Programme includes allocations also at the Measure level), and only cumulative figures for IPA+ESF. This is consistent with ESF regulations and enables to adjust the financial allocations between Key Areas within the Priority if needed during implementation, but on the other



hand, it prevents aligning the Priority indicators with its specific Key Areas, which is a prerequisite for credible and reliable monitoring and evaluation.

- Indicators under ESF are defined at the level of Priority Axis, while IPA indicators were specified at the level of Measures. The number of indicators has been reduced and each indicator is assigned to one specific objective. For more details see chapter 5.1.3.



5. ASSESSMENT OF FINAL DRAFT OF THE OP

5.1 APPRAISAL OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC ANALYSIS & RELEVANCE OF STRATEGY

5.1.1 Rationale & Consistency of Intervention Logic

The OP HRD 2007-2013 features interventions funded through public expenditures which are aimed at institutional capacity strengthening, broadening access to employment, education and training provision, supporting research and development, fostering social inclusion, increasing the adaptability of employees and employers to changing labour market conditions and strengthening the role of civil society. The **logic underlying these interventions coincides with the rationale for investing public money on human capital**. Through the OP HRD the following activities are identified as human capital investments (directly or indirectly):

- Building / strengthening the capacity of institutions in charge of managing the labour market;
- Education and training at any stage of a person's life, targeted at employees (on- and off- the job), entrepreneurs, job-seekers and/or inactive people;
- Internships and temporary work placement associated with education or training;
- Building / strengthening the capacity of education and training systems and structures;
- Awarding grants to junior and young researchers and providing access to scientific databases;
- Counselling and coaching of job-seekers and inactive people from vulnerable groups;
- Assistance for entering the labour market to socially excluded groups;
- Building / strengthening the capacity of civil society institutions.

In terms of internal coherence, the rationale and intervention logic of the Programme are consistent and clearly rooted. The Programme document begins with the description of context at national and EU level, followed by socio-economic analysis and SWOT analysis. The strategic priorities resulting from the analysis cover a wide range of interventions focused on human resources developments. They are broken down into 5 Priorities and 13 Key Areas of Operations covering all identified weaknesses. At the Programme level, the framework or overall objective states: "To create more and better jobs. More immediately, to attract and retain more people in employment by increasing human capital investment, reinforcing social inclusion and promoting adaptability of enterprises and workers." Each Key Area of Operations has one specific objective.

There are 3 Key Areas of Operations within the **Priority Axis 1 Enhancing access to employment and sustainable inclusion in the labour market**. The specific objectives are: 1) To reduce existing unemployment and the 'threat' of new unemployment and also promote the reintegration of the unemployed by supporting the design and implementation of both active and passive labour market measures that target the specific conditions of the Croatian labour market; 2) To support the development of the capacity of Croatia's public institutions in the employment field by raising quality of CES service; and 3) To increase adaptability of SMEs and crafts by delivering essential professional entrepreneurial knowledge and skills both of employees and



owners of enterprises/crafts. All three specific objectives are linked to the OP HRD framework objective and contribute to its fulfilment.

There are 3 Key Areas of Operations within the **Priority Axis 2 Reinforcing social inclusion and integration of people at a disadvantage**. The specific objectives are: 1) To promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged groups through their integration to the labour market; 2) To promote education of the disadvantaged groups through their integration in the regular educational system; and 3) To improve employment opportunities and promote reconciliation of work and family life by developing of new and improving quality of social services in the community. All three specific objectives are linked to the OP HRD framework objective and contribute to its fulfilment.

There are 3 Key Areas of Operations within the **Priority Axis 3 Enhancing human capital and employability**. The specific objectives are: 1) To support the development of the capacity of public institutions and relevant non-government partners in the vocational education and training field and in the field of adult education; 2) To strengthen investment in human capital and promote greater employability by developing and implementing a coherent HRD policy and national qualifications framework and increase the overall labour market relevance, efficiency and quality of the education and training systems; and 3) To increase the level of participation in lifelong learning, support availability of lifelong learning and enhance human capital in R&D occupations. All three specific objectives are linked to the OP HRD framework objective and contribute to its fulfilment.

Priority Axis 4 Technical Assistance is supporting the efficient management and implementation of the programme and thus contributing to the fulfilment of its all objectives.

There are 2 Key Areas of Operations within the **Priority Axis 5 Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance**. The specific objectives are: 1) to enhance the quality of social dialogue in Croatia and 2) to support and reinforce civil society. The link to the OP HRD framework objective is not as direct as in Priority Axes 1, 2 and 3. Neither enhancement of the social dialogue quality, nor support of the civil society has a direct impact on creation of more and better jobs. On the other hand, social dialogue is a process aiming at the improvement of working conditions which can be seen as a precondition for a satisfactory long term employment. Civil society organisations play an important role in social and educational sector and increasingly take over public services responsibilities from the state. Thus, their support and reinforcement can be considered as a contribution to human capital investment, reinforcement of social inclusion and promotion worker's adaptability. However, this intervention logic is rather theoretical and it will be difficult to quantify the contribution of the Priority Axis 5 to the fulfilment of the OP HRD framework objective.

From the perspective of the Ex-ante Evaluation, assessing the relevancy of the rationale noted above means examining and verifying the validity of the labour market analysis and outlook and SWOT analysis presented in the OP and the relevance of the Programme/Priority/KAO/objectives and strategy in this light. The section below focuses on labour market and socio-economic developments that form the external environment for the OP HRD.



The relevance of OP HRD is assessed against the broader picture drawn by the financial and economic crisis that has seriously affected Croatia. After years of constant growth, the GDP decreased by 6,0% in 2009 and 1,2% in 2010 which had a negative impact on employment and on social cohesion as well. Besides the crisis, the demography of Croatia is still unfavourable in terms of decreasing and aging population. Such structural changes will have a negative impact on the labour force, as well as on the social system in the future.

According to the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011, “First Results by Settlements”, published by the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, the total number of inhabitants in Croatia in 2011 reached 4 290 612 persons. It is 3.31% less than in 2001 (4 437 460 inhabitants) and 10.32% less than in 1991 (4 784 265 inhabitants).

The recent publication “Women and Men in Croatia 2012” (Croatian Bureau of Statistics) showed that the population’s share of women was 51.7% and of men, 48.3%. The same source of data indicates an increase in age coefficient (percentage of population aged 60 and over in the total population) from 21.6% in 2001 to 23.2% in 2010. The aging index (percentage of population aged 60 and over in population younger than 20) rose from 90.7% in 2001 to 110.3% in 2010. The actual population of Croatia continued to decrease, since the number of live births in 2011 was lower than the number of deaths. The Monthly Statistical Report of March 2012 confirmed this trend in 2011 (negative natural increase of -8271 inhabitants) as well as in the first two months of 2012 (-2787 inhabitants).

