

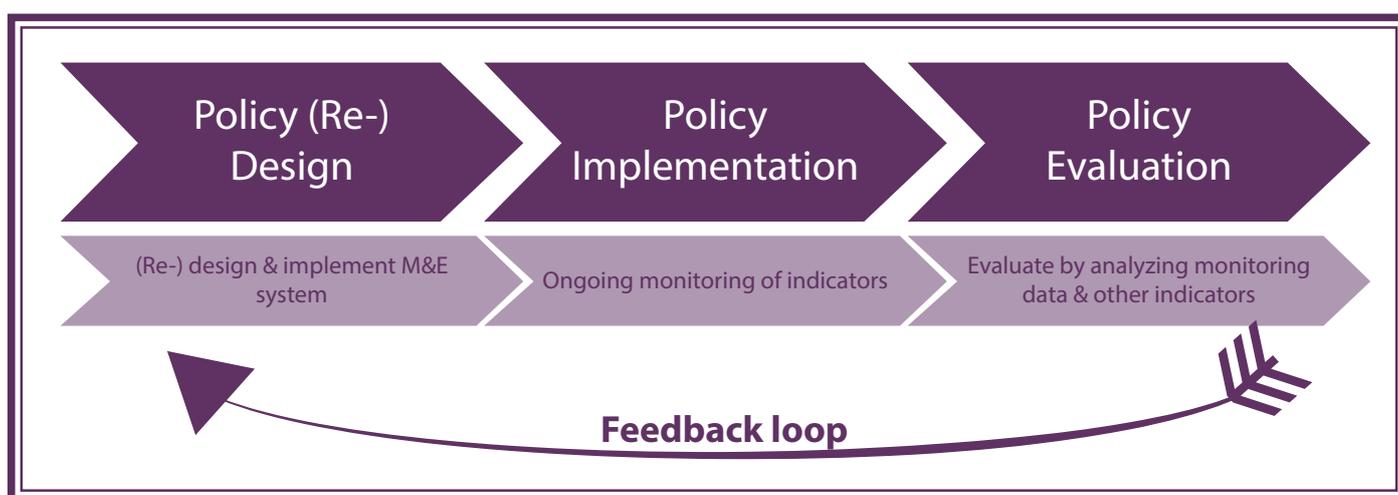
Romania: Toward a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Economy

Monitoring and Evaluation

An effective and efficient monitoring and evaluation system for Romania's National Climate Change Strategy is essential to ensure that resources are used as fully, effectively, and efficiently as possible.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) can be defined as the systematic and objective measurement and assessment of progress and performance of an intervention. A comprehensive system documents activities, outcomes, and impacts; promotes transparency and accountability; and facilitates continuous learning. The system should also evolve, expand, and improve over time to adapt to changing needs, priorities, capabilities and available data.

Climate policy evaluation uses data to answer specific questions about the implementation, outcomes, and effects of policy or related issues. A theory-based approach facilitates evaluation of the entire implementation process. Through the development of indicators for each step in the process, it is possible to not only learn which policies are successful or not, but also why they succeeded or failed and how they can be improved.



The structured and on-going process of evaluating Romania's National Climate Change and Low-Carbon Green Growth Strategy 2016-2030 (NCCS) and associated 2016-2020 Action Plan for Climate Change (APCC) will provide policy-makers with the means to judge whether policies and related actions meet their intended purposes and provide feedback on outcomes and consequences that will help inform future efforts. This is especially important as policy-makers are still developing an understanding of what makes good policy around climate change mitigation and adaptation.

M&E of the NCCS and APCC will require pragmatism regarding what is possible within current constraints as well as a clear sense of purpose with defined roles, responsibilities and accountability. But it also has great potential to:

- Enhance understanding among policy-makers and other key stakeholders of Romania's climate change risks and vulnerabilities, and;
- Help identify cost-effective approaches to reduce those risks, as well as reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.



There is no need to “reinvent the wheel” as existing M&E and reporting systems can be built upon, and have the potential to generate valid information.

There are strong links between climate action at the national level and international agreements. Consequently, Romania is able to build upon the existing foundation for monitoring and evaluating (M&E) public policies when developing a comprehensive system for M&E for the NCCS and APCC.

These links include institutional arrangements and M&E activities for existing climate change-related policies and measures, notably those derived from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol, plus the requirements for EU Member States regarding the M&E of the EU-level climate and energy package, and the 2020 goals for smart, sustainable, and inclusive growth. For example, relevant indicators are already being monitored by the National Institute of Statistics, National Authority for Energy Regulation, as well as EU Operational Programme Management Authorities. New indicators can be developed as necessary.

M&E addressing the NCCS is but one important piece of a broader national M&E strategy tailored to national circumstances and priorities, one that ‘looks’ both downwards and upwards, so that national decisions are informed by sub-national experiences and Romania is able to effectively share its progress with the international community.

Romania’s current obligations, activities, and capacities regarding climate change M&E and reporting and international best practices were assessed.

