

INTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts

UNDP Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia / April 2016

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU – European Union

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NGDO – Non-governmental Development Organisation

NGO – Non-governmental Organization

ODA – Official Development Assistance

OECD – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

SNIECODA - Strengthening the National Institutional and Education capacity to carry out ODA programs/project

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNEG – United Nations Evaluation Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Romanian Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is a rapid response financing tool that facilitates the quick transfer of Romanian experts and expertise to meet Romania's Official Development Assistance (ODA) priority countries¹ ad hoc needs in development sectors in which Romania can bring an added value, by sharing its transition experience to democracy and a market economy.

The current evaluation is intended to assess the design and relevance, performance (efficiency, effectiveness), achievements and sustainability of the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts in the context of Romania's development cooperation program. The evaluation will identify/document lessons learned and recommendations that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its partners may use in improving the design and implementation of the instrument.

The report touches upon the following evaluation criteria:

- a) **Relevance of the project** – evaluating the extent to which the evolving format and content of the project meets various stakeholders' needs and interests;
- b) **Effectiveness** of project implementation – the extent to which the project has met its objectives;
- c) **Efficiency** - the extent to which the available resources were used in an efficient and transparent manner;
- d) **Sustainability** of results – the extent to which the effects of this project are resilient and the mechanisms which support the durability of results;

Each evaluation criterion is assessed on a four-point scale – Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory – based on the OECD Scale of Evaluation Findings.

The overall rating of the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is satisfactory. The Mobility Fund is a financing tool that offers low-risk, low-cost up-scalable development solutions to the needs of Romania's ODA partner countries, while making excellent use of Romania's features as an emerging donor – limited financial resources, but relevant transition expertise to be shared through partnerships centred on the ownership of the recipient state. The Mobility Fund should be preserved as an ODA delivery tool on the long-term, complementing the other existing aid delivery modalities. However, there are number of important adjustments that need to be implemented, at the institutional, legal, strategic, and design level to ensure the enhanced effectiveness and sustainability of its results, particularly given the current heavy reliance of the mechanism on the UNDP implementation procedures and institutional network and in the light of the imminent closure of the UNDP-MFA partnership.

¹ The Romanian ODA priority countries are defined in the Romanian ODA Strategy, further amended through the 2011 Memorandum on the development assistance partner states and the Memorandum on Romania's development assistance partner states for the period 2012-2015. Currently, Romania's ODA partner countries are: The Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, The Republic of Iraq, Palestine, The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

<p>relevance</p>	<p>Highly satisfactory</p> <p>The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is a highly relevant tool for the provision of Romania's development assistance to its ODA partner countries as it matches perfectly Romania's emerging donor profile, its strengths and inherent limitations, such as limited available funding. Moreover, the instrument is complementary to the other available funding modalities used by Romania, offering a low-risk, low-cost solution for scaling up adequate development solutions upon the request and with the ownership of the partner countries.</p>
<p>effectiveness</p>	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is an easy-to-use, flexible financing tool, with a robust methodology that offers tailored solution for various types of ad-hoc development needs of the partner countries. However, some sections of the methodology require strengthening, especially with regard to monitoring the achieved results and follow up actions and engagement of Romanian Embassies in the partner countries into the process. Also, there are a number of inherent challenges regarding the effectiveness of the tool as the implementation of the input provided by Romanian experts is highly reliant on the drive, commitment and capacity of the beneficiary institution and the specific national context and opportunity of the proposed recommendations/models.</p>
<p>efficiency</p>	<p>Highly satisfactory</p> <p>The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts offers very low-cost solutions to institutional capacity building / technical assistance needs, based on the sharing of experience between peer institution/ experts in Romania and its ODA partner countries that are experiencing similar developmental challenges to those that Romania was confronted with during its transition period.</p>
<p>sustainability</p>	<p>Satisfactory</p> <p>The sustainability of the results achieved in the beneficiary country are highly reliant on internal affairs and the capacities and drive of the partner institutions. In terms of institutional and financial sustainability of the Mobility Fund, there are good prospects for the elaboration of a new solid legal and institutional framework to support the implementation of the Mobility Fund from the specialised ODA Department of the MFA. Within the MFA there is a strong sense of ownership and a strong will for the continuation of this funding mechanism, which emerged as a good practice from the UNDP-MFA partnership. However, the Mobility Fund requires some more solid knowledge management associated instruments to enhance its usability and sustainability, such as the Expertise Locator and DevFin.</p>



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INTRODUCTION

OBJECT OF THE EVALUATION – THE MOBILITY FUND FOR GOVERNMENTAL EXPERTS

The Romanian Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is a rapid response financing tool that facilitates the quick transfer of Romanian experts and expertise to meet Romania's ODA priority countries² ad hoc needs in development sectors in which Romania can bring an added value, by sharing its transition experience to democracy and a market economy.

The Mobility Fund has been designed by the MFA in cooperation with the UNDP and became operation in the autumn of 2013. The instrument is fully financed from the ODA budget allocated to the MFA on an annual basis and is implemented jointly by the UNDP Regional Hub in Istanbul (through the Romanian ODA team based in Bucharest) and the MFA.

With rare exceptions, the instrument is specifically designed for public servants from Romania and the ODA partner countries and is focused on the thematic priorities of the Romanian ODA programme. The Mobility Fund is a rapid reaction tool that aims to facilitate the provision of development assistance support in circumstances that could not have been anticipated well in advance to allow for the design of fully fledged projects and that require a very targeted and specific type of intervention. As such, the Mobility Fund was constructed to complement the other existing financing tools and modalities applicable for the Romanian ODA, for example from the annual call for proposal launched by the MFA, or direct allocations to the partner countries, modalities which are suitable for large scale initiatives, elaborated based on a more complex planning process. Also, the Mobility Fund does not aim to replace the development cooperation/ international relations budgets of Romanian line ministries and specialised agencies. The instrument only funds complimentary actions to those already organized by the line ministries with a specific development purpose, based on the specific request of a partner country.

The Mobility Fund is an application-based financing instrument, whereby interested representatives of public authorities in Romanian or the ODA partner countries (and in exceptional cases, where the requested expertise cannot be found in public institution, representatives of the private sector and the civil society) can submit their proposal, using a standardised application procedure. Applications for the Mobility Fund are received throughout the year, depending on the availability of funds, and are awarded on the first-come first-served principle, granted that the assistance needs are well justified. The operational structure of the Mobility Fund consists of its Advisory Board and the Technical Secretariat, which jointly manage the mobility mission as follows.

- The applications are analysed by the Advisory Board, composed of one representative of the MFA Development Assistance Unit, who consults with the relevant MFA geographical departments and one representative of the UNDP, from the Romanian ODA team.

² The Romanian ODA priority countries are defined in the Romanian ODA Strategy, further amended through the 2011 Memorandum on the development assistance partner states and the Memorandum on Romania's development assistance partner states for the period 2012-2015. Currently, Romania's ODA partner countries are: The Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, The Republic of Iraq, Palestine, The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

- The secretariat, which is ensured by the UNDP, manages all the operational procedures incurred by the mobility missions (including the provision of travel arrangement and daily subsistence allowance). The UNDP also serves as a main contact point for the successful applicant throughout the entire process of the mobility mission, from the beginning of the application process to the final reporting, following the completion of the mission.