Employment

The changes in labour force and employment reflect the economic recession in 2009 and 2010. Main statistical data related to employment is presented in the table below:

Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011 (last quarter)
Working age population ('000)	3 657	3 680	3 708	3 752	3 788
<i>Out of which Women</i>	1 943	1 948	1 969	1 996	1 985
Labour force ('000)	1 785	1 785	1 765	1 747	1 717
<i>Out of which Women</i>	807	812	820	811	814
Persons in employment ('000)	1 614	1 636	1 605	1 541	1 479
<i>Out of which Women</i>	717	730	736	711	N/A
Inactive population (15+, '000)	1 872	1 895	1 943	2 005	2 071
<i>Out of which Women</i>	1 136	1 136	1 149	1 185	N/A
Activity rate	48.8%	48.5%	47.6%	46.6%	45.3%
<i>Out of which Women</i>	41.5%	41.7%	41.7%	40.6%	N/A
Unemployment rate	9.6%	8.4%	9.1%	11.8%	13.9%
<i>Out of which Women</i>	11.1%	10.0%	10.3%	12.2%	N/A
Labour productivity (Eurostat, EU 27 = 100%)	75.7%	78.3%	76.9%	77.4%	N/A

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics: Statistical Information 2010 and 2011, Monthly Statistical Report 3/2012

In the five-year period, 2007 – 2011, the working-age population (15+) has increased by 3.6%, from 3.66 million in 2007 to 3.79 million people in 2011. In the last quarter of 2011, out of 3.788 million people of the working age population in Croatia, the labour force consisted of 1.717 million persons, 1.479 million of which



were employed and 238,000 of which were unemployed. The number of inactive persons of working age in 2011 was 2,071 million people. In the last quarter of 2011, out of total 3,788 million persons of working age population in Croatia, 1,985 million (52.4%) were women. In contrary, out of total 1,717 million persons of labour force 45.3% were women and 54.7% were men. The activity rate of the labour force has decreased from 48.8% in 2007 to 45.3% in the last quarter of 2011. In terms of labour productivity (Eurostat data), after years of growth Croatia reached a peak of 78.3% in 2008, went back to 76.9% in 2009 and rose again to 77.4% in 2010. In the period from 2006 to 2008, the unemployment rate (as monitored through the Labour Force Survey) improved from 11.1%, to 8.4%. However, the unemployment rate started to increase again in 2009, from 9.1% to 11.8% in 2010, which was higher than in 2006. In the last quarter of 2011, the unemployment rate reached 13.9%.

Considering the negative trends in labour force, working activity of the population as well as in unemployment, the relevance of the labour market interventions is very high. KAO 'Supporting the entrepreneurship development and improving SMEs and crafts competitiveness' is based on the analysis of educational needs in SMEs and craft conducted by the Croatian Chamber of Economy in 2011. Considering the high share of SMEs and crafts on the overall employment and prevailing secondary education degree of entrepreneurs and crafts owners, investing public money into their further professional knowledge and skills is a relevant intervention.

Social inclusion

In the last several years social inclusion indicators focusing on income inequalities and poverty have mostly remained the same, or inclined mildly, and thus require further long term assistance:

Indicator	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
At-risk-of-poverty rate	17.4%	17.4%	18.0%	20.6%	N/A
<i>Male</i>	15.9%	15.5%	16.1%	19.8%	N/A
<i>Female</i>	18.7%	19.1%	19.9%	21.4%	N/A
<i>18 – 24 years</i>	15.0%	14.4%	16.0%	21.6%	N/A
<i>25 – 54 years</i>	11.7%	10.8%	12.3%	17.1%	N/A
<i>55 – 64 years</i>	16.9%	15.5%	14.6%	20.1%	N/A
<i>65+ years</i>	29.0%	31.2%	31.5%	28.1%	N/A
<i>Employed</i>	4.1%	3.7%	4.4%	5.0%	N/A
<i>Unemployed</i>	34.5%	32.6%	37.4%	44.7%	N/A
<i>Retired</i>	22.8%	23.4%	24.3%	23.2%	N/A
<i>Other economically inactive</i>	28.2%	26.1%	26.5%	35.0%	N/A
Adult beneficiaries of social care services (as of 1st January)	317 847	318 393	312 061	314 255	N/A

Source: Croatian Bureau of Statistics: Poverty Indicators 2006-2008, 2009, 2010, Beneficiaries and services of Social Care 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010

According to the publications of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, the at-risk-of-poverty rate of 17.4% in 2008 was identical to the rate in 2007, but increased to 18% in 2009 and to 20.6% in 2010. The at-risk-of-poverty rate, by age and sex, was the highest in 2010 for persons aged 65 years and over and amounted to 28.1%. The at-risk-of-poverty rate, by the most frequent activity status was the highest for unemployed persons 44.7%, other economically inactive persons 35.0%, and for retired persons, 23.2%. In 2010, there were 314,255 adult beneficiaries of social care services, 2.74% more than 2009. The share of female



beneficiaries was 50.5%. The highest percentage was recorded in the category Physically or mentally disabled persons (26.4%), Adult persons in various needs of social care (26.1%), Persons without sufficient means of livelihood (22.3%), Persons without sufficient earnings (15%), Mentally ill and drug- or alcohol-addicted persons (5.3%) and Persons with behavioural disorders (4.8%).

In terms of social services, the regional differences in Croatia which are partially a historical legacy and partially a consequence of the recent war still remain a challenge. Regarding the access to the labour market, still there is a lack of institutionalized tailor-made services for unemployed, hard-to-place persons. People with disabilities, long term unemployed, youth with low education level as well as Roma persons and other minorities threatened by social exclusion are facing different obstacles in entering the labour market.

Education and R&D

Interventions in the field of education are targeted on meeting the labour market needs. Although there is a lack of systemic analysis which would enable long-term planning of educational offer, several IPA service contracts addressed this issue already. As a result, certain tools for examination of the responsiveness of the education system to the labour market needs have been developed (i.e. Methods for the analysis of the educational needs for economic development; Analysis of trends in local labour market needs; Methodology for development of occupational standards, qualifications as well as VET curricula; Qualification Planning and Manual for Development of occupational standards, qualifications and VET curricula). However, recent developments underlining the relevance of the interventions in the field of education are not included in the OP document. Respective sections of the OP document need further revision and update.

In general, the Croatian population has relatively high rate of persons who finished secondary education but low rate of persons who finished higher education and the workforce has relatively low skill levels. Croatia is also lagging behind the EU-27 regarding the share of tertiary (ISCED 5 and 6) education graduates in the population. That lag is likely to become smaller since the number of the tertiary-education graduates has been growing in the past several years. According to Eurostat the number of persons aged 15-64 with tertiary education attainment has increased from 13.1% in the year 2002 to 15.7% in the year 2010. The levels of provision of adult education and training, especially the application of life-long learning principle, are still significantly below those in the EU. According to Eurostat data, the adult participation in education and training was only 2.0% in 2010 (a decrease in comparison to 2.1% in 2005) while the EU-27 rates for 2010 show levels around 9.1% of the population participating in any type of learning activity, which includes hobbies.

Interventions in the field of research and development are aiming to increase and to rejuvenate researcher population in Croatia. Recent development in the sector is shown in the table below:

Indicator	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Human resources in science and technology EU-27	38.6%	39.2%	39.6%	40.1%	40.5%
Human resources in science and technology Croatia	29.2%	28.8%	29.9%	31.6%	32.1%
Total employment in R&D (persons)	16 377	17 058	17 528	16 072	16 102
Researchers (total persons)	10 428	11 109	11 915	12 108	11 001
Researchers (full time equivalent)	5 778	6 129	6 697	6 931	6 597



Source: Eurostat, measured mainly using the concepts and definitions laid down in the Canberra Manual, OECD, Paris, 1995; Croatian Bureau of Statistics: Research and Development, 2010.

