



MINISTRY
OF REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CZ



**Integrated
Risk-Management System
at MoRD-NCA Level
2014–2020**

National Coordination Authority

Integrated Risk-Management System at MoRD-NCA Level 2014–2020

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1. Introduction to risk management

Risk management is the process by which current or future risks are analyzed to prevent negative effects on the entity. At the same time, this process allows to propose solutions to avoid such undesirable effects and impacts.

Risk management should be an integral part of every corporate management, and in the recent years this area has also been at the forefront of the public sector. The risk issue is very broad and may vary according to its focus. In business and public sectors, the process is most often about identifying, analyzing, evaluating, managing and monitoring risks. The aim of this process is to reduce or completely eliminate the effects of the identified risks by designing appropriate measures.

For public policy in the Czech Republic, the risk management is governed by the methodological guidance of the Central Harmonization Unit of the Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic (see Ministry of Finance, 2016), which defines the scope also for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds). At the level of the Ministry for Regional Development - National Coordination Authority (hereinafter referred to as MoRD-NCA), the risk management area of ESI Funds is regulated in the Risk Management Methodological Guideline for the 2014-2020 Programming Period.

It should be noted that the risk management of ESI funds strictly follows the principle of subsidiarity in obtaining information that is passed on throughout the implementation

structure from the project level, e.i. the final beneficiaries, up to the level of the European Commission. In the first phase, the beneficiaries and the managing authorities are monitored for risks at the level of individual projects. Risk monitoring thus begins already in the project preparation and evaluation phase. In the next stage, the risks are monitored and evaluated at program level and further at the level of Partnership Agreement. The following text describes the main principles and processes of risk management from the program level above.

The aim of this publication is to describe the risk management system at the level of MoRD-NCA within the implementation of ESI funds in the 2014-2020 programming period in terms of the Czech Republic.

Through risk management, the MoRD-NCA seeks to establish co-operation between all stakeholders and to introduce a systematic approach to identifying potential risks and mitigating their negative impact on European funds. Ultimately, this risk management system will help to smoothly draw on the funds and meet the objectives of the Partnership Agreement, which defines the main commitments to the European Commission.

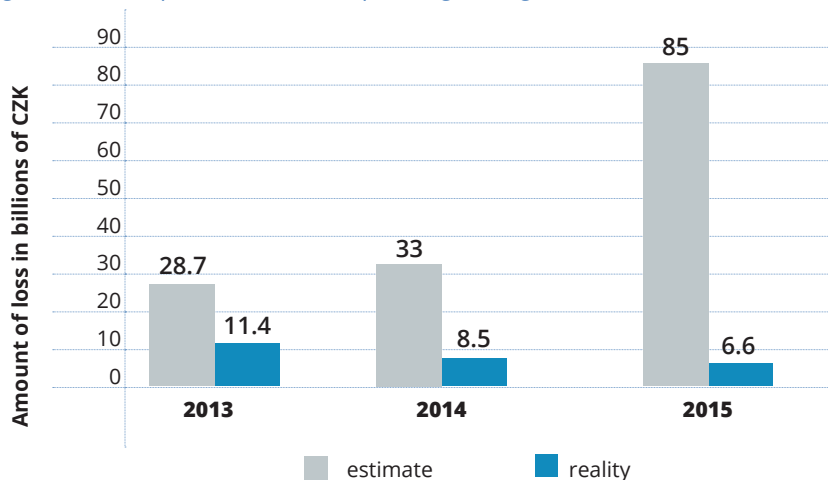


2. Risk management at MoRD-NCA level

The foundations for the current integrated risk management system at the MoRD-NCA level were laid in 2009, primarily in response to the economic crisis, which was also reflected in the area of European funds. The downturn in private investment in new projects threatened, among other things, with a continuous drawdown. The Czech Republic had to respond to this situation and take adequate measures to reduce the negative effects of the crisis. Another impetus for the need for and further development of the Central Risk Management System (MoRD-NCA) was the extensive suspension of operational programmes in 2012 on the basis of an audit by European Commission. The results of the audit revealed errors in the implementation

of the programmes and remedies started to be addressed at the national level through the corrective action plan. It is precisely the awareness of the problems directly threatening to draw European funds, the need for a response by drawing up a plan of corrective measures in relation to a flat-rate suspension of programmes and the regular implementation of the measures that we can consider as the beginning of the development of an integrated risk management system for the 2014-2020 programming period. Through a similar tool for present risk management, examples of good practice amongst actors in the implementation structure have been successfully passed in the past and improved communication with managing