In brief, the application process consists of the following steps: the eligible candidate must submit the full application file (applicant’s CV, letter of intent endorsed by the sending institution, filled in application form, agenda of the proposed activity, proof of request from the beneficiary, declaration regarding eligible costs) to the UNDP focal point with at least 10 working days prior to the proposed event/meeting/project. Within maximum 5 working days from the receipt of the complete application, the applicant receives a response on the acceptance or rejection of application. In case of acceptance, the flight ticket is procured by UNDP in the shortest time possible, while the daily subsistence allowance (DSA)³ is transferred directly to the applicant’s bank account. The successful applicant needs to submit to the UNDP representative the activity report and the boarding passes within 15 working days from the conclusion of the mobility mission.

The mobility fund covers the following type of expenses: transportation/flight tickets, DSA as per the UNDP list of DSA rates around the world (the allowance is intended to account for accommodation, meals, local transportation and miscellaneous expenses). The applicants must clearly state if any of the eligible costs (transportation, accommodation, meals) are being covered by other means.

EVALUATION PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The Evaluation is intended to assess the design and relevance, performance (efficiency, effectiveness), achievements and sustainability of the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts in the context of Romania’s development cooperation program. The evaluation will identify/document lessons learned and recommendations that the implementing partners may use in improving the design and implementation of the instrument.

³ Based on the UN standardized DSA rates, promulgated on a monthly basis by the Chairman of the International Civil Service Commission.

This report assesses the following evaluation criteria:

- e) **Relevance of the project** – evaluating the extent to which the evolving format and content of the project meets various stakeholders' needs and interests;
- f) **Effectiveness** of project implementation – the extent to which the project has met its objectives;
- g) **Efficiency** - the extent to which the available resources were used in an efficient and transparent manner;
- h) **Sustainability** of results – the extent to which the effects of this project are resilient and the mechanisms which support the durability of results;

The current report is a project evaluation and not an impact evaluation, focusing on the achievement of outputs, rather than long-term outcomes of its implementation. However, the report will briefly touch upon the long-term effects of this project, based on the information gathered from consultations with various stakeholders.

The evaluation criteria mentioned above were assessed using the following rating categories: Highly Satisfactory, Satisfactory, Marginally Satisfactory, and Unsatisfactory, followed by an explanation of the rating. This four-point rating system is in line with international standards and was adopted from the OECD Scale of Evaluation Findings, introduced in the manual “Assessing the Development Effectiveness of Multilateral Organizations: Guidance on the Methodological Approach”, rev. June 2012, published by OECD DAC Network on Development Evaluation⁴:

highly satisfactory	the project had no shortcomings in the achievement of its objectives
satisfactory	there were only minor shortcomings
marginally satisfactory	the project had significant shortcomings
unsatisfactory	there were major shortcomings in the achievement of the project objectives

METHODOLOGY OF THE EVALUATION

The quantitative and qualitative data provided in the evaluation is based on the following methodology:

- a) Desk review of all relevant project documentation including project documents, project proposals, agendas, lists of participants, post-event reports, progress reports and any other relevant documents.
- b) In depth interviews to gather primary data from key stakeholders (relevant representatives of the Romanian MFA, UNDP, representatives of Romanian and ODA partner country public institutions and other relevant stakeholders – please see the complete list in Annex 2) using a well-structured methodology.
- c) One field mission in Chisinau, the Republic of Moldova, to assess the effectiveness of the mobility missions addressed to Moldovan institutions.

⁴ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dcdndep/50540172.pdf>



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The methodology for this evaluation is based on the Terms of Reference developed by the UNDP (available in Annex 1), and the UNEG Standards for Evaluation in the UN System comprising the respective Code of Conduct and the Ethical Guidelines.

This document is an internal evaluation, conducted by a member of the UNDP Romanian ODA team.



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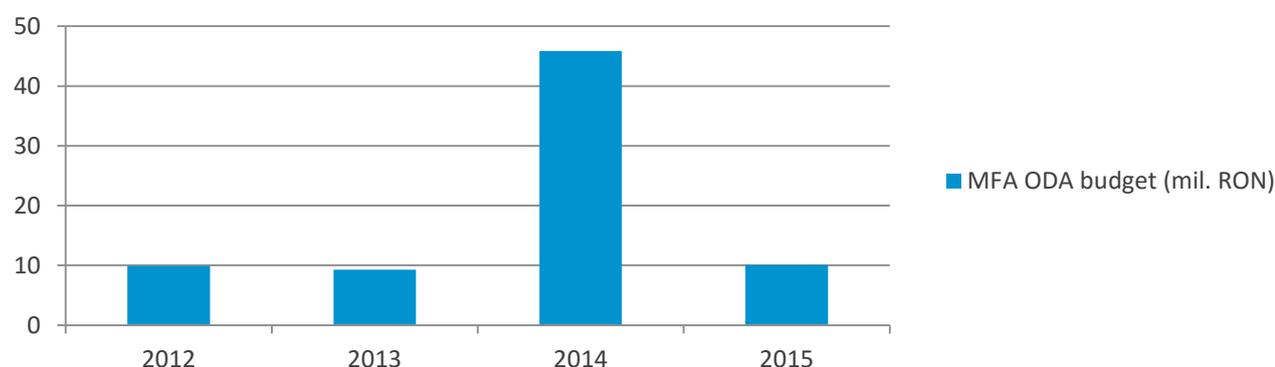
FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. PROJECT RELEVANCE

This section of the report will analyse the extent to which this funding instrument meets the needs and interests of the Romanian ODA partner countries and its compatibility with Romania’s strengths as an emerging small donor. Also, this section will propose a series of recommendation to enhance the relevance of this instrument.

Romania became an international provider of official development assistance in 2007, following its accession to the European Union. In this new capacity, Romania has been working towards defining its niche and specific approach as a new type ODA provider, whose strengths rely on its recent experience and the expertise acquired during its transition to democracy and market economy, similarly to other emerging donors in the region, such as the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and others. As such, Romania assists its ODA partner countries in achieving long-term, systemic reforms, through a horizontal type of support, relying on the exchange of experiences and expertise at the technical level. Therefore, despite a limited volume of available ODA funding, Romania can contribute to the international development cooperation efforts through a focused and more technical type of assistance, whose strength relies on the relevance of Romania’s transition experience to the countries it supports and its equal partnership approach which makes its assistance friendlier and more palatable for its partners. In order to translate this donor profile vision into actual policy, the MFA of Romania has developed a strategy for the Romanian ODA⁵, which is being currently updated and expected to be adopted by 2017. As Romania increased its capacities as a provider of bilateral development assistance, more funding has been allocated either through the annual call from proposals, through direct allocations to the beneficiary states and through the Mobility Fund. In the same time, the volume of the multilateral assistance provided decreased from 40% of the ODA budget in 2007 to 18% in 2010 and 1% in 2014. The national ODA disbursement include the development assistance contributions allocated and reported by line ministries, and the separate dedicated ODA budget managed by the MFA, which serves as the national coordinator of the Romanian development cooperation policy. The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is financed from the MFA’s ODA budget.

