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## The Place and Role of Projects in Public Administration

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**Abstract:** In Romania, a new management of the public administration structures is required for the efficiency of the available financial resources. The main objective of this paper is the management of financial resources, both from public own funds and from non-reimbursable funds from the European Union. The working method used is the analysis of the way in which the funds received by the territorial administrative units from the South-East Region of Romania contributed to the modernization of the public administration.

**Keywords:** management; public administration; financial resources

**JEL Classification:** D73; E61; O38; F36

The public administration in contemporary society needs to consider the impact that a dynamic, ever-changing environment can have. The strategy of public administration reform, in its current form, is the result not only of choosing a technical solution, but also of a political decision and will. The strategy is based on both financial resources from the national budget and European funds. On the other hand, this strategy establishes the transfer of power from the central to the local level, as a component of the democratic process.

Overall, an efficient local government pursues clear goals and results. However, the almost always limited financial resources do not allow to fulfill all the desideratum expressed at the level of the whole community, which, moreover, represents and, consequently, determines the obligatory orientation of the activity of the public administration towards a management that is specific to a market economy “minimum costs-maximum results”. Thus, for public administration managers, as stated by Bărăian and his collaborators, resource management is as important as program management. In this context, the administrative act is presented as an elaborated process differentiated according to the degree of economic and social development of that geographical area. Economic growth depends not only on investment, but also on the efficient management of development programs, in compliance with the requirements of good management of public resources.

Investments are essential to support Romania in the sense that they respond to the strategic priorities of the European Union and the specific recommendations of our country, as well as the related policy reforms in the sectors of education, employment, social inclusion and public administration.

Hințea and Mora consider that the strategic decision-making in the public domain is placed in a specific context characterized by:

- policy ambiguity (much more vaguely defined compared to private companies);

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- greater “vulnerability” to the participation and influence of the media, politicians and other agencies, as well as increased attention to these factors;
- artificial time constraints due to periodic electoral processes;
- unstable coalitions that can lead to the stopping/elimination of particular policies or solutions.

Currently, the local public administration authorities participate in financing expenses for administration and operation, for goods and services, capital repairs, consolidation, extension and modernization, supplying with medical equipment, public sanitary units of county or local interest, within the budget appropriations, approved for this purpose in the local budgets.

## **Case Study**

The research considered the analysis of investments made in the South-East Region of Romania by territorial administrative units (counties, municipalities, cities, communes), with the help of European funds, in the 2014-2020 programming period, and how they contributed to the economic development of the area.

The South-East region is the second largest of the 8 regions of Romania and includes 6 counties: Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea and Vrancea. Due to its position, the region has a special geopolitical and geostrategic importance. The region is notable for its openness to the Black Sea and the presence of the Danube Delta (Biosphere Reserve), these elements offering a significant tourism potential. Other important economic branches are agriculture and the shipping industry. The region is considered environmentally developed compared to more developed regions such as the Ilfov Region. Thus, the contribution of the attracted funds will lead to the reduction of economic and social disparities or, in equivalent wording, the increase of the country's internal territorial cohesion.

There were analyzed the funds attracted by the Regional Operational Program from 2014 until now and the investments from the European Regional Development Fund of the European Union for the development of the territorial administrative units in the South-East Region.

“The general objective of the ROP 2014-2020 is to increase the economic competitiveness and improve the living conditions of local and regional communities, by supporting the development of the business environment, infrastructure and services, for the sustainable development of the regions, so that they can manage efficient use of resources and the potential for innovation and the assimilation of technological progress” (POR 2014 - 2020 - [www.fonduri-ue.ro/por-2014](http://www.fonduri-ue.ro/por-2014)).

The mentioned objectives are transposed in the priority axes through which the ATUs were able to access European funds (Table no. 1).

The territorial administrative units (counties, municipalities, cities, communes) in the region have so far signed 262 financing contracts (Table no. 2) with a total value of 4,394.1 million lei, the value of non-reimbursable financing being 3,962.84 million lei, the difference of 431.26 million lei representing the co-financing provided from the own budgets of the beneficiary institutions. A cost-benefit analysis of the investments made in the region is indisputable the contribution made by the funds allocated by the EU, the full financial support of the investments made by the ATUs is not feasible. The beneficiaries of the investment works (ATUs) have the possibility to bear their own co-financing of the projects (eligible and ineligible expenses) as well as the expenses necessary for the maintenance of the investments after their completion.