Figure 1: Assumptions for under-spending during 2013-2015



Source: MoRD-NCA, 2017



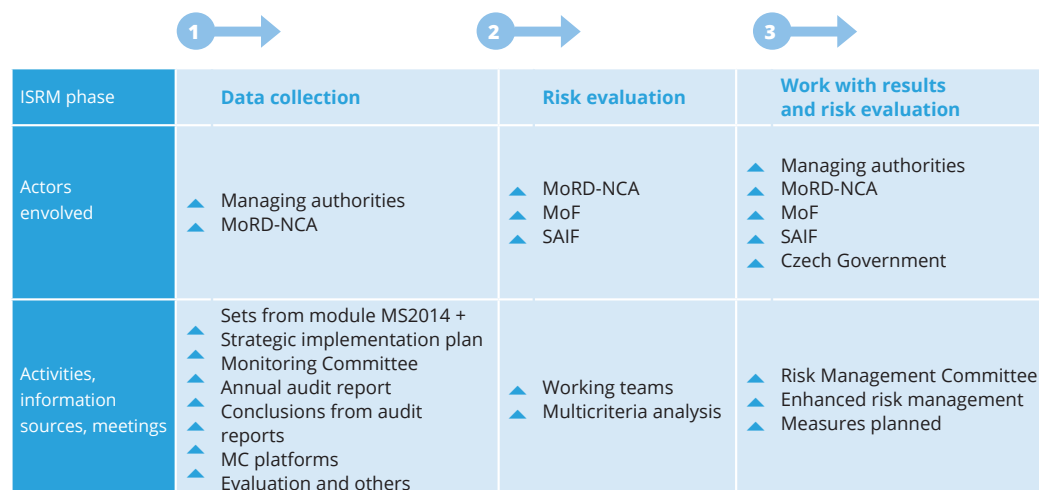
authorities. One of the real impacts of the „crisis“ management of the MoRD-NCA was, for example, reducing the under-spending. Until the end of 2013, the Czech Republic did not lose any European funds. The year 2013 was crucial as some of the operational programs failed to meet their commitments to the European Commission, and the Czech Republic did not draw up CZK 11.4 billion. In the following year 2014, the Czech Republic lost an additional CZK 8.5 billion. However, the original estimates of the under-execution for 2014 were up to CZK 33 billion.

According to the data submitted after the final documents were sent to the EC, CZK 6.6 billion and CZK 6.9 billion were not used at the end of the programming period (taking into account the under-spending of the OP Czech Republic-Poland and the OP Fisheries). However, the original assumptions for under-spending

for 2015 estimated a cumulative deficiency of up to CZK 85.0 billion (see Figure 1 Assumptions for under-spending during 2013-2015). Although it has not been able to meet all commitments to the European Commission, we can see the real reduction of pessimistic estimates of deficiencies as a direct impact of the efforts of all stakeholders through effective risk management.

On the other hand, however, no risk management at the level of the MoRD-NCA has taken place in the past for the involvement of all actors in the implementation structure or for the unified reporting of risk information and measures. The above experience has also been reflected in shaping the form of risk management in the current programming period 2014-2020. The individual risk management activities were grouped into an Integrated Risk Management System (hereinafter referred to

Figure 2: Integrated Risk Management cycle



Source: MoRD-NCA, 2017



as IRMS), which is methodologically anchored in a unified methodological environment. It is important to emphasize that the MoRD-NCA through risk management does not seek to achieve the objectives of individual programmes, but to ensure the smooth use of European funds and the fulfillment of the commitments defined in the Partnership Agreement.

The entire IRMS process involves several basic phases (see Figure 2 of the Integrated Risk Management cycle). First of all, data collection is taking place so that the risks of individual programmes, or the Partnership Agreement, can be adequately evaluated. These data and information are the input for a risk analysis. Risk analysis or identification of risk areas and specific risks takes place in working teams. These are composed of experts in the given activities and use group expert methods for risk assessment. Concurrently with this activity, the form of a risk register is formed, which represents a comprehensive database of identified risks for individual programmes and risks representing barriers at the national (horizontal) level for the implementation of European funds. Following the risk assessment, a multi-criteria analysis is calculated for each programme by the total number of points under which the programmes are categorized into three basic risk categories - the so-called traffic lights.

The Managing Authorities and Partners are informed about the outcome of the MoRD-NCA risk assessment. The negotiation with the Managing Authorities aims at discussing the significant risks that have been identified, including jointly proposing adequate measures to reduce the impact of these risks.

On the basis of past experience, the IRMS emphasized the involvement of partners, particularly from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) and the State Agricultural Intervention Fund (hereinafter „SAIF“), in the issue of risk management at the central level. For this reason, a so-called Risk Management Committee (hereinafter referred to as the „RMC“) was set up, which discusses risks identified not only at the horizontal level but also at the programme level. In addition, the RMC may find new risks on the basis of shared information that subsequently enter IRMS.

The IRMS output is to divide the programmes into risk categories and to prepare action plans not only at the programme level but also at the horizontal level. The action plans thus constitute a tool for minimizing or eliminating risks, which represent barriers to the smooth drawing and fulfillment of the objectives of European funds in the Czech Republic. Summary information on the problematic areas of ESI funds is presented to and approved by the Government of the Czech Republic.