Human resources in science and technology (HRST) as a share of the economically active population in the age group 25-64 (This indicator gives the percentage of the total labour force in the age group 25-64, that is classified as HRST, i.e. having either successfully completed an education at the third level in an S field of study or is employed in an occupation where such an education is normally required) indicates that Croatia is lagging behind EU-27, but the trend is positive. However, the worse for the sector is the recent decline in total employment in R&D and in the researcher population calculated as total number of persons as well as full time equivalent. Attracting new researchers is a highly relevant objective.

Social Dialogue and Civil Society Organisations

Both areas of intervention are new in OP HRD. They have been proposed in the frame of the second revision of the IPA OP HRD 2007 – 2013/2 and currently waiting for the final approval. While social dialogue will be supported under EU assistance for the first time, civil society organisations have been receiving assistance in the frame of CARDS and IPA Component I. The usefulness of both interventions is clearly reasoned in the OP, but their contribution to the fulfilment of the OP HRD framework objective is not clear.



5.1.2 Strategy's External Coherence with other Policies (national, NSRF, EU)

The key strategic document and reference point for the use of Structural Funds and Cohesion Fund in Croatia is the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF). It defines the priorities to be jointly financed through EU and national resources in line with overarching EU and national objectives and guidelines. At the time being there is only a provisional NSRF 2012 – 2013 available. OP HRD responds to its two key strategic objectives: to achieve higher employment through faster creation of jobs, and to promote sustainable development, more specifically the elimination of poverty. In doing so, it will contribute to the overall NSRF objective of accelerating the rate of economic growth with the prospect to achieve real convergence.

Since the beginning of the implementation of OP HRD there have been several relevant national strategies adopted. As shown in the table below, the priorities/goals of the new strategic documents are corresponding with the priorities of OP HRD. On one hand this confirms the continuing relevance of OP HRD, on the other hand it means that the new priorities/goals can be financed also under IPA and ESF. Documents listed in the table are related to the initial (and ongoing) fields of intervention covered by IPA 2007 – 2011 which are already under implementation:

Strategic Document	Goals/Priorities of the Document	IPA OP HRD Measures contributing to fulfilment of the goals/priorities
Employment		
National Employment Promotion Plan 2011-2012 (published in 2011)	Increasing the employability and participation rate of prime-age women (especially those with low or inadequate skills)	1.1, 2.1, 2.2
	Increasing the employability and participation rate of older people	1.1, 2.1, 2.2
	Increasing the employability and participation rate of young people	1.1, 2.1, 2.2
	Addressing the long-term unemployment problem	1.1, 2.1, 2.2
	Reducing the skills mismatch (mismatch between labour force knowledge and skills and labour market needs) and increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills	2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
	Improving adaptability of workers and enterprises	3.2
	Good governance	1.2, 2.3, 3.3
	Administrative capacity-building	4.1, 4.2
Strategic Plan of CES for the period 2008-2011 (published in 2008)	Develop the services of CES for the purpose of labour competitiveness and satisfying the labour market needs	1.2
	Develop human potentials and administrative capacity of CES for creating and providing new services in the labour market	1.2
	Achieve the leading position of CES in the labour market through establishment of partner relationships and strengthening of the influence on introduction and implementation of public policies	1.2
Social inclusion		



Strategic Document	Goals/Priorities of the Document	IPA OP HRD Measures contributing to fulfilment of the goals/priorities
National Implementation Plan on Social Inclusion 2011-2012 (published in 2011)	Raise the level of employability and create greater employment possibilities for those most affected by long-term unemployment as well as other vulnerable groups on the labour market	1.1, 2.1
	Improving population's educational structure, aligning education with labour market demands and promoting education of adults	2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3
	Preventive measures and ensuring equal access to healthcare services	no
	Expanding social services network, developing a non-institutional system of services and improving access to services	2.3
	Developing welfare services for preschool and school children	no
	Facilitate access to housing for socially vulnerable groups	no
	Promoting gender equality in prevention of poverty and social exclusion	2.3
	Enabling revitalization and sustainable development of deprived areas and encouraging a balanced regional development of Croatia	no
	Considering long-term and sustainable solution to poverty among senior Citizens and retirees	no
	Strengthening co-operation and partnership between Civil Society Associations and other stakeholders	5.2
Strategy of Social Welfare Development in the Republic of Croatia 2011-2016 (published in 2011)	Improving the social welfare system by applying the new law regarding social welfare with development of human resources	2.3
	Improving the professional work by functioning of vocational chambers	no
	Changes in the structure of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare	no
	Decentralization of social welfare system	2.3
	Redefining of financial assistance and improving the situation of socially vulnerable groups	no
	Expanding the network of services in social welfare	2.3
	Intergenerational solidarity	2.3
	Foster care	no
	Improvement of cooperation with civil society organizations	5.2
	Changes in social welfare centers (institutes for social welfare in the county)	2.3
	Family	2.3
	Changes in social welfare centers and in other legal entities engaged in social welfare	2.3
	Informatization of the Social Welfare System	no
	Informing and educating citizens	no
	Monitoring and Evaluation	no
	Preparation and implementation of the pre-accession and accession activities in the area of social inclusion	2.3
Education		
Development Strategy of the Vocational Education System in the Republic of Croatia 2008 - 2013 (published in 2008)	Developing qualifications based on competencies and learning results	3.1
	Harmonising permanently the education with the labour market needs	3.1
	Creating a system of vocational education and training that allows for lifelong learning and mobility	3.2
	Defining the role of teachers in the learning outcomes-oriented system	3.3
	Establishing a quality assurance system	3.3



Strategic Document	Goals/Priorities of the Document	IPA OP HRD Measures contributing to fulfilment of the goals/priorities
Strategy for the Construction and Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool Education, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education (published in 2007)	Synchronize the national curriculum with the needs and developmental goals of Croatian society and the developmental needs of the individual	3.1, 3.3
	Synchronize the national curriculum with the latest trends in the education area and improve it permanently	3.1, 3.3
	More efficiently connect the national curriculum with other education system components	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
	More efficiently connect the inner components of the national curriculum into a more coherent system	3.1, 3.3
	Develop a national curriculum whose goals, implementation and effects are clear and transparent to its participants and users	3.3
Baseline of the Croatian Qualifications Framework (published in 2007)	Understanding different types of qualifications and their interrelations	3.1
	Enhancing cooperation among various stakeholders in education	3.1, 3.3
	Lifelong access to the education system	3.2, 3.3
	Providing a clear outline of educational accomplishments for employers, learners and parents	3.1
	Creating a single system of quality assurance and enhancement for existing and new qualifications	3.1, 3.3
	Sustainable employability	3.1, 3.2, 3.3
	Setting up a system for the validation and recognition of competences acquired at the workplace and through other pathways	3.1, 3.3
	Simplicity of validation and recognition of foreign qualifications	3.1, 3.3
	Recognition of Croatian qualifications abroad	no
	Promotion of education in Croatia	3.1, 3.2, 3.3

New fields of interventions introduced by IPA OP HRD 2007 – 2013/2 (Social dialogue and Civil society) and by ESF OP HRD 2007 – 2013 (Entrepreneurship and R&D) have been prepared in line with the recent sectoral strategies, in particular:

- National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2006 – 2011;
- Strategy of Entrepreneurial Learning 2010 – 2014;
- Science & Technology Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2006 – 2010 (including Action Plan for its implementation);
- Action Plan for Mobility of Researchers 2011 – 2012.