The existing M&E for climate change issues was examined, including international reporting requirements and current M&E practices for national policies, as well as relevant institutional capacities, roles, and responsibilities. Current reporting responsibilities include:

- UNFCCC level: as for national inventories, national communications, biennial reports, and emission reduction pledges.
- EU level: including GHG emissions; public funding; relevant policies and actions; sustainable development and climate change and adaptation benefits or costs.

In addition, international best practices for M&E of climate change strategies and actions were reviewed, with particular focus on EU Member States.

Few countries have comprehensive national climate change-related M&E systems, yet there are numerous examples of good practice in specific sectors, such as health and energy, which are relevant to Romania. International best practices clearly point to developing an evaluation framework for the NSCC and APCC using a theory-based approach that incorporates the OECD Development Assistance Committee criteria of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. To the degree in which specific criteria are addressed, evaluation methods and indicators would be tailored to the individual policy instrument or policy package, stage of implementation and evaluation objectives. The solid, yet flexible, evaluation framework proposed is consistent with existing Romanian, EU, and UNFCCC principles.

A theory-based evaluation framework integrates well with the EU’s evaluation culture, which continues to deepen and evolve. There is increasing focus on usefulness of evaluation results as a planning tool during all stages of implementation, not only at the end stage related to document outcomes. There is ongoing internalization of the value of evaluation at the EU and MS levels, prompted in part by requirements for structural funds and the use of Regulatory Impact Assessments within EU legislative bodies and national bodies, as well as the transfer of knowledge and practice through other MS, and the network of Evaluation Societies.

There is no comprehensive M&E system for NCCS or APCC, but Romania has the foundations of a M&E system for public policies that it can build upon. There is a general framework for M&E of all public policies, not only those relating to climate change. However, M&E and Reporting of public policies is not yet comprehensively or consistently performed. To date, most evaluation activity is associated with EU requirements for specific initiatives.

The Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests has primary responsibility.

The national system for monitoring GHG emissions and mitigation-related policies and measures, under the oversight of the Ministry of Environment, Waters and Forests (MEWF), provides a starting point for a comprehensive M&E system for the NCCS and APCC, although it is not yet functioning as smoothly as it could. Further capacities are needed on climate change and adaptation topics at the operational level. Climate change forums and platforms are missing at the regional or local levels.

In Romania, as well as internationally, there is vastly more experience with M&E for mitigation actions than for climate resilience and adaptation.

There is currently little experience on the subject of climate change adaptation and resilience, which is also overseen by the MEWF. M&E for mitigation actions for climate resilience and adaptation face unique challenges. For example, there is a new dimension of uncertainty. No universally applicable indicator exists, instead context-specific indicators are required to measure reduction in vulnerability or other proxies for the success of adaptation in all the different sectors affected. Adaptation M&E can build on experience from different sectors and disciplines, such as tools and indicators from environmental monitoring, environmental impact assessments, cost-benefit analysis, and M&E approaches for disaster risk reduction as well as general evaluation principles.



A practical and effective monitoring and evaluation system is critical for the success of Romania's National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The development of the M&E system for the NCCS and APCC should begin immediately and built on components of the existing M&E systems, and as much as possible, on the current activities of institutions already involved in monitoring.

A theory-based approach is recommended for evaluating the NSCC and APCC. The theory-based approach facilitates an iterative process of design, evaluation, and redesign based on lessons learned so that the "successes and failures" can be determined and inform future policy. Regular evaluations should be performed at the APCC level, and also in-depth for specific policies, as needed. Fostering a "culture of evaluation" will help to fully utilize the M&E system's potential and take advantage of the feedback to increase effectiveness and better target resources.

MEWF should ensure that adequate financial and human resources for the building, operationalizing and on-going expansion of the M&E system are allocated. This not only includes ensuring sufficient dedicated staff, but also necessary stakeholder engagement, review, knowledge exchange, and outreach activities. In addition, it includes broader evaluation activities, collecting stakeholder feedback on evaluation reports, and adjusting the NCCS and APCC over time. Additional capacities are needed, and ensuring that adequate human resources with the appropriate knowledge and skills regarding climate change topics and evaluation are committed will be important. Staff training programs are essential. Also, relevant MEWF staff should actively engage in international networks for sharing knowledge and experience with other technical / evaluation experts and institutions.

Communication and information exchange (including a clear and efficient process for data sharing) must be established and maintained between all governmental entities associated with the M&E system. To improve system functioning and proactively address any weaknesses, there is a need for increased communication and data / information exchange between relevant government entities at all governance levels to improve system functioning and proactively address any weaknesses.

Engage stakeholders and provide them the opportunity to give feedback. Consultation and feedback are an integral part of the M&E system and help to ensure transparency and accountability to the public and the wider stakeholder community.

Pay special attention to the M&E of actions for climate change adaptation. The foundation for M&E of mitigation actions is much better established. Therefore, the MEWF should therefore give particular attention to the M&E of the adaptation components of the NSCC and APCC, including close liaison with Ministries responsible for monitoring investments in adaptation under the EU Operational Programmes.



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