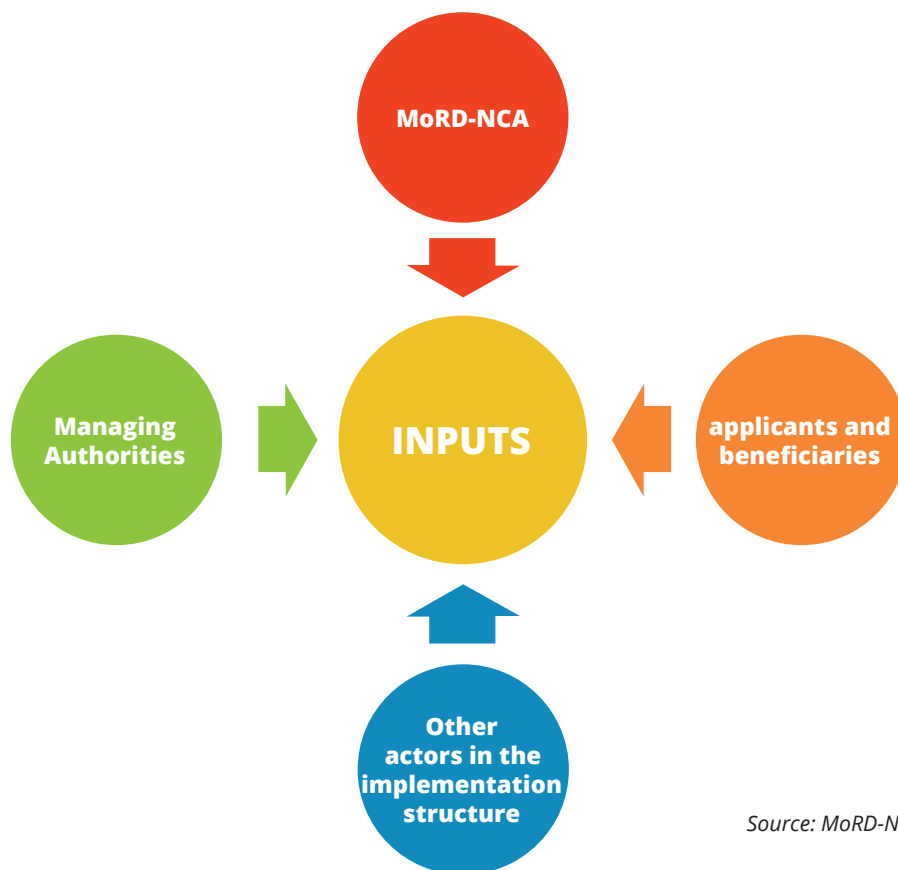


3. Data collection and analysis

The first phase of IRMS is the collection and analysis of data. This phase focuses on collecting inputs from the actors involved in the implementation (see Figure 3 Subjects of the Implementation Structure providing inputs), based on which the so-called horizontal risk register and the risk register of the individual programmes are subsequently compiled. These inputs include, in particular, data from

monitoring modules, information from the Strategic Implementation Framework, monitoring committee meetings, Annual Implementation Report, meetings of platforms set up under the monitoring committees of the programmes, data and recommendations from evaluations, findings from audit reports, etc. (see Figure 4 Basic inputs for data collection).

Figure 3: Implementation structure entities providing inputs



Source: MoRD-NCA, 2017



Sets from the module MS2014+

In the monitoring system (MS2014+), specifically in the Risk-Management Information module, the Managing Authorities fill in a template for regular (quarterly, semi-annual) reporting. Reports that are intended to monitor the state of execution of the programme include reports of compliance with financial and material milestones, indicators, forecasting levels, tracking of deadlines and procedures, as well as a report to inform about the risks of the programme. These reports are also viewed by the MoRD-NCA and the MoF. Based on these completed reports, the status of the programme implementation is monitored and evaluated and, where appropriate, and new risks might be identified that could affect the smooth implementation of the programme.

Strategic implementation plan

The Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) is a report prepared by the programme's Managing Authority, which is submitted to the members of the Monitoring Committee for discussion. The aim of this report is to inform the members of the Monitoring Committee of the forthcoming calls and the planned financial and material drawdown in the following year, and to provide them with an evaluation of the implementation of the plans and to inform of further steps planned by the MA in relation to the individual call of the programme. It is therefore the instrument by which the programme's medium- and long-term objectives are planned at annual intervals and the risk of non-fulfillment is being monitored. Based on strategic implementation plans, the MoRD-NCA monitors the state of implementation of the programmes and records any identified risk in the risk register.