Annual volume of the ODA budget allocated to the MFA



⁵ The currently applicable ODA strategy is available online at http://roaid.ro/uploads/documents/38/Strategia_nationala_privind_politica_de_cooperare_int_pentru_dezvoltare_forma_finala__ro.pdf (in the Romanian language)

Given Romania’s donor profile described above, the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is a highly relevant and adequate ODA implementation tool. It makes use of very limited financial resources to facilitate the transfer of expertise and sharing of experiences between Romania and its ODA partner countries, through tailored mobility missions which address concrete needs of the beneficiaries, in line with Romania’s thematic priorities. The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is specifically highlighted as a well-designed funding instrument that holds great potential for Romania’s development cooperation in the field of anti-corruption and integrity and electoral assistance, two thematic niches of the Romanian ODA, in the independent thematic evaluations commissioned by the UNDP⁶. Both evaluations underline the effectiveness of this tool for strengthening Romania’s development cooperation niche in each thematic area, given the flexibility that the instrument allows for the rapid and cost-effective interventions it can facilitate.

“The Mobility Fund is a useful tool for electoral assistance providing a flexible mechanism for a timely and targeted response, while the Electoral Toolkit has significant potential for a cost-effective way to share the Romanian experience.”⁷

Romania is not the only emerging donor in the region to have identified the relevance of such a funding instrument for financing the exchange of technical expertise with its ODA partner countries. The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Croatia already have in place or are currently developing similar funding instruments. Moreover, other donors, such as Russia, are interested in adapting such financing modalities in their own national ODA implementation frameworks. The existence of similar funding instruments in the region, each adjusted to the national legislation and ODA priorities, stands as proof for its relevance to the donor profile specific to the new EU member states and other emerging donors in the region.

The table below presents a very brief overview of a number of similar funding instruments used by other emerging donors in the Easter Europe region⁸:

<p>Slovak Centre for Experience Transfer from Integration and Reforms (CETIR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding modality implemented since summer 2011 by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic; • Geographic focus: Republic of Moldova, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia and Ukraine; • Thematic focus: Reform and management of public finance, tax reforms, management and utilisation of EU financial tools, security sector reform, energy, economic growth (focus on small and medium enterprises), food security, decentralisation and public administration reform, civil society; • The mobility missions consist mainly of study visits by state administration, regional and local self-government representatives of partner countries to Slovakia and reciprocal study visits of Slovak experts.
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6 The thematic evaluations are available online at <http://roaid.ro/uploads/documents/62/Thematic%20Evaluation%20-%20Romanian%20ODA%20Anti-corruption%20and%20integrity.pdf> (page 14) and <http://roaid.wwwiew.com/uploads/documents/33/Thematic%20Evaluation%20-%20Electoral%20Assistance.pdf> (page iv, 21)

7 Thematic evaluation of the electoral assistance provided within the Romanian ODA programme, page 21;

8 Based on the information available online, via <http://fundingdevelopment.org/> and dedicated websites; there is limited information available on the Bulgarian and the Croatian mobility instruments.

<p>Czech Temporary Expert Assignment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding modality implemented since January 2015, addressed to Georgia, The Republic of Moldova and Serbia; • Thematic focus: agriculture, ecology, industry, education, health, good governance with a special emphasis on the Czech experience in EU legislation approximation and implementation of EU regulatory standards; • Missions are carried out by Czech experts (receiving the status of consultants) and can last up to 25 working days.
<p>Czech Expert on Demand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New funding modality of the Czech-UNDP trust fund, which aims to facilitate the rapid deployment of Czech expertise on-demand; • Thematic focus: environment, energy and agriculture, economic transformation, democratic governance and health; • Addressed to individual consultants (remunerated as such); • The expertise can be requested by UNDP Country Offices in ECIS region through the trust Fund; • Eligible assignments must last up to 3 months and can include small-scale feasibility studies, on-site assessments, scoping missions, contributions to trainings, workshops, etc.

In terms of design and usability of the Romanian Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts, the feedback received during the consultations undergone for the preparation of this evaluation has shown that there is a general positive reaction regarding the funding modality, both from the providers and recipients of expertise. The interviews showed that the Mobility Fund is actually perceived and used as a flexible tool that addressed ad-hoc needs of the beneficiary institutions, by matching these needs with the necessary resources made available by Romanian ODA in a timely manner. The Mobility Fund does not act as an emergency reaction tool, but rather as an instrument dedicated to development needs that had not been planned/could not have been planned so as to be financed through other financing modalities, such as the annual call for proposals or through individual initiatives led by the Romanian line institutions. As such, the Mobility Fund is highly appreciated for the reduced bureaucracy of the application process, the rapid implementation of the approved mobility mission (deployment of experts is done in maximum 10 days upon the application submission) and the rapid results that it can produce to ad-hoc, specific and small-scale needs in ODA partner countries. In addition to being a quick response tool that facilitates the prompt provision of support services to Romania's partners, the Mobility Fund also offers solutions to small scale interventions that do not require a more ambitious project or programme-type intervention, but that are of high relevance for the partners. The other funding instruments that are made available by Romanian MFA are not suitable for such small scale types of intervention – for example the annual call for proposal requires a very systematic planning of activities, with a minimum of 1 year prior to the beginning of the actual project activities, and is more suitable for larger-scale interventions. Projects implemented by specialised ministries and line institutions also have a larger scope and require more planning.

The research that informs this evaluation indicates that there are a number of main reoccurring purposes the Mobility Fund is used for:

1. **Capacity building of partner states' institutions (technical assistance and training).** Most mobility missions supported the partner country in the development of specific strategic/operational/legal frameworks on specific topics such as electoral assistance, public communication, public health and sanitation, public order, market economy, and others. Also, the main scope of a number of mobility missions was the provision of technical trainings addressed to public servants in the partner countries performed by Romanian experts. This type of missions included both activities in the beneficiary country and visits of ODA partner country representatives in Romania.
2. **Scoping for larger interventions in the beneficiary country on specific thematic topics and project design.** A number of mobility missions had as main goal the assessment of the partner country needs in a particular technical field, in order to evaluate the potential for a larger-scale intervention, designed upon the request of the partner. Thus, the Mobility Fund can be used as seed funding to assess the potential for partnership development in a partner country. This function of the Mobility Fund holds large potential to be further explored both in terms of effectiveness and efficiency of the Romanian ODA, as it would ensure the national ownership of beneficiary countries and general relevance of larger and costlier interventions that could be financed by the MFA or directly through the budgets of the line institutions (once the necessary capacities are created).
3. **On-field monitoring.** Given the limited project implementation capacities of the beneficiary countries, a few mobility missions had the specific purpose of implementation progress monitoring and provision of technical advice, particularly in the case of larger-scale infrastructure projects generally financed through direct allocations to the Government of the Republic of Moldova.

The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts also financed a number of mobility missions performed by representatives of civil society and the private sector in particular cases where the required expertise could not be found within public institutions. The flexibility of this financial instrument, both in terms of eligibility of experts and types of missions it funds, makes it therefore highly relevant for a wide range of Romania's ODA partner countries' needs and complements well the other existing funding modalities.

CONCLUSION:

The rating for the relevance criteria is **highly satisfactory**.