Table 1

Priority axis of the ROP 2014-2020	Investment priority	Supported activities
3. Supporting the transition to a low-carbon economy	3.1. Supporting energy efficiency, smart energy management and the use of renewable energy in public infrastructure, including public buildings, and in the housing sector	3.1. A. For public buildings 3.1. B. For residential buildings 3.1. C. For public lighting
	3.2. Promoting strategies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions for all types of territory, in particular urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable urban mobility plans and relevant mitigation measures	- Investments to improve urban public transport - Investments for electric and non-motorized transport - Other investments aimed at reducing CO2 emissions in the urban area (urban, except for county seat municipalities)
4. Supporting sustainable urban development	4.1. Promoting strategies to reduce carbon dioxide emissions for all types of territory, in particular urban areas, including the promotion of sustainable urban mobility plans and relevant mitigation measures	- Investments to improve urban public transport - Investments for electric and non-motorized transport - Other investments to reduce CO2 emissions in urban areas (county seat municipalities)
	4.2. Carry out actions to improve the urban environment, revitalize cities, regenerate and decontaminate derelict industrial land (including conversion areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise abatement measures	* construction of pedestrian alleys, bike lanes, creation of sidewalks; * arrangement of green spaces, * creation of facilities for recreation on the arranged lands (sports areas, playgrounds for children); * Wi-Fi installation in public spaces, street furniture (benches, trash cans, etc.). For county seat municipalities.
	4.3. Providing support for the physical, economic and social regeneration of disadvantaged communities in urban and rural areas	* Investments in facilities for public use: green areas, public squares, squares, sports fields, for educational, cultural and recreational activities;
	4.4. Investments in education, training, including vocational training for the acquisition of skills and lifelong learning through the development of education and training infrastructures	* Construction / rehabilitation / modernization of small-scale basic utilities (gas, electricity, water, sanitation);
	4.5. Increasing the quality of education infrastructure relevant to the labor market	* construction / rehabilitation / modernization / extension / equipping of educational infrastructure (nurseries and kindergartens);
5. Improving the urban environment and the conservation, protection and sustainable use of cultural heritage	5.1. Conservation, protection, promotion and development of natural and cultural heritage	* Restoration, consolidation, protection and conservation of historical monuments, interior facilities; * Tourism promotion activities, including its dignification.
	5.2. Take action to improve the urban environment, revitalize cities, regenerate and decontaminate derelict industrial land (including redevelopment areas), reduce air pollution and promote noise abatement measures	* construction of pedestrian alleys, bike lanes, creation of sidewalks; * landscaping, * creation of facilities for recreation on landscaped land, installation of Wi-Fi in public spaces, street furniture (benches, trash cans, etc.). For the urban environment, except for the county seat municipalities,
6. Improving the road infrastructure of regional importance	6.1. Stimulating regional mobility by connecting secondary and tertiary nodes to the TEN-T infrastructure, including multimodal nodes	* modernization and rehabilitation of the county road network that ensures connectivity with the TEN-T network. * construction / modernization of the detour variants with county road status, public transport stations on the county road route. * investments for road safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
7. Diversification of local economies through sustainable	7.1. Support employment-friendly growth by developing endogenous potential as part of a territorial strategy for certain areas, including the conversion of declining industrial regions, as well as increasing	* Development of infrastructure for spa tourism * Creation and expansion of leisure infrastructure, * Arranging natural tourist objectives of public utility.
development tourism	accessibility and the development of specific natural and cultural resources.	
8. Development of health and social infrastructure	8.1. Investing in health and social infrastructure that contributes to development at national, regional and local level, reducing health inequalities and promoting social inclusion by improving access to social, cultural and recreational services, and moving from institutional services to the services provided by the local authorities	8.1.A. outpatient * rehabilitation / modernization / extension / endowment of the outpatient infrastructure
	8.2. Improving the quality and efficiency of emergency hospital care	8.2.B. Emergency reception units
	8.3. Increasing the coverage of social services	8.3. Rehabilitation / modernization / extension / endowment of social services infrastructure for the elderly, 8.3.C. rehabilitation / modernization / extension / endowment of social services infrastructure, intended for children
9. Supporting the economic and social regeneration of disadvantaged urban communities	9.1. Local development placed under the responsibility of the community	* construction / rehabilitation / modernization of social housing, integrated medical-social community centers, pre-university education units, * investments in the development of the degraded urban space of the disadvantaged community: construction / rehabilitation / modernization of buildings to accommodate various social activities, * construction / endowment with equipment of the infrastructure of the insertion social economy enterprises.
10: Improving the educational infrastructure	10.1. Investments in education and training, including vocational training, for the acquisition of skills and lifelong learning through the development of education and training infrastructures	10.1. Construction / rehabilitation / modernization / extension / equipping of pre-school and pre-school educational infrastructure
	10.2. Increasing participation in vocational and technical education and lifelong learning	10.1.B. construction / rehabilitation / modernization / extension / equipping of educational infrastructure for compulsory general education * construction / rehabilitation / modernization / extension / equipping of the educational infrastructure for vocational and technical education
13: Supporting the regeneration of small and medium-sized cities	13.1. Improving the quality of life of the population in small and medium-sized cities in Romania	Construction / extension / completion / modernization / rehabilitation / endowment of day social centers for children, the elderly, for adults with disabilities; * Construction / extension / completion / modernization / rehabilitation / endowment of social canteens, social housing.; * Construction / extension / completion / modernization / rehabilitation / endowment of the educational infrastructure, schools, nurseries, kindergartens; * Construction / extension / completion / modernization / rehabilitation / endowment of buildings with cultural and / or recreational functions, including by changing the initial use of the buildings.