The Programme Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee (MC) is a committee the task of which is to assess the implementation of the programme and functions in accordance with the EU Regulation No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013. The MC members are representatives of the relevant steering and coordination entities and partners (e.g. ministerial departments, economic and social partners, partner ministries, regions, municipalities, non-governmental non-profit organizations, etc.). At MC meetings, the Managing Authority informs all members about the risks and problems of the programme's implementation and measures taken, financial and material progress, administrative programme provision, external and internal controls and audits, evaluation and communication plans. The information presented by the Managing Authority at this meeting also enters the risk registers.

Annual audit report

Another input for risk assessment is the Annual Audit Reports of programmes (hereinafter referred to as „AAR“), which are prepared annually by the Audit Authority. Information from these reports is a valuable input for risk identification, as there are identified mistakes in managing and control systems that can point to systemic risks in programmes.

Platforms under MC

In order to strengthen the partnership principle in the implementation of the program, the Managing Authorities have set up a platform(s) for the preparation of calls under the Monitoring Committees. The main objective of these platforms is to deal in more detail with the



preparation and negotiation of the planned calls for proposals in cooperation with partners in the relevant fields (social, economic, etc.). Also, information from these platforms, or rather the work of the Managing Authority with planning and discussing calls for proposals with these partners can reveal the risks associated with programming and managing calls at program level.

Evaluation

Recommendations from evaluation studies and their implementation are an important source of information for risk identification. When identifying the risks in this area, the

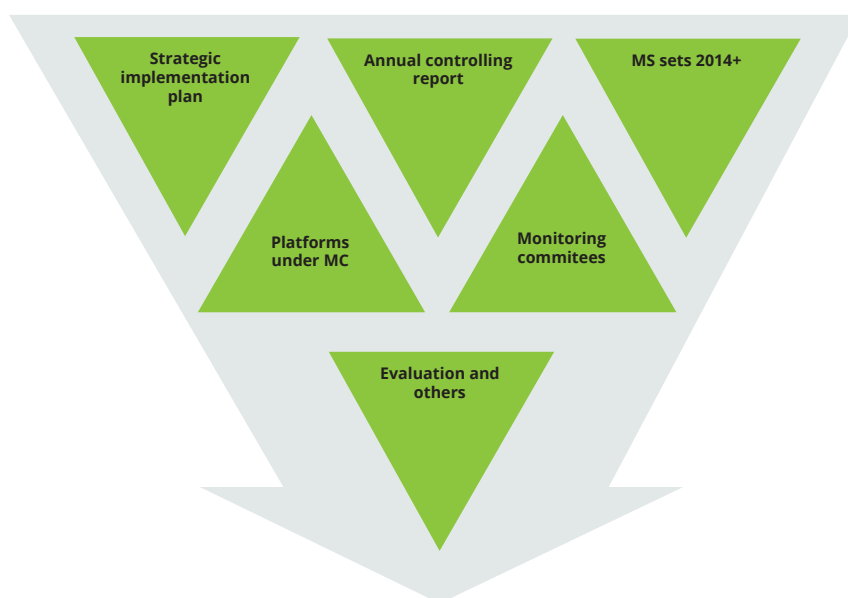
MoRD-NCA draws in particular from management reviews carried out by the Managing Authorities or from recommendations resulting from evaluations carried out by the MoRD-NCA Evaluation Unit.

All identified risks are recorded on the basis of the above inputs in the so-called horizontal risk register and the risk register at programme level (see Figure 4 Input processing).

Horizontal Risk Register

Horizontal risks register primarily records the so-called horizontal risks, the solution to which exceeds the capabilities of the

Figure 4: Input processing



HORIZONTAL RISK REGISTER / PROGRAMME RISK REGISTER

Source: MoRD-NCA, 2017



Managing Authority itself, and it is therefore necessary to involve other national actors. Horizontal risks are identified in cooperation with MoRD, MoF and SAIF. For each horizontal risk, measures are proposed to be part of the Annual Implementation Report of the Partnership Agreement.

Programme Risk Register

The Risk Register of the programmes serves to record the so-called cross-sectional and specific risks of the programmes. The risks that occur across all programmes are referred to as cross-sectional risks. This means that the risk is common to all programmes, but it differs

for each programme by its significance. An example of a cross-sectional risk can be the fulfillment of the $n + 3$ rule. Another type of risks that are recorded in this registry are specific risks. These risks are individual according to the specific focus of the programme, with which they are associated. Appropriate measures are agreed for the most important risks.

BOX 1

Horizontal risks

Risks at the level of the Partnership Agreement, which the Managing Authority can not influence / eliminate (e.g. currency risk, public contracts, etc.).

Cross-sectional risks

Programme-level risks, i.e. those that occur across all programmes and which the Managing Authorities can influence / eliminate (e.g. non-compliance with SMG).

Specific risks

The risks of a particular programme that are not cross-sectional and which the Managing Authorities can influence / eliminate (the risk relate to specific issues in relation to the programme's focus).