During the last decade Croatia has been benefiting from different EU assistance programmes and gained a significant experience in programming and implementing EU funded programmes and projects. Previous interventions in human resources development have been co-financed under CARDS and Phare. In the field of employment projects were focusing on enhancing the administrative capacity at both national and local level, as well as preparing the administration for the effective absorption of future assistance under the ESF. In the field of education projects aimed at increasing investment in human capital through better education and skills. Interventions in the social inclusion sphere supported in particular minorities and social service delivery by the non-profit sector. A wide range of projects supported the development of civil society



organisations, mainly focusing on capacity building and networking. In the field of research and development, Croatia has been benefiting from the 7th Framework Programme.

Complementarities of OP HRD with other IPA components can be found in Component I (Transition Assistance and Institution Building), Component II (Cross border cooperation) and Component III C (Regional Competitiveness):

Component I has been used for assisting Republic of Croatia as regards to the preparations for the future structural instruments – in terms of institutional strengthening, project pipeline preparation, programming process for the ESF etc. Institution building activities supporting the Operating structure of the OP HRD in building their capacities as well as in the implementation of the OP HRD are taking place as complementary actions to Priority 4 Technical Assistance of the OP HRD as well as to other measures covering institution building.

Links and complementarities between HRD OP and **Component II Cross-border cooperation** consist in cross-border employment, education and social affairs initiatives, in particular in the following Priorities/Measures:

- 1) Cross Border Programme Croatia – Bosnia and Herzegovina: Priority 2 Improved Quality of Life and Social Cohesion, Measure 2.2 Improved accessibility to community based services;
- 2) Cross Border Programme Croatia – Montenegro: Priority Axis 1 Creation of favourable environmental and socio-economic conditions in the programming area by improvement of the co-operation in the jointly selected sectors and good neighbourly relations in the eligible areas, Measure 1.3 Small cross-border community development projects;
- 3) Cross Border Programme Croatia – Serbia: Priority 1 Sustainable socio-economic development, Measure 1.3 People-to-people;
- 4) Cross Border Programme Hungary – Croatia: Priority 2 Cooperative Economy and Intercommunity Human Resources Development, Measure 2.2 Intercommunity Human Resources Development;
- 5) Slovenia – Croatia Operational Programme 2007 – 2013: Priority 1 Economic and social development, Measure 1.3 Social Integration;
- 6) Adriatic IPA Cross-border Co-operation Programme 2007-2013: Priority 1 Economic, Social and Institutional Cooperation, Measure 1.3 Social, Labour and Health Networks.

Component III C (Regional Competitiveness OP) and the follow up ERDF Regional Competitiveness OP aim to achieve higher competitiveness and balanced regional development by supporting SME competitiveness and by improving economic conditions in Croatia's lagging behind regions. Thus both programmes, OP HRD and RCOP, influence the labour market as well as the overall development of the Croatian economy. Their complementarity is twofold: on one hand infrastructural investments made by RCOP are later used for human resources development; on the other hand educational and employment interventions made by OP HRD are increasing the competitiveness of Croatian SMEs and lagging behind regions as such. The dividing line between the two Programmes in supporting the competitiveness of SMEs and crafts has been set as follows: the OP HRD is dedicated to providing training in basic SME skills while RCOP will focus on financing consultancy services to SMEs. Another complementarity between the two Programmes has been identified



in the field of Research and Development. The dividing line is set by the provision of infrastructure which is a precondition for eligibility under RCOP. On the other hand, OP HRD intends to provide research grants for young researchers as well as to enable better inter-sectoral cooperation and transfer of knowledge and skills which is a clear indication of soft noninvestment interventions.

Additional minor complementarities can be found also between OP HRD and **IPARD – Agricultural and Rural Development Plan 2007 – 2013**. While Under LEADER approach there are training and education activities of local action groups envisaged (aiming at their capacity building in the fields necessary for their active participation in the process of planning and implementing local development strategies), HRD OP envisages operations targeting on strengthening capacities of small CSOs for the provision of a wider span of services to their local communities. Thus the demarcation between HRD OP and IPARD Programme is based on different types of activities.

5.1.3 Adequacy of System of Indicators

The specification of suitable indicators is probably the most difficult part of the programming process. It requires accuracy, mathematical logic as well as in depth knowledge of the respective sector. Significant changes made in the system of indicators under IPA OP HRD indicate that it was an ongoing learning process which is in effect one of the main objectives of IPA interventions. Based on previous experiences, a new system of indicators for ESF OP HRD has been proposed covering the whole 2007 – 2013 period. However, there are still deficiencies that need to be improved.

General observations:

- The number of indicators and their distribution over the five Priority Axes is appropriate. Most of them are clear and well defined.
- The assignment of each indicator to one specific objective is a good approach. However, it was not consistently applied in Priority Axes 3, 4 and 5. The formulation of specific objectives in the indicator table within the Priority axis 4 does not correspond with the formulation in the text.
- Indicators are targeted on all major operations.
- All indicators have a measurement unit, initial value, review frequency and source of verification. All indicators except one (Number of persons with special needs assisted by provision of new educational services) have a target value.
- There is no typology of indicators specified (output, result, impact).
- Most of the indicators proposed are referring to immediate outputs of the projects. Additional indicators monitoring achievements from a longer perspective (i.e. result and impact indicators) should be specified.
- There are no descriptions of unclear indicators. Relevant definition, assumptions, explanation and/or guidance on collecting data is required, in order to raise and standardise the understanding of



indicators among users and increase the accuracy of monitoring.

- In order to ensure correct monitoring data, measures should be taken to avoid multiple counting of persons participating in more than one project/activity.

The overview of indicators and specific recommendations for some of them are provided in the table below:



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Indicator	Objective	Unit	Initial value	Target value	Review frequency	Source of information	Corrective measures proposed
Priority Axis 1: Supporting access to sustainable employment and adaptability of the labour force							
Number of Human resources development plans (prepared by Local Employment Partnerships) accepted by the county assemblies	To reduce existing unemployment and the 'threat' of new unemployment and also promote the reintegration of the unemployed by supporting the design and implementation of both active and passive labour market measures that target the specific conditions of the Croatian labour market.	Number	4	21	Annually	Survey/MIS	
Number of job seekers participations in the priority		Number	0	9750	Quarterly	Implementation reports / MIS	
Number of Local employment development projects implemented		Number	0	75	Annually	Implementation reports / MIS	
Number of new and improved services	To support the development of the capacity of Croatia's public institutions in the employment field by raising quality of CES service.	Number	0	3	Annually	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of beneficiaries who adopted essential professional and entrepreneurial skills	To increase adaptability of SMEs and crafts by delivering essential professional entrepreneurial knowledge and skills both of employees and owners of enterprises/crafts.	Number	0	3000	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	Further clarification is needed: What is the milestone for essential professional and entrepreneurial skills being gained? Is it participation in the training, obtaining training certificate or anything else?
Number of Chambers and Tradesmen Associations which promoted education and training for craftsmanship		Number	0	40	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	Further clarification is needed: What is considered to be a promotion of education or training by Chambers and Tradesmen Associations? Is it informing its members, organisation of the training or anything else?
Priority Axis 2: Reinforcing social inclusion and integration of people at a disadvantage							