The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is a highly relevant tool for the provision of Romania's development assistance to its ODA partner countries as it matches perfectly Romania's emerging donor profile, its strengths and inherent limitations, such as limited available funding. Moreover, the instrument is complementary to the other available funding modalities used by Romania, offering a low-risk, low-cost solution for scaling up adequate development solutions upon the request and with the ownership of the partner countries. It is also a very relevant instrument for partnership development and larger intervention scoping in Romania's ODA priority states.



It is easy to use
It helps avoid long and bureaucratic procurement processes



It ensures flexibility
It allows immediate response to the beneficiary's ad hoc needs



It brings value for money
The aid is strategically placed and timely delivered

HOW IS THE MOBILITY FUND PERCEIVED BY ITS BENEFICIARIES?



It forges partnerships
It encourages network development and best-practice sharing among homologue public institutions



It can be used as seed funding to explore new projects and partnerships

RECOMMENDATIONS:

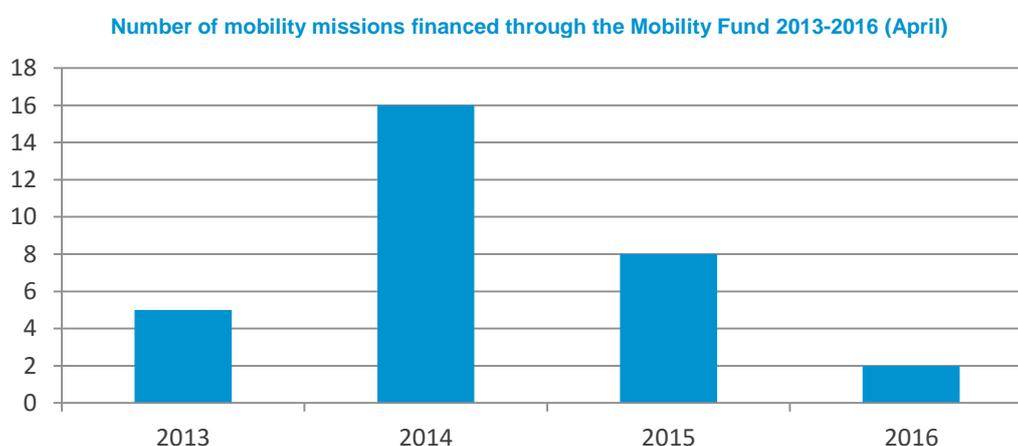
- The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is a well-suited financing instrument that can potentiate Romania's ODA efforts. As such, the instrument needs to be further used, on a medium and long-term period. Given the leading role that the UNDP is currently playing in the operationalisation of the Mobility Fund, it is important that the new secondary legislation provides for specific provisions and procedures that allow for the smooth transfer of the Mobility Fund from the UNDP to the MFA's new development cooperation agency, after the closure of the UNDP-Romania partnership project. This Agency should be equipped with the necessary legal and operational capacities to take over and implement the entire implementation cycle of the Mobility Fund.
- To the extent possible, the new legislation, the applicable guidelines that will regulate the activity of the newly created ODA Agency and that will set the new ODA framework should maintain the same flexible design of the funding instrument, facilitating mobility missions for both Romanian and ODA partner countries experts, representing public institutions, but also civil society and the private sector, in exceptional cases.
- The role of the Romanian Embassies on the ground needs to be enhanced in order to ensure a rapid and more relevant response to the needs of the ODA partner country. Currently, the Romanian Embassies have a minor and circumstantial role in the implementation of the Mobility Fund. Consequently, the request for expertise comes rarely from or facilitated by the Embassies and they are not always consulted when the Mobility Fund applications are evaluated. The new ODA implementation guidelines should clearly regulate the role of the embassies in: assessing the relevance of the requested missions, in managing and monitoring the partnerships and missions themselves, in following up to ensure the sustainability of results and in further promoting this

funding instrument. As a first step, the MFA can inform the Romanian Embassies in the partner countries of the existence of the Mobility Fund and the future implementation arrangements under the new ODA Agency (where this has not been done), and develop a capacity building plan addressed to Romanian Embassies in order to better prepare them for a long-term engagement in the implementation of the Mobility Fund.

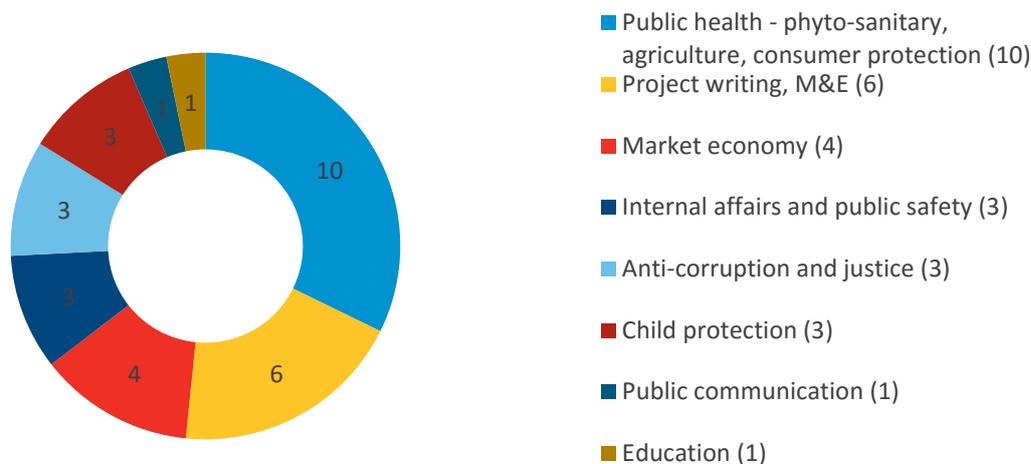
B. PROJECT EFFECTIVENESS

This section of the report will assess the extent to which the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts meets its purposes as described above, taking into consideration the design of the project, its financing and implementation. Also, this section will look into the results achieved by mobility missions, with a particular focus on those that took place in the Republic of Moldova.

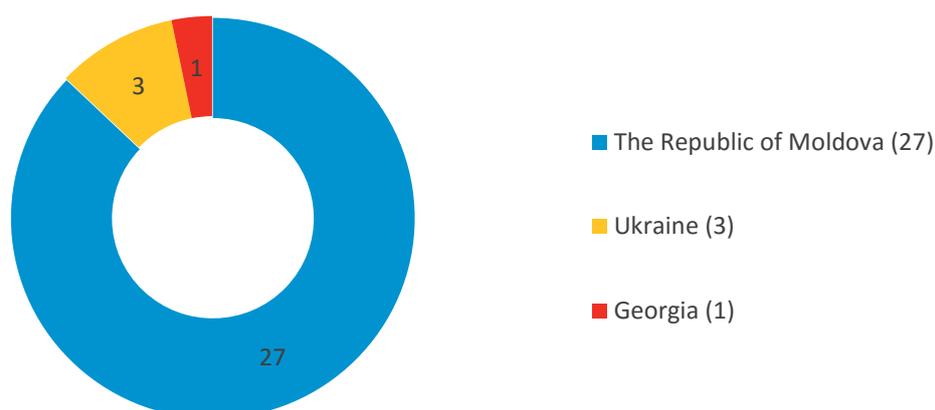
The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts was launched in the August 2013 as a new funding instrument, complementing the other existing ODA delivery modalities available (particularly for public institutions and their representatives). It was based on the model of the Mobility Fund for civil society representatives implemented by the Federation of Romanian Nongovernmental Organizations for Development (FOND). So far (mid-April 2016), a number of 31 mobility missions were financed through the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts as described in the table below:



Number of mission per thematic priority financed through the Mobility Fund 2013-2016 (April)



Number of mission per country financed through the Mobility Fund 2013-2016 (April)



As shown above, the overwhelming majority of the mobility missions targeted public institutions from the Republic of Moldova (27 out of a total of 31). Most missions were conducted by public servants and other experts from Romania (19) and from the ODA partner countries (5), 6 missions were performed by representatives of the private sector and one by representatives of civil society. In 5 cases, the Mobility Fund was used to facilitate exchange visits of partner countries' representatives in Romania, and the remaining 26 missions were conducted in the partner countries, enabling Romanian experts to share their experience and expertise to the respective partner institutions. The large proportion of missions carried out in the beneficiary country is well justified by their specific objective (monitoring, project development, capacity building and large audience trainings).