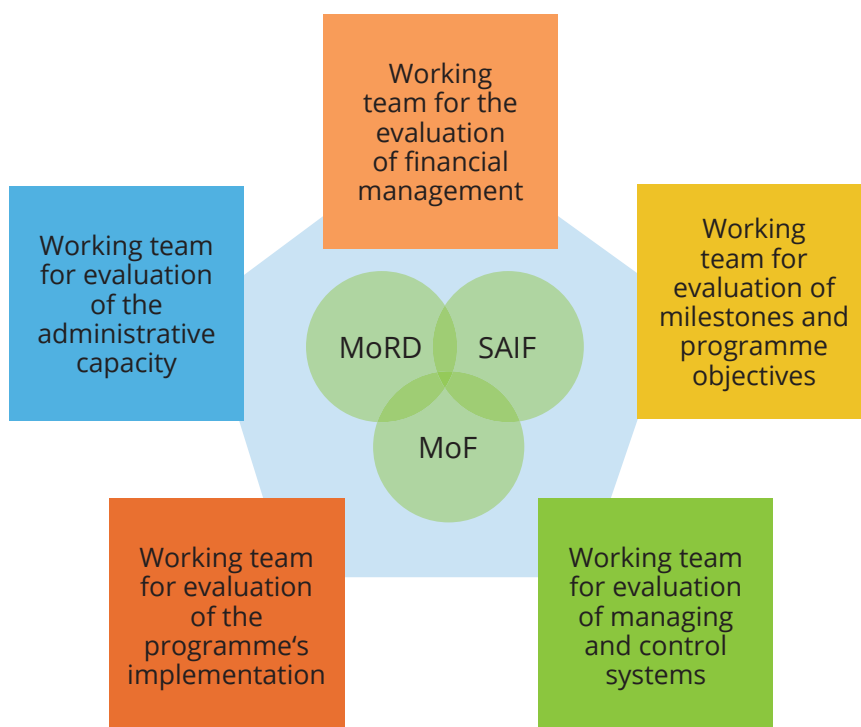
4. Risk assessment

After the previous phase of gathering all available information, the risk assessment follows. The outcome of the evaluation is the breakdown of individual programmes by risk categories.

The first level of risk assessment is carried out by the working teams that have been set

up by the MoRD-NCA for a comprehensive risk assessment. These teams identify and evaluate all risks based on their probability and impact using group expert methods. In the second evaluation stage, the already assessed risks enter the so-called multi-criteria analysis, which results in a point assessment of the programmes in terms of their risk.

Figure 5: Overview of risk assessment teams



Source: MoRD-NCA, 2017



Working teams

The MoRD-NCA has set up five working teams for risk assessment. The teams are grouped into so-called risk areas (see Figure 5 of the Risk Assessment Working Group) that all risks associate and are involved in the area across horizontal institutions (MoRD, MoF and SAIF). The working teams meet to discuss the following areas:

- milestones and programme objectives,
- financial management of programmes,
- the management and control systems of the programmes,
- implementation of programmes,
- administrative capacity of programmes.

Based on the expert discussion, but also with the use of other group expert methods, all identified risks are evaluated in the working teams. Together, each of them:

- assesses the cross-cutting and specific risks of programmes in the area (i.e. the risks falling under the responsibility of the Managing Authorities),
- proposes and evaluates new programme risks,
- proposes new horizontal risks (i.e. risks, which fall under the responsibility of other guarantors than Managing Authorities),
- discusses and makes proposals for measures for selected risks.

The team will determine probability and impact for each risk. The value of the risk, as defined in the MG for risk management of ESI Funds in the 2014-2020 programming period, is calculated as the product of these values:

significance = probability * impact,

with a maximum significance value of 25.

BOX 2

Degree of risk significance

At the level of the MA and MoRD-NCA, the risk materiality scale is defined in the MG for Risk Management of ESI Funds in the 2014-2020 programming period as follows:

| Value | Risk importance scale | Description |
|---------|--|--|
| 1 - 7 | Low importance | The risk has no consequences for the programme's implementation |
| 8 - 12 | Medium significance | The risk has small to medium consequences for the programme's implementation |
| 13 - 25 | Significant to highly significant risk | A critical risk with possibly serious consequence |



Multi-criteria analysis

Multi-Criteria Analysis (hereinafter referred to as „MA“) is one of the instruments for assessing the risk of programmes in the 2014-2020 programming period. It is implemented on the basis of a defined range of criteria - risk areas and specific risks identified by the MoRD-NCA and other horizontal institutions. The aim of the MA is to ensure an evaluation that will be comparable in time and that will be equal in its approach to all programmes.

Ideologically and logically, MA is based on a multi-criteria decision analysis that evaluates risks at the level of individual pre-defined alternatives. In the case of the MA, the risks (identified by the working teams) are assessed at the level of individual programmes. The MA is created separately for each programme and its result for each programme is a number in the range 0-100. Based on this result, the programmes are sorted (compared) according to the number of points achieved.