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Indicator	Objective	Unit	Initial value	Target value	Review frequency	Source of information	Corrective measures proposed
Number of target group beneficiaries who increased employability potential through project activity participation	To promote social inclusion of the disadvantaged groups through their integration to the labour market	Number	0	2000	Quarterly	Implementation reports / MIS	
Number of beneficiaries who obtained diploma or certificate (formal/non formal) by the end of the Grant scheme implementation	To improve employment opportunities and promote reconciliation of work and family life by developing of new and improving quality of social services in the community	Number	0	1000	Quarterly	Implementation reports / MIS	
Number of persons, members of specified target groups, who acquired job during the lifetime of the project		Number	0	150	Quarterly	Surveys / MIS	
Number of persons with special needs assisted by provision of new educational services	To promote education of the disadvantaged groups through their integration in the regular educational system	Number	0		Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	Target value is missing.
Number of pupils/students with special needs in educational institutions supported by tailor-made activities		Number	0	350	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of students with disabilities who received scholarships		Number	0	300	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Priority Axis 3 - Enhancing human capital and employability							
Share of the total education professionals participated in the activities of the interventions	To strengthen investment in human capital and promote greater employability by developing and implementing a coherent HRD policy	%	0	5	Upon completion of programme	Survey/MIS	



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Indicator	Objective	Unit	Initial value	Target value	Review frequency	Source of information	Corrective measures proposed
Share of students within formal education system who received scholarships	and national qualifications framework and increase the overall labour market relevance, efficiency and quality of the education and training systems.	%	0	20	Upon completion of programme	Survey/MIS	Target value doesn't seem to be realistic. 20% of all students within formal education system are going to be supported by a scholarship?
Number of students who participated in extracurricular activities	To support the development of the capacity of public institutions and relevant non-government partners in the vocational education and training field and in the field of adult education.	Number	0	300	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of students that received scholarships in mathematics, science and technology areas		Number	0	100	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of institutions at all levels of formal education using new curricula based on CROQF principles		Number	0	100	Annually	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of staff in education and training who were trained/retrained		Number	0	500	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of general education programmes defined/adapted on the basis of the CROQF		Number	0	20	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of HE study programmes defined/adapted on the basis of the CROQF		Number	0	30	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of adult education students who received scholarships to acquire basic skills		Number	0	800	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	Further clarification is needed: What is considered to be a basic skill?
Total number of junior and young researchers assisted by intervention		To increase the level of participation in lifelong learning, support availability of lifelong learning and enhance human	Number	0	30	Annually	Implementation reports/MIS



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Indicator	Objective	Unit	Initial value	Target value	Review frequency	Source of information	Corrective measures proposed
Number of grants awarded to junior researchers (PhD students)	capital in R&D occupations	Number	0	10	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	<i>Target value is too low. Supporting only 10 junior researchers will have a very limited impact on R&D in Croatia.</i>
Number of grants awarded to young researchers (Post-doc)		Number	0	20	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	<i>Target value is too low. Supporting only 20 young researchers will have a very limited impact on R&D in Croatia.</i>
Number of procured research journals databases and journals		Number	0	6	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Priority Axis 4: Technical Assistance							
OP funds contracted	To ensure efficient and effective OP management by financing the preparation, management, monitoring, evaluation, information and control activities of the Operational Programme, as well as prepare a project pipeline	%	0	100	Annually	MIS	
Number of potential applicants received support through Technical Assistance		Number	0	140	Annually	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of staff from OP administration bodies having received a training		Number	0	100	Annually	Implementation reports/MIS	<i>Target value is too low. Total staff planned according to ODS by 31.12.2013 is 185, Workload analysis recommends 200 employees. Each staff member should be trained.</i>
Priority Axis 5 - Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance							
Number of social partners organizations that have increased their capacities	To enhance the quality of social dialogue in Croatia, and to support and reinforce civil society.	Number	0	8	Annually	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of mentorships, research studies, trainings, courses, seminars executed		Number	0	20	Annually	Implementation reports/MIS	<i>Don't mix training activities and research studies into one indicator.</i>



Indicator	Objective	Unit	Initial value	Target value	Review frequency	Source of information	Corrective measures proposed
Number of CSOs' implementing projects contributing to socio-economic growth and democratic development		Number	0	70	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	
Number of new initiatives/ programmes of small, community based CSOs implemented on local levels		Number	0	50	Quarterly	Implementation reports/MIS	Further clarification is needed: What is considered to be a new initiative/ programme? What is the precise definition of a small community based CSO?



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5.2 MAIN FINDINGS WITH REGARD TO EXPECTED OUTCOMES & IMPACTS

In general, impacts are measurable approximately 1-2 years after completion of Programme implementation. At this stage it can be only summarised what expectations are connected with the Programme and if they seem to be realistic from the perspective of actual achievements under IPA OP HRD 2007 – 2011.

The expectations regarding socio-economic impacts of employment interventions underwent significant changes in the course of Programme implementation. Due to economic recession in 2009 and 2010, the unemployment rate increased from 8.4% in 2008 to 13.9% in 2011 and the expectations shifted from further reduction of unemployment to the recovery of labour market. A very positive impact of OP HRD would be a decline of the unemployment rate to the 2008-level. Regardless of the global economic development, there are several expected impacts that should be reached by OP HRD. On the national level it is the reduction of long term unemployment, enhanced quality of public employment services and improved support to disadvantaged groups. The expectations at regional level are focused mainly on better strategic planning and local employment initiatives. In terms of entrepreneurship it is expected that SMEs and crafts owners and employees will have more theoretical knowledge and better practical skills for successful conduction of their business.

Interventions in the field of education are targeted on meeting the labour market needs. The added value of Programme implementation will be the comprehensive Croatian Qualifications Framework which is compatible with the European Qualifications Framework. Its expected impacts include establishing benchmarks for the comparability of competences, encouraging lifelong learning and especially prior learning and non-formal and informal learning, promoting labour mobility and promoting high quality employability that will strengthen the supply of attractive, accessible and high-quality education and training provision at all levels (including flexible learning pathways). The expected impacts on adult education and training, especially the application of life-long learning principle, will be reflected in higher adult participation in education and training. In the field of research and development it is expected that the Programme will contribute to turning the negative trends in the total number and aging of researcher population by attracting and motivating junior and young talents.

The expected impact of the social inclusion intervention is a better social inclusion of people at a disadvantage, or, at risk of social exclusion. Emphasis is being placed on the specific problems of the long-term unemployed with low levels of qualifications and skills, as well as minority groups and people with disabilities. Their greater access to education and employment will have a positive impact on the overall social situation in the country as well as on Croatia's future social expenses. Strengthening the network of community based social services for disadvantaged groups and strengthening care and support structures in the labour market will also contribute to the self-fulfilment of disadvantaged individuals as well as to economic development as such.



The main anticipated impact of the intervention focused on civil society is overcoming the limitations faced by the civil society in Croatia today, in particular, lack of capacities, information and financial sources. The impacts of strengthening the civil society organisations will be visible in better advocacy of public policies, assisting in the democratic transition, promoting the right to education and health care and providing humanitarian aid, especially in areas where state bodies have difficult access and a low level of influence. Moreover, in the context of the current global financial and economic crisis, the role of social economy, non-profit entrepreneurship and volunteerism could become ever-more important as these activities will be of crucial importance in terms of mitigation of the social implications of the crisis.