Overall, the Romanian specialised institutions and their experts were highly responsive to the requests of the ODA partner countries: out of all the received requests for support, Romanian experts managed to accommodate the needs of the beneficiaries with a single exception - the Superior Council of Magistracy in Romania which was not able to respond positively to a request for support coming from the EUAM mission in Ukraine.

The consultations with various stakeholders revealed that the mobility missions financed throughout the last 3 years were enabled by three main factors:

1. First, the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts was mainly used by Romanian and partner country institutions which had previous experience in implementing development assistance projects and which had received or implemented financing from the ODA budget administered by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (such as in the case of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie, the specialised authorities active in the field of child protection, the National Authority for Sanitary, Veterinary and Food Security and others).
2. Second, the existence of a previous bilateral partnership/cooperation between homologue institutions was an enabling factor for the successful use of the Mobility Fund (for example in the case of the Romanian Gendarmerie, the Romanian Competition Council, the Permanent Electoral Authority, and others).
3. Third, on a limited number of occasions, the mobility missions were facilitated by the representatives of the Romanian Embassies (so far only in the case of the Republic of Moldova).

In those cases where the Mobility Fund applications did not occur on the foundation of a previous collaboration between homologue institutions in Romania and the ODA partner countries, the identification of experts has been made in a rather ad-hoc manner, based on the personal network of the MFA ODA and UNDP team members. This is a challenge that requires a sustainable and institutionalised response (see chapter on sustainability of results). With regard to the methodology of the Mobility Fund, most interviewed stakeholders considered that the process is very light and flexible and that the application procedures are easy to understand and comply with. One particular aspect that emerged as a good practice is the focus on the expressed need of the partner country: applicants need to demonstrate the specific request for expertise/assistance of the beneficiary institution, expressed in the form of an official letter or any other type of official correspondence. The request needs to be as specific as possible including the type and number of experts requested and the length of the desired mission. This requirement increases the ownership of the beneficiary over the mobility mission and increases its effectiveness and relevance, minimising the risk of providing ODA in the form of supply-driven assistance.

One of the most challenging aspects related to the implementation of the Mobility Fund is tracking its results and evaluating the extent to which the ODA funds channelled through this instrument lead to tangible and ideally sustainable results. This is a common challenge that has been identified by all the other emerging donors in the region who implement similar funding modalities, including the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria⁹. In the specific case of the Romanian Mobility Fund, the design of the instrument and its methodology do not enable a strong monitoring of the achieved results. Moreover, the limited engagement of the Romanian Embassies in the implementation of the financial instrument reduces even further the feasibility of a significant results-based monitoring. The nature of the financial instrument itself is such that the achievement of actual results is highly reliant on the good will, drive, commitment and capacity of the beneficiary institutions. In most cases, the mobility missions imply the exchange of expertise between homologue institutions, which result in a set of recommendations or specific proposals to be further implemented by the ODA partner countries. Therefore, the achievement of final results at the institutional/ policy/ legal/ operational level

⁹ As expressed during the Istanbul High-level knowledge management and knowledge sharing workshop

(which tends to make the object of technical assistance missions) implies a process which is fully led by the partner country. Moreover, the high personnel rotation in public institutions presents one more challenge to successful follow-up activities that would produce the actual results of the mobility missions and to the monitoring of results, given the potential fragmentation of the ODA partner's institutional memory. Notwithstanding these inherent limitations, the Mobility Fund could greatly benefit from a more solid monitoring framework to maximize the effectiveness of results, to the extent possible in each situation. The Mobility Fund offers a safe-to-fail, low-risk, low-cost solution for providing up-scalable technical support and assistance to ODA partner countries, benefit which exceeds the associated risks.

The interviews conducted with representatives of both Romanian and ODA partner country institutions indicated the fact that there is a very limited level of awareness regarding the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts both in Romania and in partner countries. The visibility of the Mobility fund is particularly low among institutions in the partner countries, as most applications received are from Romanian experts, who lead the entire application process and facilitate the elaboration of the necessary documentation in the beneficiary institution. Consequently, even the institutions that have benefited from Romanian expertise through this instrument are not very familiar with the purpose, design and implementation methodology of this instrument. Also, the consultations with various stakeholders underlined that Romanian specialised institutions and agencies that are interested in sharing their expertise have a very limited knowledge of this instrument (and generally of available ODA financing instruments). Under these circumstances, there is a clear need for additional communication mechanisms for this funding modality, both on the field, in the ODA partner countries and among Romanian interested institutions, starting with those that address the thematic niches of the Romanian ODA policy.

CASE STUDY – RESULTS OF THE MOBILITY FUND IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA

The research informing this evaluation included one 3-day field mission in Chisinau, allowing for a more consistent discussion with some of the Mobility Fund beneficiaries on the results achieved and their overall feedback on this funding modality. Consultations included representatives of the Competition Council in the Republic of Moldova, of the Department of the Carabineer Troops, of the Centre of Quarantine, Identification, Arbitration Expertises and Production Disinfection and the National Agency for Food Safety. The overall feedback regarding the relevance, usability and results of the mobility missions was highly positive, especially given the fact that in all of the cases mentioned above, the support received through this instrument was complementary to other larger-scale bilateral assistance initiatives developed between homologue institutions in The Republic of Moldova and Romania.

In the case of the Competition Council of the Republic of Moldova, a relatively new institution that was launched in 2012, the Mobility Fund was used several times to facilitate both the provision of technical assistance on a number of specialised topics that fall within the mandate of the agency such as economic concentrations and state support and one job-shadowing programme addressed to junior/mid-level representatives of the Moldovan institution. All missions were complementary to the previous larger-scale cooperation between the two homologue institutions, whereby authorities in the Republic of Moldova elaborated and approved specialised legislation in the field of economic competition based on the Romanian model. Following the adoption of the law, the Competition Council requested the expertise of the Romanian counterparts on practical aspects related to the implementation of the new legislative package

and support on specific cases, where the Romanian Competition Council had accumulated a substantive case study background. A significant part of these expertise-sharing needs were facilitated through the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts. The Moldovan Competition Council representatives also mentioned that they are planning to take further the cooperation with the Romanian counterpart, continuing the capacity building of the institution with the support of the Romanian Counterparts, on topics such as legislative barriers and awareness raising among the domestic population.