BOX 3

The individual MA steps are as follows:

1. The working team determines the significance of the risk.
2. For each risk its weight is determined based on the relative pairing method - Saaty's method. All risks are compared with each other and the mutual weight of each of the two risks is varied. The result of the mutual comparison is the matrix $n \times n$, where n is the number of risks of the given programme. Based on the Saaty matrix, the weight of each risk is calculated in %.
3. A MA coordinator counts a score for all the assessed risks. The risk score is the product of the risk weights in % (see point 2) and their assigned significance (see point 1) transformed and multiplied by 100. By multiplying by 100, the result is normalized to 0-100.
4. The score for all the risks is given by the total score of the programme, i.e. the number in the interval 0-100.

The above described process is applied to all programmes.



Risk categories

The score, calculated for each programme in the MA, forms the basis for the division of programmes to risk categories called „traffic light“ (see Figure 6 Program Risk Categories).

Based on the MA's results and the predefined limits for the inclusion of programmes in the relevant categories, MoRD-NCA differentiates risk-based programmes into: (1) high-risk programmes, (2) medium-risk programmes, and (3) low risk programmes.

Figure 6: Risk programme categories



Source: MoRD-NCA, 2016

5. Working with the results of the risk assessment

After the division of programmes to risk categories, the risks are discussed at the programme level and at the horizontal level by the Risk Management Committee. Subsequently, draft plans of programme measures (action plans) and plan of horizontal risk measures are prepared and communicated with the relevant Managing Authorities at enhanced risk management meetings.

Risk Management Committee

The Risk Management Committee (hereinafter referred to as the „Committee“) was established to discuss and address potential and identified risks in the implementation of ESI Funds in the 2014-2020 programming period at the horizontal level. Its members are MoRD-NCA, MoF-AO, MoF-PCA and SAIF, which provides an objective view of the risk areas and specific problems in the implementation of ESI funds.

The Committee is convened whenever a programme risk assessment is carried out or if necessary, i.e. if a significant risk is identified at the national level that could have an impact on the smooth implementation of the programmes, an extraordinary meeting may be convened outside the specified interval. The Committee discusses not only the identified risks of programmes and risks at the horizontal level in the area of ESI implementation, but also monitors the progress in implementation of measures taken to reduce the effect of identified risks, evaluates the fulfillment and sufficiency of the measures taken and

proposes further steps in case of non-compliance. Furthermore, it may also be at the Committee's meetings based on shared information where a new risk is identified that also enters IRMS.

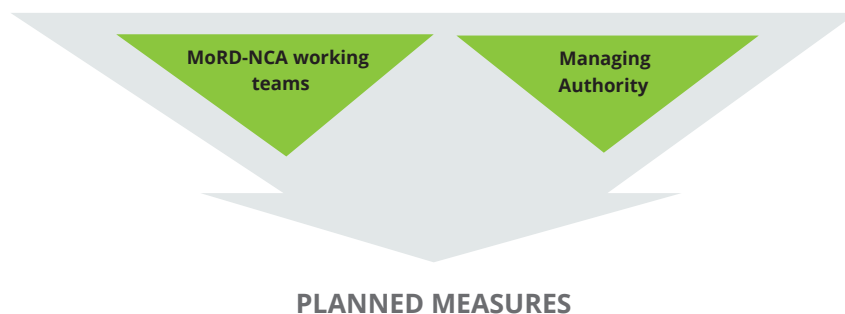
Preparation of action plans

After programmes are categorized into individual risk categories, the programme administrators draft and complete plans and measures especially in the cases of medium and high-risk programmes. Action plans are the main tool for minimizing risks and their impacts, both at the programme level and at the horizontal level. Specific draft measures are already being prepared by working teams (see Figure 7 Programming Action Plan) in response to the identified risks and reflect those risks that have been assessed as moderately to highly significant with degree of materiality 12 and above (see Box 2). These proposals are further discussed with the concerned Managing Authorities to reflect the specificities of the programmes and to be drawn up individually for each programme.

Based on the above, the phase of preparation of the action plans takes place in parallel with the intensified risk management meetings. Plans always include the risk area, the number, the name and description of the measure, the guarantor of the implementation of the measure and the date by which the measure is to be met (see Figure 8 Template of the Action Plan).



Figure 7: Creation of plans for programme measures



Zdroj: MMR-NOK, 2016

Intensified risk management meetings

An important step in the IRMS process are meetings of intensified risk management, usually with high-risk and medium-risk programmes based on risk assessment results. At these meetings, the managing authorities are confronted with the identified risks that could have an impact on the continuous use of funds or the achievement of the stated objectives. Representatives of the Managing Authority have the opportunity to clarify and express specific risks at these meetings. At the same time, it is through a discussion to search effective solutions and appropriate measures

to reduce identified risks or to eliminate them altogether. Meetings are held with the participation of representatives of MA, MoRD-NCA, MoF-PCA and, in the context of the discussed topics, the MF-AA or representatives of other departments of the MoRD can participate in the meeting.