Social dialogue intervention is aimed on removing obstacles such as lack of experience and low technical capacities of social partners in effectively representing the interests of their members. It is expected that they will contribute to strengthening the dialogue between the government and social partners and the partnership between employers and trade unions, as well as in enhancing social dialogue at the local level, both at the municipal and company level, and in developing sectoral dialogue and sectoral collective bargaining. All these will have an impact on working conditions, wages and other issues related to employment.

As all EU instruments, OP HRD will have impacts in the field of capacity building of both Management structures and beneficiaries. The added value of OP HRD is the high number of Grant Schemes that are the most efficient tendering method for educating final beneficiaries in the regions. Counties, municipalities, schools, NGOs as well as private bodies all around the country learn to plan, draft, implement and monitor small and medium sized projects. Another added value of the Programme is the broad scale of institutions involved in its management. At the end of OP HRD 2007 – 2013 implementation 3 ministries and 4 other bodies will have a substantial knowledge and experiences in managing EU funds. Expected impact of the IPA and ESF 2007 – 2013 exercise in terms of capacity building is an efficient and useful drawing of much higher ESF allocation in 2014 – 2020 period.



5.3 APPRAISAL OF STRUCTURES AND PROCEDURES FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

This section reviews the effectiveness of the implementation and monitoring arrangements for OP HRD, and analyses the organizational and managerial capacity of the main actors involved in planning and implementation. Crucial input in this section has been provided by the Croatian officials and beneficiaries in interview meetings with the Evaluator.

Under the provisions of IPA Implementing Regulation, the following bodies have been involved in the implementation of OP HRD:

- National IPA Coordinator (within the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds);
- Strategic Coordinator for the regional development and the human resources development components (within the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds);
- Competent Accrediting Officer (within the Ministry of Finance);
- National Authorising Officer (within the Ministry of Finance);
- National Fund (within the Ministry of Finance);
- Audit Authority (Agency for the Audit of European Union Programmes Implementation System);
- Operating Structure (see below).

The Operating Structure consisting of five bodies that perform specific tasks related to the management and implementation has been accredited by the European Commission (Decision on conferral of management powers to the bodies of the Operating Structure IV. components of the IPA on 1 December 2008). The accreditation process is underway for two new bodies - Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs and National Foundation for Civil Society Development, being in charge of the new priority “Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance”, proposed within the framework of programming period 2012-2013/2. The Conferral of management verification audit was performed by the representatives of DG EMPL on 13 - 15 December 2011.

The transition process from IPA management to ESF management should be smooth given that Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds, the Ministry of Finance, on the basis of their current and envisaged future roles as the NSRF Coordinating Authority and the Certifying Authority respectively, have been ensuring a coordinated and strategic approach in setting up the relevant institutional framework for the implementation of the EU post-accession funds.

The most important difference between IPA and ESF is the introduction of EDIS comprising three interrelated components: the management of aid on a decentralised basis, the waiving of the ex-ante approval requirements and the use of national procedures including procurement rules. Preparation for EDIS under OP HRD is already under way. According to the 2nd Progress Report on the achievements in meeting the requirements and benchmarks set in the Roadmap to waive ex-ante controls for the period ending 31



December 2011, steps have been taken to reach adequate establishment and management of the organization and the staff (see below). The functioning of the decentralised implementation system under IPA is satisfactory, absorption indicators have been met and the overall rejection rate of tender and contract documents submitted to the EC Delegation for ex-ante control has been decreased from 28,75% in 2010 to 7,43% in 2011.

Management Structures of the ESF OP HRD will consist of seven institutions:

Managing Authority	Ministry of labour and pension system				
Intermediate Bodies (level I)	PA1 Employment Ministry of labour and pension system	PA2 Social Inclusion Ministry of Social policy and youth (KAO 2.1, KAO 2.3) Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (KAO 2.2)	PA3 Education Ministry of Science, Education and Sports	PA4 Technical Assistance Ministry of labour and pension system	PA5 Civil Society Ministry of labour and pension system (KAO 5.1.) Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs (KAO 5.2)
Intermediate Bodies (level II)	Croatian Employment Service	Croatian Employment Service (KAO 2.1, KAO 2.3) Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education (KAO 2.2)	Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education	Croatian Employment Service	Croatian Employment Service (KAO 5.1) National Foundation for Civil Society Development (KAO 5.2)

The function of Managing Authority for the OP HRD will be performed by the Ministry of Labour And Pension System that will be responsible for managing and implementing the OP in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and clear separation of functions. It will have a coordinating role in all phases of the Programme cycle. Intermediate Bodies (level I) will be responsible for programming, monitoring and reporting in the frame of their sector. They will also conduct quality checks of on verifications carried out by Intermediate Bodies (level II). Intermediate Bodies (level II) are in direct contact with beneficiaries. They are in charge of preparation of tenders and Grant Schemes, tendering and contracting procedures, contract implementation, carrying out verifications, making payments and reporting. Despite delegating various tasks to Intermediate Bodies, the Managing Authority retains the overall responsibility for the correct execution of delegated tasks.

Although the 3-level and 7-institutions Management Structure appears to be complicated, there have been no serious problems identified under IPA OP HRD 2007 – 2011. However, as reported by the Croatian officials in interview meetings, there are still bylaws and internal procedures for ESF missing. On the other hand, the transition from IPA to ESF is an opportunity to improve existing procedures which are too complicated, particularly with respect to Grant Schemes:

- Reporting on quarterly basis and requiring extensive supporting documentation constitute the main



administrative load for both Contracting Authorities and Beneficiaries. However, despite frequent and work-intensive reporting, the information collected on qualitative achievements of the projects is insufficient. Simplification of reporting procedures and enriching the limited qualitative data on project progress remains a challenge.

- Project management costs should become eligible expenditure under ESF. As a safeguard, control mechanisms should be established to avoid overlapping in wage reimbursement of persons working in more than one project.
- Sophisticated control mechanisms should be established to avoid multiple reporting and overlapping in reimbursement of costs for persons participating in more than one project/activity. For the start, Final Recipient Identification Forms collected under IPA projects are waiting to be processed into an electronic database format and verified.
- In order to increase Programme efficiency, a list of maximum eligible unit prices for the most frequent budget items should be developed (e.g. hourly fees of project managers, hourly rates for different trainings, rates for renting training rooms, prices for IT equipment etc.). Obviously, the unit prices should reflect current market prices, be adjustable and enable procurement of high quality services and supplies.
- Procedures for Direct Award operation need to be established as this type of operation has not yet been implemented through IPA in Croatia. The Ministry of Labour and Pension System is currently waiting for instructions from European Commission services (DG EMPL and EC Delegation in Croatia).

Considering the limited progress in preparation of ESF procedures, there is a possibility to secure more time for their proper establishing. According to the Article 105a of the Treaty Concerning the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union (Specific provisions following the accession of Croatia), *“Any procurement procedure ... which, on the date of accession, has already been the subject of an invitation to tender published in the Official Journal of the European Union shall be implemented in accordance with the rules laid down in that invitation to tender.”* In other words, this provision gives Croatia the opportunity to prepare Calls for proposals and tenders that will be financed under ESF budget line, but implemented under PRAG. So if the Operating Structure accelerates publishing of calls, major part of the 2013 ESF allocation can be implemented under IPA rules which they are familiar with. This approach will reduce the risk of delays and decommitments.