The representatives of the Carabineer Troops (CT) of the Republic of Moldova were also highly satisfied with the results of their cooperation with the Romanian counterparts, facilitated both through the Mobility fund for Governmental Experts and the annual call for development cooperation projects managed by the Romanian MFA. The larger-scale, one-year project implemented by the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie in the Republic of Moldova was the first and only (December 2015) significant capacity building (professional training) activity that the Carabineer Troupes benefited from. Additionally, the Romanian Gendarmerie provided further support to their homologues in the Republic of Moldova in the field of project management and accessing European Funds. Following the recommendations of the Romanian experts, a new department focused on external financing has been created in the CT structure, to ensure a greater absorption of development funds and expertise. The representative of the CT highlighted the interest of the institution to further the cooperation with the Romanian counterparts and continue building on the results achieved so far, for example through the provision of a new training on the accession of European Fund and project management addressed to the newly recruited staff of the project implementation unit and through the provision of technical assistance to guide the elaboration of a new strategy for the reform of the Carabineers, to complement the new proposed legislative package.

The Centre of Quarantine, Identification, Arbitration Expertize and Production Disinfection requested the expertise of their Romanian counterparts on various occasions, with the general objective to further strengthen their technical capacity to deliver timely and quality services in the field of food safety to economic agents. The Romanian experts provided theoretical and practical training to the specialised personnel working in the institution's laboratory on the analysis of food products, including recommendations on the operational procedures that need to be implemented to develop a sound quality assurance system. The centre is now fully operational and fully accredited to operate in the Republic of Moldova. The centre also aims to become fully certified in Romania (the certification process is currently ongoing).

The National Agency for Food Safety of the Republic of Moldova was the beneficiary of two mobility missions performed by representatives of the Romanian National Sanitary Veterinary and Food Safety Authority mainly on topics related to internal and external communication. Following the mobility missions, the National Agency for Food Safety elaborated and adopted an annual communication plan, including specific activities and indicators and an official procedure on the flow of public information within the institution and communication with mass-media (which was tested shortly after its adoption, during the handling of an Antrax case). Also, a territorial-level communication network was established, with a mandate and operational procedure. A fully-fledged communication strategy was drafted by the ANSA communication specialist, based on the model and recommendations received from the Romanian counterparts, but the strategy was

not finalised, given the lack of human resources (the communication specialist moved to a different institution and the post remained vacant).

CONCLUSION:

The rating for the effectiveness criteria is **satisfactory**.

The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is an easy-to-use, flexible financing tool, with a robust methodology that offers a low-cost, safe-to fail solution for various types of ad-hoc developmental needs of the partner countries. However, some sections of the methodology require strengthening, especially on monitoring of the achieved results and the involvement of Romanian Embassies in the partner countries. Also, there are a number of inherent challenges regarding the effectiveness of results as the implementation of the input provided by Romanian experts is highly reliant on the drive, commitment and capacity of the beneficiary institution and the specific national context and opportunity of the proposed recommendations/models. Despite these inherent limitations that all the emerging donors in the region are facing when using this type of financing instrument, the benefits brought by the use of this instrument and its potential exceed by far the associated risks.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Strengthen the monitoring framework of the Mobility Fund and adjust the methodology of the instrument accordingly. A standardised form for the final mission report needs to be elaborated, focusing more on the results and on the expected follow-up of the mission. The report should include a light management response plan endorsed by both the provider of assistance and the beneficiary institution. The monitoring module of the Romanian EU DevFin platform can be used to effectively keep track of the achievements of the mobility missions. The platform, in its current configuration (taking into consideration the technical requirements of the monitoring module that is soon to be implemented), allows for the population of the data base with all the mobility missions, registered as individual results. Moreover, the required follow-up actions for each mobility mission can be flagged and monitored with the use of the already existing DevFin technical specifications. The Embassies could further support the monitoring process by requesting information on the results achieved at the technical/institutional level in the partner countries, based on the monitoring timeline agreed in the mission report.
- The level of awareness regarding the Mobility Fund needs to be increased, both among the specialised institutions in the ODA partner countries and the Romanian counterparts. A special communication plan should be elaborated specifying the communication responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in the implementation of the Mobility Fund. For example, the MFA and the UNDP should continue to update and disseminate as widely as possible the dedicated communication materials describing the scope of the financing tool and the application procedure. In the case of the main Romanian ODA thematic priorities, where thematic evaluations have been

completed, the communication materials on the Mobility Fund should be distributed in conjunction with the brochures describing the Romanian expertise in those specific fields. The following channels can be used for the distribution of communication materials in the partner countries: the network of the embassies, the UNDP Country Offices, the national institutions that ensure the effective coordination of assistance (for example, the State Chancellery in The Republic of Moldova, the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade of Ukraine, etc). The dedicated section covering the Mobility Fund on the RoAid website should be regularly updated and further developed in the form of a dedicated tab, presenting the instrument, its scope and implementation process, and a link to an online application interface, for ease of accessibility and increased visibility (linking for example a Google Form online application form with the RoAid website). A set of potential communication activities are presented in the table below.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNDP	Romanian Embassies
<p>Regularly update the brochure with information about the Mobility Fund with information about new missions;</p> <p>Elaborate a two-slide power point presentation/ infographic with information about the Mobility Fund to be used in different general presentations, where relevant;</p> <p>Continue to share these materials in various national and international events, where relevant;</p> <p>Ask experts to send good quality photos from their missions, together with the mission reports;</p> <p>Maintain the dedicated section about the Mobility Fund on roaid.ro and regularly update it with information about new missions and follow-up activities;</p> <p>Regularly inform the Romanian Embassies about the new completed missions, at least until the Embassies take over a bigger role in the implementation of the Mobility Fund.</p> <p>Inform the Consultative Council/Advisory Board about the new missions conducted since the last meeting of the board and the results of these missions; invite the governmental experts to share their experience with the Mobility Fund;</p> <p>Include a special session/workshop in the Romanian Development Camp where governmental experts can</p>	<p>Translate all the materials prepared by the MFA in the local language, if feasible;</p> <p>Share the brochure and the link to the roaid website with all the institutions in the partner countries to inform them about the Mobility Fund;</p> <p>Include the two power point slides/infographic in the presentations given by the Embassies in the partner countries, where it is relevant;</p> <p>Share information about new missions through the Embassies' social media channels, such as the Facebook page;</p> <p>Monitor the results of the missions and share the updates on the Embassies' communication channels;</p> <p>Organize informal meetings with local governmental experts who benefitted from the Mobility Fund;</p>

<p>share their experience in using the Mobility Fund and the results of their missions;</p> <p>Send a <i>thank you</i> e-mail and a feedback form after a mission is completed to both institutions, to 1) enhance the good relations between the MFA and the other institutions; 2) to make sure that the institution in the partner country is well aware about the Mobility Fund (especially in case the applicant is the Romanian counterpart); 3) better understand the experts' experience with accessing and using the Mobility Fund.</p> <p>Share the information materials about the Mobility Fund with the UNDP Country Offices (COs); inform COs about new missions relevant to the COs and the consequent partnerships and projects developed;</p> <p>Share information about the Mobility Fund on various international platforms, such as http://fundingdevelopment.org/, or http://southsouthworld.org/</p>	
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- The ownership of the ODA partner country over the results of the mobility missions needs to be enhanced. As such, the application process should continue to include the receipt of an official letter requesting the expertise/services from the Romanian partner institutions. Moreover, a standardized form should be elaborated to guide the formulation of this letter, so as to enhance the focus on the relevance of the mission for the national development objectives, its expected results, and the prospects for implementation/upscaling of the outputs resulting from the mission. Also, as previously mentioned, the beneficiary institutions should sign the follow-up plan contained in the final mission report.

