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WORKING PAPER

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NOTE

From:	European Commission
To:	Working Party on Structural Measures
N° Cion doc.:	COM(2018) 375 final
Subject:	Common Provisions Regulation 2021-2027: Fiche 5 "Operations of strategic importance (Articles 2(4), 17, 35, 36, 41-45, 67 CPR proposal)"

Delegations will find attached fiche number 5 "Operations of strategic importance (Articles 2(4), 17, 35, 36, 41-45, 67 CPR proposal)", as prepared by the Commission services.



13 September 2018

WORKING DOCUMENT OF THE COMMISSION SERVICES

**Subject: Operations of strategic importance (Articles 2(4), 17, 35, 36, 41-45, 67
CPR proposal)**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this fiche is to provide further information on the concept and provisions related to "operations of strategic importance" included in the Commission's proposal for a Common Provisions Regulation ('CPR' proposal). The concept and corresponding provisions are applicable to all seven shared management funds covered by the CPR proposal but their relevance may vary depending on the fund and the profile of the programmes. For example, Annex VI for AMIF, ISF and BMVI does not provide for a dedicated part for the description of such projects given limited relevance.

2. Concept and objectives

The concept is defined under Article 2(4) CPR proposal, as an "*operation which provides a key contribution to the achievement of the objectives of a programme and which is subject to particular monitoring and communication measures*".

The introduction of notion of projects of strategic importance aims at providing higher visibility of the EU support to emblematic projects, regarding their contribution and impact to the achievement of the concerned programmes' objectives. It is first and foremost a communication tool; it should be understood in the context of the reinforced provisions linked to the visibility, transparency and communication provisions (Articles 41-45 CPR proposal). For the avoidance of confusion, the concept of operations of strategic importance is not related to the concept of major projects of the previous programming periods.

3. Identifying projects of strategic importance

In accordance with Article 17(3)(d)(i) CPR proposal, programmes need to identify for each specific objective, "*the related types of actions, including a list of planned operations of strategic importance, and their expected contribution to those specific objectives [...]*".

There are no formally established uniform criteria as regards operations which would qualify as having strategic importance. As Member States, regions, corresponding programmes and

interventions are different, establishing criteria in terms of costs or scope would have resulted in rigid and possibly complex rules with limited use. The proposed flexible approach would allow national and regional authorities to define these operations (depending on the programmes' context) when the programmes are discussed and agreed with the Commission services.

Operations of strategic importance may include projects of very diverse nature: they could be projects of innovative nature or pilot actions in view of a potential broader roll-out. While the financial volume in itself is not decisive, projects of substantial financial volume either in absolute terms or compared to the allocation for the corresponding specific objective, or projects with a very significant share in terms of contributing to the programme targets established are most likely of strategic importance. All programmes would have to identify such projects which would contribute to substantially leveraging the visibility of the EU support.

It is important to find the right balance in terms of the number of such projects identified in order to avoid a disproportionate administrative burden when it comes to their examination and monitoring.

4. Monitoring and communication

The selection and implementation of such projects would require specific actions:

- Managing authorities will need to inform the Commission and provide all relevant information to the Commission, when selecting such operation – Article 67(6) CPR proposal. In accordance with Article 36(3) CPR proposal, for programmes supported by the ERDF, the ESF+ and the Cohesion Fund, Member States would have to provide the Commission with the information on the physical and financial progress in implementing operations of strategic importance every year. This information would need to be provided no later than one month before the annual review meeting. There is no formal requirement detailing the form, the content or the modalities of submission of such information to the Commission
- Monitoring committees would need to examine the physical and financial progress in implementing operations of strategic importance, where relevant – Article 35(1)(g) CPR proposal.

In addition, Member States would need to pay particular attention to operations of strategic importance when ensuring visibility (Article 41(a) CPR proposal) and beneficiaries would need to organise a communication event and involve the Commission and the responsible managing authority, for operations of strategic importance (and operations whose total cost exceed EUR 10 000 000), pursuant to article 45(1)(e) CPR proposal.