In spite of increasing capacities at all levels, there is still a need for systematic capacity building in terms of staffing and enhancing of skills. The Organisational Development Strategy OP HRD drafted in July 2010 envisaged the number of people to be employed in particular institutions involved. The target numbers have been calculated upon estimated financial allocations for the years 2012 and 2013:



Institution	Actual number of employees involved in implementation of OP HRD (March 2012)	Staff planned according to ODS by 31.12.2013	Staff to be employed according to the Work Load Analysis	
			In 2012	In 2013
Ministry of Labour and Pension System	27 (Head of BROP + 26 employees)	32	4	8
Ministry of Social Policy and Youth	10 (Head of BRPM + 9 employees)	9	6	0
Ministry of Science, Education and Sport	7 (Head of BRPM + 6 employees)	12	4	7
Croatian Employment Service	40 (Director + 39 employees)	60	21	4
Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education	21 (Director + 20 employees)	37	8	6
Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs	16	23	4	3
National Foundation for Civil Society Development ³	8 (Director + 7 employees)	12	3	0
Total	129 persons	185 persons	50 persons	28 persons

Source: National Fund, National Foundation for Civil Society Development, Organisational Development Strategy OP HRD, Work Load Analysis

In March 2012 there have been 129 persons employed in bodies comprising the Operating Structure. It is 70% of the target number for December 2013 projected by the Organisational Development Strategy OP HRD. More recent Work Load Analysis shows the need for even higher number of new employees. By any means, continual growth of the number as well as of the capability of Operating Structure staff is crucial not only for successful implementation of IPA, but especially for the upcoming ESF Programme.

Improvements in motivation and retention of civil servants across the state administration have been already achieved. Based on the Regulation on Post Titles and Post Complexity Coefficients in Civil Service (Official Gazette No. 022/2011), employees of the Ministries and Governmental Office for Cooperation with NGOs responsible for IPA receive a bonus of 30% of wage. In comparison, public servants (employees of Croatian Employment Service and Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education) are still waiting for a similar regulation in the frame of the Law on Public Services that is being prepared. At present, different wages for similar work lead to demotivation and discontinuity among the Contracting Authorities employees.

Besides wages, it is important that systematic trainings are developed for the staff, and induction and on-the-job-training system is in place for the new employees, in order to ensure their inclusion into work through joint activities with experienced colleagues. However, as reported in particular by the Contracting

³ In April 2012 National Foundation for Civil Society Development was not a part of Operating Structure as it was waiting for written accreditation.



Authorities, present employees are overloaded and do not have sufficient time for trainings, nor for mentoring of new people. Moreover, there is no training plan aiming on the preparation for ESF in place.

Progress has been achieved in capacity building among final beneficiaries. This statement is based on the interviews with both Contracting Authorities as well as on field visits conducted by the Evaluator. Grant Scheme beneficiaries who have been visited in Sisak and Petrinja fully understand the project logic, principles of project partnership as well as financial management of EU projects. According to the Survey of OP HRD Grant Scheme Beneficiaries conducted in 2011, the vast majority of the beneficiaries participated in workshops, seminars and info days organised by Operating Structures. Only 31% of Grant Scheme beneficiaries used external experts for the preparation of the grant application. On the other hand, beneficiaries rated the cooperation with the implementing bodies. The overall rating is 4.34 (on the scale of 1 – very bad to 5 – excellent). While cooperation with the Croatian Employment Service reached the rating 4.69, the cooperation with the Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education averaged only at 3.66.

The Management information system for IPA is in place and fully operational. It has a rather simple architecture containing mainly the data on procurement process, signature of the contract and financial flows. As it is not an analytical tool, more sophisticated monitoring is conducted manually in excel files. A more complex monitoring information system is currently under preparation for future ESF interventions. Another important tool to monitor the implementation process of OP HRD is the Procurement plan. It is a document in Excel sheet format containing deadlines for procurement of all supplies, services and grant schemes in the frame of OP HRD. Regarding the assessments on N+3 risks, a system called Lothar (also an Excel sheet) provides the possibility to monitor financial data for contracted operations, their payments and certification, as well as data by which the contracting, payments and certification is planned. In that way, the system combines financial data from Management information system and Procurement plan and helps to identify critical points in implementation of each project.



6 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

This final section presents the conclusions of the Ex-ante Evaluation of the Operational Programme for Human Resource Development based on the results presented in previous sections. It subsequently presents the related recommendations for further improvements.

Conclusion 1. The OP HRD is a unique OP document in terms of repeated programming and dual implementation. As a result of the postponed accession to the EU, the pragmatic decision to continue supporting HRD priorities set by IPA 2007 – 2013/2 led to elaboration of a unique OP document covering the whole 2007 – 2013 period, including both IPA and ESF budget lines. Thus the implementation of the OP HRD will constitute a significant challenge for Croatia, applying at the same time different procedures for similar projects within a single programming framework.

Conclusion 2. The March 2012 draft of the OP HRD may be qualified as a document that meets the EU standards:

- It contains an extensive analysis on the Croatian labour market, on its educational system, on the position of vulnerable groups and on civil society.
- The strategy is translated into a proposed set of Priority Axes and key areas of intervention which will tackle the weaknesses of the Croatian human resources development identified in the analytical part of the document.
- The strategy and interventions are coherent with EU and national policies, including complementarity with the other Operational Programmes.
- There is a set of quantified indicators attached to each of the Priority Axes.
- The OP HRD also contains the main outlines of the implementation.

However, improvements of the intervention logic and the system of indicators are still required.

Conclusion 3. The OP HRD exhibits a strong European added value. In the Evaluator's opinion, the OP HRD is generating added value due to:

- helping to address long-standing, structural problems and gaps of Croatia in the field of employment, education, social inclusion and civil society.
- providing access to both IPA and ESF programming and procurement procedures, which by itself is a major step towards successful utilisation of 2014-2020 assistance.

Conclusion 4. The strategic approach adopted by the OP HRD is an improvement compared to previous EU-funded interventions. The OP HRD is a more comprehensive intervention that combines institution and capacity building with policy change in human capital investment leading to more sustained outcomes.

Conclusion 5. New challenges facing human capital in Croatia. The continued high levels of unemployment



and inactivity, especially affecting the women, the switch to continuing and adult education, as well as the advent of the Civil Society are the main current trends in the labour market and socio-economic environment, requiring a modified policy response to which the OP HRD should contribute.

Conclusion 6. Mitigate risk factors in transition from IPA to ESF. Staff shortages in combination with work overload, unjustified remuneration differences between civil and public servants, and delays in preparation of ESF procedures and bylaws constitute risk factors that must be handled to enable smooth implementation in the immediate future.