The final plans of the measures, modified on the basis of discussion with the Managing Authorities, enter into the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Partnership Agreement (hereinafter referred to as „AR on PA“), which is submitted to the Government of the Czech Republic for approval and subsequently sent to the European Commission.

Figure 8: Risk programme categories

| Measures planned for XY programme in the year n | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---------|----------|
| Risk area | Measure | Guarant | Due date |
| | Number, title, measure description | | |
| | | | |

Source: MoRD-NCA, 2017



6. Monitoring the development of identified risks

The ISMS outputs, i.e. the results of the risk assessment, identified risks, including the negotiated plans of programme measures, are part of the Annual Report on the Implementation of the Partnership Agreement.

As a whole, the AR on PA is subsequently assigned to the Government of the Czech Republic for approval. Once approved, the measures contained therein become binding on all actors in the implementation structure. This means that individual risk managers continuously monitor the risks and regularly inform the MoRD-NCA about the progress in implementing the measures. At the same time

if a new risk is identified during the risk monitoring to influence the drawing of European funds, and thus to fulfill the objectives of the Partnership Agreement, it enables ISMS to react relatively flexibly to this fact. Such risk is immediately included in the risk register, evaluated and relevant measures are developed to help reduce its negative impacts, ideally eliminate the risk.

BOX 4

Report on the Implementation of the Partnership Agreement (AR on PA)

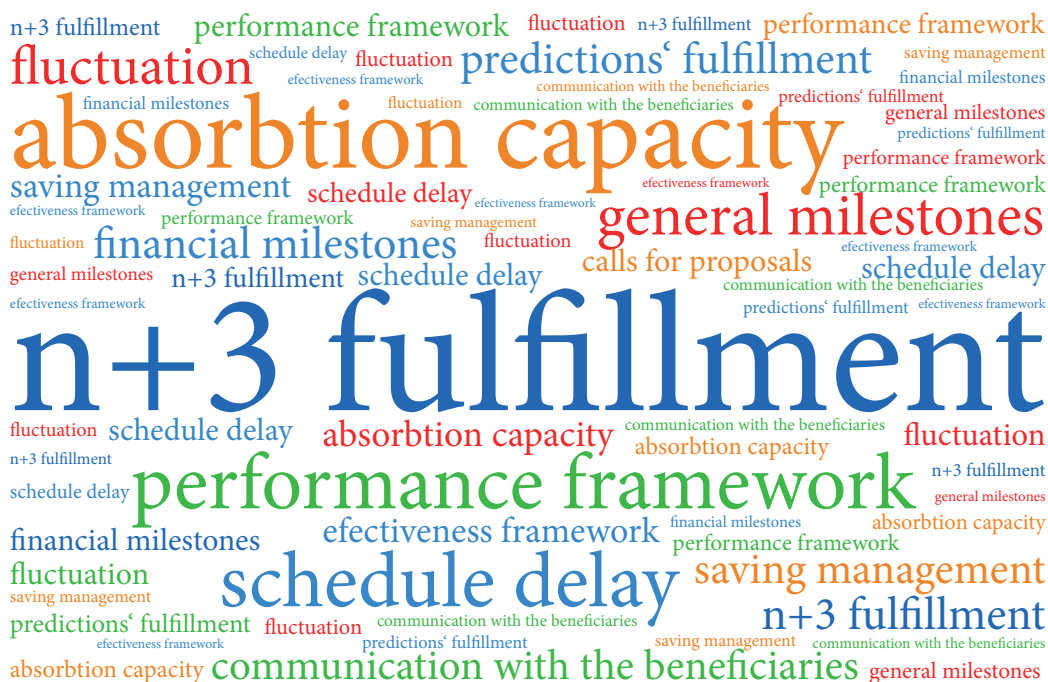
The obligation to process the Annual Implementation Report follows from Article 50 of General Regulation No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

The Annual Report is information on the state and progress of the implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds, or the Partnership Agreements for the past year and summarizes the main risks and measures taken to improve the implementation of the 2014-2020 programming period.

AR on PA is submitted to the Government of the Czech Republic. Subsequently, the report is also submitted to the European Commission, by default, by 31 May of the year following the year for which the report is valid.



