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Developing an Internal Evaluation System in the Romanian Public Procurement System

Background: The study shows why and how the evaluation systems must be adapted to public administrations' needs so they can respond to current challenges, to be able to perpetuate the solutions that work in the current context, and can be adapted to future contexts, recognition, management, and decreasing the negative effects of possible Black Swans. Its main purpose is to build an adequate evaluation internal structure for the Romanian Public Procurement System (PPS) and analyzes the context, inputs, processes, and possible results to help the decision-makers to increase the performance of this system, according to the second pillar of OECD methodology. Projected at the theoretical level in all PPS organizations, it was inspired by the structural form of the Kalman filter in statistics, as a needed step further to connect the public administration- the scientists - the management of the public organizations. It assesses the system processes and the institutional environment where the goals are developed, and the possible environment of the Black Swan event, the relationships between processes, in a design that investigates how the actual results could change future endeavors, including the green procurement targets in the planning phase, often ignored in evaluation studies. The main evaluation questions are: Do we need ongoing evaluation in public systems to prevent the Black Swans events' negative effects? How do we develop an evaluation system in which these effects can be assessed and managed, that could help the learning process?

Methods: Mixed research methods were used as research of specialized literature and open databases like those of public organizations in Romania, and of the European and international organizations (European Commission, World Bank, O.E.C.D, and World Economic Forum), observation, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires with closed and/or open answer questions, as well as the Chatham House method. The data was analyzed against criteria and collected as settled in the transformational evaluation design, between November 2020 and May 2021 in the first stage and it was extended in actual doctoral studies.

Results: The framework, the context, and the tree of the problem (three chapters in the „why" section), a sensitive area where vulnerable points were explored and found, the proposed structure to help analysis and learning, the target outcomes, and the data to sustain this proposal (the „how" section), further steps, limitation, and conclusions.

Conclusions: A relevant example was the analysis of the encouraged mobility of civil servants within the system, according to the Administrative Code, and the observation of the negative effects materialized by the lack of specialists in public procurement, in the central and county contracting authorities, both for planning and the ex-post evaluation of the contracts financed from national funds. That is why the proposed solution is a strong ongoing evaluation structure that can help prevent or lessen the drastic consequences of such events or at least help prepare for the impact of the Black Swan event.