These priority areas fund projects to increase energy efficiency, support sustainable urban development, capitalize on cultural heritage, improve road infrastructure, develop sustainable tourism, develop health and social infrastructure, support disadvantaged communities and improve educational infrastructure.

**Table 2. ATU financing contracts in the South-East Region**

Priority axis of the ROP 2014-2020	Financing contracts ATUs Southeast Region	Total required project value (million lei)	The amount of the grant (million lei)
3.1. A	10	30.72	17.78
3.1. B	52	292.3	224.74
3.1. C	4	69.65	67.6
3.2	4	142.92	115.78
4.1	24	1160.95	1055.39
4.2	4	60.32	52.81
4.3	3	46.36	38.54
4.4	9	43.52	31.83
4.5	4	35.87	30.79
5.1	19	251.52	238.28
5.2	8	77.25	73.85
6.1	14	1043.77	1009.95
7.1	5	88.16	85.93
8.1. A	18	225.74	194.01
8.2. B	7	159.22	139.63
8.3. A	9	30.77	28.79
8.3. C	5	23.71	21.84
9.1	1	2.03	1.43
10.1. A	7	22.98	19.72
10.1. B	28	219.52	207.07
10.2	2	32.77	29.61
13.1	25	289.05	277.47
<b>Total</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>4349.1</b>	<b>3962.84</b>

Among the important projects for the region (with the highest value of the project) are:

- Axis 3: “Increasing the energy performance for the boarding school building and the cafeteria building of the Technical College “Gh. Asachi” Focșani, including related works”, 10 million lei;
- Axis 4: “Modernization of tram and road lines for Siderurgiștilor streets and December 1, 1918 in Galați”, 104 million lei;
- Axis 5: “Establishment of a leisure and leisure area in the Mihail Sturza neighborhood, Odobești city, Vrancea County”, 9 million lei;
- Axis 6: “Rehabilitation and modernization of the regional transport infrastructure between the localities Matca - Valea Mărului - Cudalbi - Slobozia Conachi - Smârdan (DJ 251)”, 68 million lei;
- Axis 10: “Rehabilitation and modernization of the Gymnasium School no. 33, from the Municipality of Galați”, 6 million lei.

The analysis is not exhaustive, as the funding obtained through the ITI mechanism, by the ATUs in the Danube Delta area as well as those through SUERD, by the beneficiaries in the eligibility area of the South-East Region were not considered.

## Conclusions

The public administration provides the technical basis for the aggregation and implementation of important projects, for encouraging economic growth and supporting the improvement of competitiveness. An essential element of sustainable development in terms of the sustainability of investment projects is the local development strategies, their correlation, in order to prioritize investments with optimized costs and reduce the time to make investments. In this sense, the analysis of the programs through which the local investments are financed must be supervised, in order to correlate them with the prioritization of the local investment needs, included in the medium - and long - term local development strategies.

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