Figure 9: Frequent risk areas



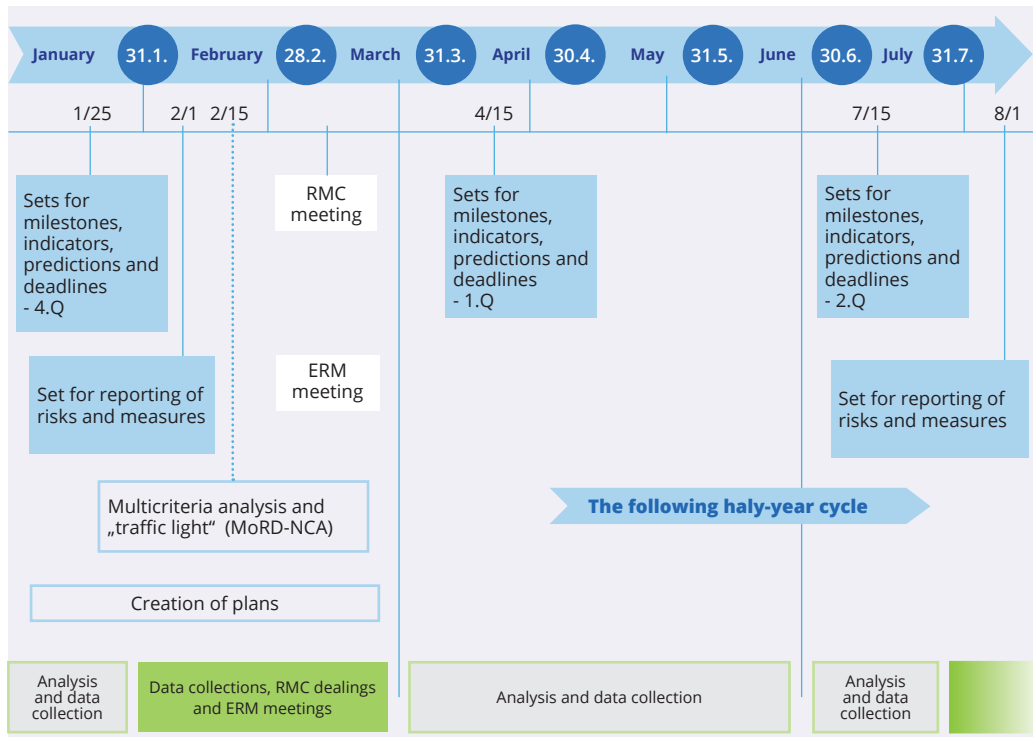
Source: MoRD-NCA, 2017

However, the risk management process at the MoRD-NCA level does not end with the indication of ISMS outputs in the AR on PA and subsequent risk monitoring. The implemented measures are evaluated at regular intervals and, if the risks already identified are not reduced, new measures may be proposed, taking into account the development of programme implementation. At the same time, the IRMS cycle, which includes the collection of input data, their subsequent analysis, risk assessment and risk classification,

preparation of action plans and meetings for intensified risk management, is repeated at half-yearly intervals (see Figure 10). IRMS thus represents a continuous cycle of risk management at the level of the MoRD-NCA.



Figure 10: ISRM half-year cycle



Source: Mord-NCA, 2017

On the basis of continuous monitoring, it is possible to monitor the development of risks in time within this system and to propose individual measures in cooperation with the entities concerned. At the same time, based on experience, it is possible to find measures for past situations in the past and

to pass on examples of good practice. Through these measures, the MoRD-NCA, in cooperation with managing authorities, seeks to prevent the negative impacts of risks in the implementation of the programmes, or in the implementation of ESI funds in the Czech Republic.



7. Conclusion

Based on a range of events, it was necessary to respond centrally to the negative effects that directly threatened the use of European funds. The progressively developed risk management system at the MoRD-NCA level as the central coordinating body of the European funds in the Czech Republic resulted in the setting up of the so-called ISMS for the 2014-2020 programming period.

MoRD-NCA, which seeks to prevent negative effects on the use of European funds under the conditions of the Czech Republic. This makes it possible to identify risks in a timely manner and to find effective solutions through discussion with partners involved.

It is not a constant dogma. Based on collaboration with managing authorities and other stakeholders, joint efforts and feedback are evaluated. If the measures taken do not have a real effect on the implementation of the European funds, the MoRD-NCA seeks to respond to this situation and find alternative solutions in cooperation with stakeholders. The conclusion of the last programming period has shown that the risk management of the MoRD-NCA has had an impact in the form of

a reduction in the original estimates of non-use of European funds. It is the MoRD-NCA motivation to transfer this good practice also within the 2014-2020 programming period.



List of abbreviations

| | |
|----------|---|
| EC | European Commission |
| ESIF | European Structural and Investment Funds |
| IRMS | Integrated risk management system |
| MA | Multi-criteria analysis |
| MoF-AO | Ministry of Finance - Audit Authority |
| MoF-PCO | Ministry of Finance - Paying and Certifying Authority |
| MoRD-CA | Ministry for Regional Development - National Coordination Authority |
| MS2014 + | Monitoring System 2014+ |
| MC | Monitoring Committee |
| MA | Managing Authority |
| SIP | Strategic Implementation Plan |
| SAIF | State Agricultural Intervention Fund |
| AAR | Annual Audit Report |
| RMC | Risk Management Committee |
| AR | Annual Report |
| AR on PA | Annual Report on the Implementation of the Partnership Agreement |
| ERM | Enhanced risk management |

Resources

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