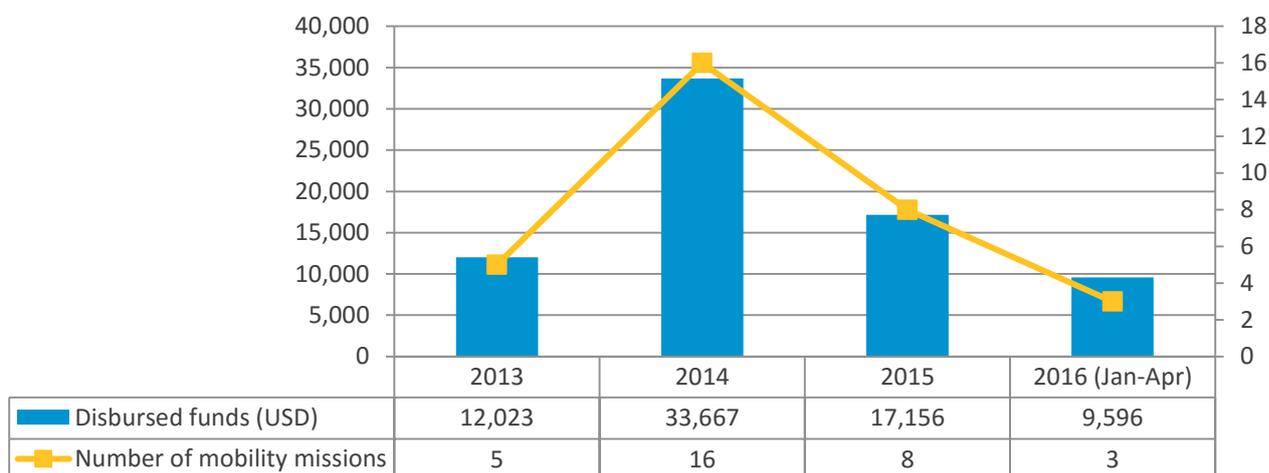
C. PROJECT EFFICIENCY

This section of the report will assess the extent to which the costs incurred by the Mobility fund for Governmental Experts are justifiable and transparently allocated.

The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is fully financed by the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs from its ODA budget and directly implemented by the UNDP Regional Hub for Europe and the CIS. So far, the MFA disbursed 73.000 USD to the UNDP through three Third Party Cost Sharing Agreements as follows: one in May 2013 (51.000 USD), one in December 2014 (80.000 USD) and one in May 2015 (22.086 USD). All unspent balances received for the Mobility

Funds are rolled over for the following years. For instance, the 2015 unspent balance is currently used for funding mobility missions in 2016. The annual delivery of the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts is as follows:

Disbursed funds from the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts (USD)



The funds allocated to this project have been made public on the former and current dedicated ODA website – www.aod.ro and www.roaid.ro, respectively, on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Romania in the yearly national ODA reports.

Taking into consideration the available data in the period 2013-Mid April 2016, the average cost of one mobility mission is 2.214 USD. However, the cost of the mobility missions may vary widely depending on the duration of the mission and the number of delegated experts, from less than 1.000 USD per mission (one expert, 3-working day mission) to more than 6.000 USD (2 experts, 20 working-days missions). Most mobility missions had costs between 1.500 - 2.000 USD.

Under these circumstances, the value for money of the mobility missions is very high. Considering the outputs of the mobility missions for some cases, the associated costs of the missions facilitating these products is extremely low. For example, the missions conducted by 4 experts from the Romanian National Authority for Sanitary Veterinary and Food Security at the National Food Safety Authority - ANSA (Republic of Moldova) resulted in the elaboration of a draft communication strategy, an annual communication work plan and a new internal communication procedure; the two missions having a combined cost of less than 3.000 USD. Also, one representative of the General Inspectorate of the Romanian Gendarmerie delivered a training on the project management of specialised EU funds available to the Republic of Moldova, based on Romania's pre-accession experience, to which 10 representatives of the Moldovan Carabineer Troupes participated, with a total cost of less than 2.000 USD. This instrument proves the added value of South-South cooperation, that relies less on the financial power of donors and more on their expertise and experiences that can be shared with their ODA partners.

CONCLUSION:

The rating for the effectiveness criteria is **highly satisfactory**.

The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts offers a cost-efficient solution to institutional capacity building / technical assistance needs, based on the vertical sharing of experience between peer institution/ experts in Romania and its ODA partner countries that are experiencing similar developmental challenges to those that Romania was confronted with during its transition period.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The new legislation and the respective rules and regulations that will be guiding the implementation of the ODA budget of the Romanian MFA should contain the necessary provisions to allow for a daily subsistence allowance that is easy and quick to disburse, and sufficient for the expenses incurred by the respective experts using the Mobility Fund.

D. SUSTAINABILITY OF RESULTS

This section of the report will assess the sustainability of the results achieved through the Mobility fund for Governmental Experts, and its institutional and financial resilience as a distinct funding modality available for the implementation of Romania ODA.

As previously argued, the planned end results of most mobility missions aim for increased institutional or technical capacities at the level of local and regional governmental authorities, or legislative/strategic public policy frameworks to advance the development of the partner country in specific thematic areas. The actual implementation of the support provided through the Mobility Fund is essentially reliant on the will, capacity and commitment of the beneficiary. From this point of view, assessing the sustainability of the Mobility Fund results is very difficult, given the numerous independent variable that influence it. However, these types of interventions that focus on increasing capacities at the governmental level have high sustainability and impact prospects, if owned and further nurtured by the ODA partner country. These inherent sustainability risks can only be addressed to a limited extent through the elaboration of a very solid methodology of the Mobility Fund, centred on the ownership of the beneficiary and focused on results.

From an institutional point of view, the current momentum is a defining milestone for ensuring the sustainability of the Mobility Fund. Given the imminent closure of the UNDP project “New ODA Cooperation Partnership with the Romania”, which provides the framework for the implementation of the funding instrument, the MFA, with the support of the UNDP needs to complete the elaboration and approval of the new legislative package that would allow for a smooth handover of the Mobility Fund to the new ODA Agency (to be created in 2017). The necessary amendments to the existing norms and procedures that regulate the mobility fund (particularly pertaining to travel allowances) need to be made through the new ODA implementation guidelines so as to maintain the flexibility and promptness of the instrument. Exceptions

to the current national legislation should be regulated to ensure the proper implementation of the Mobility Fund so as to allow:

- An increased daily subsistence allowance (DSA). Currently, the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts provides DSA as per the UN official rates, which are more aligned to the real subsistence necessities than those practiced by the Romanian public administration.
- A functional bureaucracy. The rapid processing of the Mobility Fund applications and the quick disbursement of the travel allowance (the current procedure states that the disbursal of the allowance should be finalised in a maximum of 10 working days);
- Funding the mobility of both Romanian and ODA partner country specialists;
- Funding the mobility of both representatives of public institutions, but also, on an exceptional basis, representatives of NGOs and the private sector.