6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the above conclusions, the Evaluation Team proposes the following recommendations:

1. In order to avoid confusion among public beneficiaries it is recommended to add a short explanatory section describing the development of OP HRD in the light of the postponed EU accession and clarifying differences in terminology, objectives, indicators and procedures between IPA and ESF.
2. Further development of methodology and establishment of the system for regular measurement of the mismatch between the education system and the labour market needs is necessary. It is an important supporting tool for employment and education policies at national level as well as for future monitoring and programming of EU assistance. On the other hand, respective sections of the OP document need revision and update focused on recent developments in education sector as well as results achieved by IPA service contracts.
3. Corrective actions should be taken regarding the intervention logic of the proposed Priority Axis 5 'Strengthening the role of civil society for better governance', in order to explain its contribution to the fulfilment of the Programme's framework objective.
4. The system of measurable indicators requires further improvement:
 - a. Typology of all indicators needs to be specified (output, result, impact).
 - b. Additional indicators monitoring achievements from a longer perspective (i.e. result and impact indicators) should be specified.
 - c. The assignment of each indicator to one specific objective should be consistently applied in Priority Axes 3, 4 and 5.
 - d. The formulation of specific objectives in the indicator table within the Priority Axis 4 should be unified with the formulation in the text.
 - e. Description of unclear indicators needs to be introduced. Relevant definition, assumptions, explanation and/or guidance on collecting data is required, in order to raise and standardise the understanding of indicators among users and increase the accuracy of monitoring.
 - f. In order to ensure correct monitoring data, measures should be taken to avoid multiple counting of persons participating in more than one project/activity.
5. Missing bylaws and internal procedures for ESF have to be elaborated and adopted. At the same time use this opportunity to improve existing procedures which are too complicated in particular in Grant Schemes:
 - a. Reporting on quarterly basis and requiring extensive supporting documentation constitute the main administrative load for both Contracting Authorities and Beneficiaries. However, despite frequent and work-intensive reporting, the information collected on qualitative achievements of the projects is insufficient. Simplification of reporting procedures and



enriching the limited qualitative data on project progress remain a challenge.

- b. Project management costs should become eligible expenditure under ESF. Equally important, control mechanisms should be established to avoid overlapping in wage reimbursement of persons working in more than one project.
 - c. Sophisticated control mechanisms should be established to avoid multiple reporting and overlapping in reimbursement of costs for persons participating in more than one project/activity. For the start, Final Recipient Identification Forms collected under IPA projects are waiting to be processed into an electronic database format and verified.
 - d. In order to increase Programme efficiency, a list of maximum eligible unit prices for the most frequent budget items should be developed (e.g. hourly fees of project managers, hourly rates for different trainings, rates for renting training rooms, prices for IT equipment etc.). Obviously, the unit prices should reflect current market prices and enable procurement of high quality services and supplies.
 - e. Procedures for Direct Award operation need to be established as this type of operation has not yet been implemented through IPA in Croatia, outside the Operating Structure.
6. Accelerate preparation of tenders and calls to be financed under the 2013 ESF allocation. If published in the Official Journal of the European Union before the date of accession, they will be implemented under PRAG which will reduce the risk of delays and decommitments.
 7. Financial motivation of the public servants within the Operating Structure needs to be provided by a quick adoption of the new Law on Public Services regulating their remuneration in a similar way as it is regulated for civil servants.
 8. Further capacity building in terms of staffing and skills enhancement is of utmost importance. Moreover, as a part of preparation for ESF, a realistic training plan should be developed and brought into effect across Operating Structure.
 9. Final revision of the Programme document focused on typing mistakes is needed.



APPENDIX A. KEY ANALYSIS INSTRUMENTS

The most important methods and techniques used in Ex-Ante Evaluation of ESF OP HRD have been the following:

- **Use of secondary source data:** Existing information gathered and interpreted by the evaluator. Secondary data consists of information drawn from the IPA OP monitoring system, produced by statistics institutes and provided by former research. The most important sources of secondary data are listed in Appendix C. Key Documents Consulted.
- **Use of administrative data:** Information relating to the administration of the Programme collected through a structured monitoring process and analytical works conducted mainly by Operating Structure. Main sources of administrative data have been the Annual Implementation Reports, Organisational Development Strategy and Workload Analysis prepared for the IPA counterpart OP.
- **Stakeholder consultation** (See Appendix B. Evaluation Consultees): A Project office has been located at the Ministry of Regional Development and EU Funds. Daily ad hoc consultations with sectoral counterparts as well as with Project Implementation Unit helped the evaluator in identifying relevant contact persons within Operating Structure and possible sources of information Interviews have been structured according to the following topics:
 - Progress in implementation of the IPA counterpart OP Priority axis / Measures
 - Contribution of IPA to sectoral programmes and strategies and relevance of these strategies
 - Level of cooperation within the Operating Structure
 - Benefits taken from the Technical Assistance projects, including the status of “project pipeline”
 - Experiences with different contracting forms (service contracts, supply contracts, grant schemes, direct awards, framework contracts, twinning contracts)
 - Challenges and opportunities (What can be done in a better way?), including preparation for the management of the ERDF.
- **Logic models:** Generic term that describes various representations of programmes linking their contexts, assumptions, inputs, intervention logics, implementation chains and outcomes and results. In this particular evaluation it has been used for analysis of the OP HRD intervention logic.



APPENDIX B. EVALUATION CONSULTEES

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APPENDIX C. KEY DOCUMENTS CONSULTED

- Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2007 – 2009 for Croatia
- Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2008 – 2010 for Croatia
- Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2009 – 2011 for Croatia
- Multi-annual Indicative Planning Document 2011 – 2013 for Croatia
- Republic of Croatia, Central Office for Development Strategy and Coordination of EU Funds: Strategic Coherence Framework 2007-2013
- National Strategic Reference Framework 2012 – 2013 (Draft of June 2010)
- Treaty Concerning the Accession of the Republic of Croatia to the European Union
- Republic of Croatia: Operational Programme For Human Resources Development – Second Version – Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance 2007HR05IPO001 (July 2010)
- Republic of Croatia: Revision of OP HRD 2007-2013/2
- Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship: Operational Programme Human Resources Development – Sectoral Annual Implementation Report for the Year 2010
- Ministry of Labour and Pension System: Operational Programme Human Resources Development – Sectoral Annual Implementation Report for the Year 2011
- Republic of Croatia – Ministry of Labour and Pension System: Operational Programme Human Resources Development – ESF (Draft March 2012)
- Republic of Croatia – Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship: Survey of HRDOP Grant Scheme Beneficiaries – Questionnaire Analysis (2011)
- Organisation Development Strategy Operational Programme “Human Resources Development”
- WYG International Ltd in consortium with YTKO: Evaluation of Active Labour Market Measures Targeting Disadvantaged Women in the Labour Market (2007-2010)
- Republic of Croatia: National Employment Promotion Plan 2011-2012 (published in 2011)
- Strategic Plan of CES for the period 2008-2011 (published in 2008)
- Republic of Croatia: National Implementation Plan on Social Inclusion 2011-2012 (published in 2011)
- Republic of Croatia: Strategy of Social Welfare Development in the Republic of Croatia 2011-2016 (published in 2011)
- Government of the Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport: Development Strategy of the Vocational Education System in the Republic of Croatia 2008 - 2013 (published in 2008)



- Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, Council for the National Curriculum: Strategy for the Construction and Development of the National Curriculum for Preschool Education, General Compulsory and Secondary School Education (published in 2007)
- Government Office for Cooperation with NGOs: National Strategy for the Creation of an Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2006 – 2011
- Republic of Croatia – Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship: Strategy of Entrepreneurial Learning 2010 – 2014 (published in 2010)
- Government of the Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport: Science & Technology Policy of the Republic of Croatia 2006 – 2010 (published in 2006)
- Government of the Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Science, Education and Sport: Action Plan for Mobility of Researchers 2011 – 2012 (published in 2010)





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