

INTEGRITY PACTS EU'S IMPACT CASE 04

ROMANIA – CADASTRE OF RURAL AREAS (4)

OVERCOMING IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

CONTRACTING PROJECT INFORMATION

Country	Romania
Project	Cadastre of rural areas (RO)
Project description	Provision of technical assistance to increase land registration in rural areas in Romania, aiming to register about 5.758.314 hectares in 660 territorial administrative units/localities.
IP signature date	20/11/2017
Contracting authority	Agenția Națională de Cadastru și Publicitate Imobiliară (National Cadastre Agency, NCA)
Managing authority	Ministerul Dezvoltării, Lucrărilor Publice și Administrației (Managing Authority for the Regional Operational Programme)
Monitoring organisations	Transparency International Romania , Institute for Public Policy
Procedures monitored	1
Contracts awarded	Several (framework contract)
Current stage	Implementation
Impact categories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Promote better value for money (2) Enhance transparency and accountability (3) Foster project timeliness (4) Increase access and participation of citizens (5) Encourage competition and fairness (6) Support institutional changes

IMPACT CASE

Romania faces a challenging backlog in land registration. The country's regulation on the matter mandates a lengthy and costly procedure, which deters registration, particularly in the poorest municipalities and rural areas. With the support of the European Union (EU), Romania's National Cadastre Agency (NCA) has revamped efforts to address the barriers stopping people from registering land and launched a new contracting project to recruit specialised firms to support rural communities throughout the process. Firms are expected to provide assistance for different tasks such as measuring land, reviewing existing legal records, compiling the preliminary land register, and following the formal procedure until the final approval of the local cadastre.

In the form of a framework agreement, the project's contracting strategy split the contract into multiple lots to increase the number of firms working at the same time in different areas and municipalities of the country. In practice, this meant that the NCA had to track performance and contract enforcement with multiple entities – contractors and local authorities – at different times. Adequate supervision is essential in assessing which firms should be awarded subsequent contracts.

The project's monitors – Transparency International Romania and the Institute for Public Policy (IPP) - noticed the challenge and approached the NCA to discuss how to **improve their communication with the contractors and keep better track of the different contracts**. Initially, the NCA held monthly meetings with all contractors simultaneously, which later changed to smaller meetings with groups of contractors. The start of the COVID-19 pandemic also added a new layer of complexity, and meetings were postponed.

Turning the obstacle into an opportunity, TI Romania and IPP encouraged the NCA to reorganise and improve the meetings. After consideration, the contracting authority decided not only to limit the number of participants but also to group firms with similar projects, either in size or development stage. The adjustments have shown positive results. Communication with the different firms became regular, and the NCA had better control of the project's contracts implementation.

Later, monitors saw that local political factors started to affect the compilation and approval of local cadastres. In some municipalities, local politicians – such as mayors – were using issues emerging from measuring land and proving ownership as personal leverage, particularly in times close to elections, and slowing down the process to approve the local cadastres and conclude the corresponding contract.

To address the risk, the monitors proposed joining the NCA as observers and in some municipalities. According to the rules, the mayors of these jurisdictions are responsible for holding a public discussion and can object to the local cadastre's approval. External observers act as a third party and can objectively assess the situation when necessary. The monitor's presence proved helpful to keep political factors at bay.

Thanks to the Integrity Pact implemented on the Cadastre project in Romania, the contracting authority improved their communication with contractors and managed to keep better track of contracts. The improvements **enhanced transparency and accountability** in the project, as well as **supported project timeliness**.

This impact case was developed in the framework of the project [Integrity Pacts – Civil Control Mechanism for Safeguarding EU Funds](#), Phase 2 funded by the European Commission. It brought together government agencies, civil society and the private sector in 11 EU countries, to ensure that 18 public contracts were designed, awarded and implemented to the highest possible standards of transparency and accountability. **Last case update:** 16 July 2021.