Currently, the existing ODA unit within the MFA together with the UNDP Romanian ODA team are elaborating the relevant legislation and there seems to be a good level of support from across the government in favour of passing such legislation. At the technical level, the MFA shows a great interest in the continuation of this financing modality and is eagerly searching for the correct measures to allow for the long-term implementation of the fund by the MFA specialised structures. The new ODA Strategy (currently in draft form, expected to be adopted by the end of 2016) specifies the Mobility Fund as a distinct funding modality of the Romanian ODA. Also, the Mobility Fund will be mentioned distinctly in the Annual Work Plans and in the ODA Implementation Guidelines, which will provide further details regarding the operationalisation of the Fund.

Currently, the identification of the Romanian experts to be deployed through the Mobility Fund is heavily reliant on the personal contacts of the members of the MFA ODA unit and of the UNDP ODA team. The heavy personnel rotation specific for the institutional profile of the MFA, the expected expansion of the current unit into a fully-fledged Agency with new human resources, and the closure of the UNDP-MFA partnership are all strong arguments in favour of a more institutional and continuous mapping of the Romanian transition expertise. Currently, with the support of the UNDP Istanbul Regional Hub, an NGO partner - Global Focus - is developing and populating an online database (the Expertise Locator) which aims to identify the Romanian expertise in Romania's thematic ODA niches. The Mobility Fund should be closely linked with the Expertise Locator, which provides, on the one hand, a reliable source for searching Romanian experts in various thematic fields, as per the request of the partner countries and, secondly, an easy to use mapping of the Romanian expertise that can be presented to both the ODA partners and other donors, to enhance the responsiveness of the Romanian ODA and its coordination with other co-interested donors. In order to further develop the pool of Romanian experts, where possible, governmental professionals who go on mission in partner countries could be encouraged to take with them a more junior staff who can benefit from the learning process and the international experience of working with homologue institutions from other countries.

With respect to the financial sustainability of the project, although the Romanian legislation does not allow for multi-annual planning, as the national budget (which includes specifications regarding the ODA allocations) is issued on an annual basis, the continuity of the Mobility Fund will be ensured through the new ODA strategic and normative



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framework. Should the current practice of dividing by percentage the MFA ODA budget per country and funding modality, the mentioning of the Mobility Fund as a distinct funding modality with its own per cent budgetary allocation would further solidify the financial sustainability of the Mobility Fund.

CONCLUSION:

The rating for the sustainability is **satisfactory**.

The sustainability of the results achieved in the beneficiary country are highly reliant on internal affairs and the capacities and drive of the partner country. In terms of institutional and financial sustainability, there are good prospects for the elaboration of a solid legal and normative framework that would guide the implementation of the Mobility Fund from the specialised ODA unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Within the MFA there is a strong sense of ownership and a strong will for the continuation of this funding mechanism, which emerged as a good practice from the UNDP-MFA partnership. However, the Mobility Fund requires some more solid knowledge management associated instruments to enhance its usability and sustainability, such as the Expertise Locator and DevFin.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- As previously argued, the new legislative and strategic framework that will be guiding the implementation of the Romanian ODA and the functioning of the new MFA ODA Agency (currently in draft form) need to clearly specify the Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts as a long-term, established delivery modality of the Romanian development assistance, maintaining the current scope and the flexibility of the tool. The planning and the implementation of the Mobility Fund should be attributed to the Romanian MFA, as the institution that is best placed to guide the strategic disbursement of funds through this modality, given the fact that the MFA guides the thematic priorities and articulates Romania's technical ODA niches and given insight and the direct contact with the beneficiaries through the Romanian Embassies in the ODA partner countries.
- Link the Mobility Fund with the Expertise Locator, which offers a rapid, reliable and resilient tool for identifying the relevant Romanian experts in response to the ODA partner countries specific demands. Also, all the Romanian experts that have been deployed through the Mobility Fund should be included in the Expertise Locator data base.
- The Mobility Fund implementation methodology should be amended as described above (see the chapter above on the efficiency of the tool) so as to strengthen the monitoring process, to enhance the ownership of the beneficiary and to increase the focus on results of the mobility missions.



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STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Mobility Fund for Governmental Experts requires a new legal and operational framework, particularly given the closure of the UNDP project “The New ODA Cooperation Partnership with Romania” (expected for end 2017). The new ODA strategy and the corresponding secondary legislation should identify the Mobility Fund as a specific, distinct and long-term funding modality, allowing for the same flexibility and promptness. The management and implementation of the Mobility Fund should be located to the extent possible in the new ODA Agency of the MFA, to be created through the new legislative package;
- In terms of effectiveness and sustainability, the Mobility Fund requires an enhanced monitoring framework and a more institutionalised expertise mapping process. As such, the Mobility Fund should be linked to both DevFin and the Expertise Locator. Under the current circumstances, the technical features of the DevFin monitoring module could provide an effective monitoring instrument, considering each mission an individual result. The application methodology should be slightly adjusted so as to enhance the ownership of the beneficiary and the focus on results, including a standardised results-oriented request letter and a post-mission response plan endorsed by the ODA partner institution detailing the follow-up required for each mobility mission. The Mobility Fund should also be closely linked to the Expertise Locator, being currently developed by Global Focus with the support of the UNDP. The Expertise Locator is an effective and easy-to-use knowledge management tool that will provide a reliable instrument to search for specific expertise required through the Mobility Fund and that will no longer rely on the personal network of a limited number of UNDP and MFA professionals. This linkage enhances the usability and the sustainability of the Mobility Fund, particularly given the new human resources that will equip the ODA Agency to be created through the new ODA legislative package.
- The role of the Romanian Embassies on the ground needs to be enhanced in order to ensure a more solid and rapid coordination with the partner countries on their specific needs. Currently, the Romanian Embassies have a minor and circumstantial role in the implementation of the Mobility Fund. The Mobility Fund methodology needs to be adjusted so as to include the Embassies in all the phases of the mobility missions (from evaluation of the applications to the monitoring of mobility missions’ results) and should be engaged more proactively in promoting among potential beneficiaries the Mobility Fund as an adequate financing tool, as they are best suited to appreciate the relevance and urgency for support in various thematic areas in the ODA partner countries.
- The visibility of the Mobility Fund should be increased, both among the specialised institutions in the ODA partner countries and the Romanian counterparts. A special communication plan should be elaborated specifying the communication responsibilities of each stakeholder involved in the implementation of the Mobility Fund. In the case of the main Romanian ODA thematic priorities, where thematic evaluations have been completed, the communication materials on the Mobility Fund should be distributed in conjunction with the brochures describing the Romanian expertise in those specific fields. The following channels can be used for the distribution of communication materials in the partner countries: the network of the embassies, the UNDP Country Offices, and the national institutions that ensure the effective coordination of assistance in the ODA partner countries. The dedicated section covering the Mobility Fund on the RoAid website should be regularly updated and further developed. Also, for ease of accessibility and increased visibility, an online application tool for the Mobility Fund should be elaborated (linking for example a Google Form online application form within the RoAid website).

