

# **3**

## **Delivery of ICT/digital projects in the Greek public sector**

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This chapter analyses and assesses the delivery of digital and ICT projects in the Greek public sector, including the current governance, internal processes and capabilities. The first section presents the governance for developing digital projects, identifying the key stakeholders, the institutional set-up and leadership. The second section summarises the international business and operational process for implementing digital and ICT projects in Greece, including the preparation, approval and funding of investment projects as their implementation. The third section presents an assessment of the workforce, including the digital talent and skills and the procurement capabilities of the public sector staff. The fourth and last section presents the monitoring capacities and evaluation mechanisms to support the delivery of digital projects and secure benefit realisation.

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## Governance for the development of ICT/digital government projects

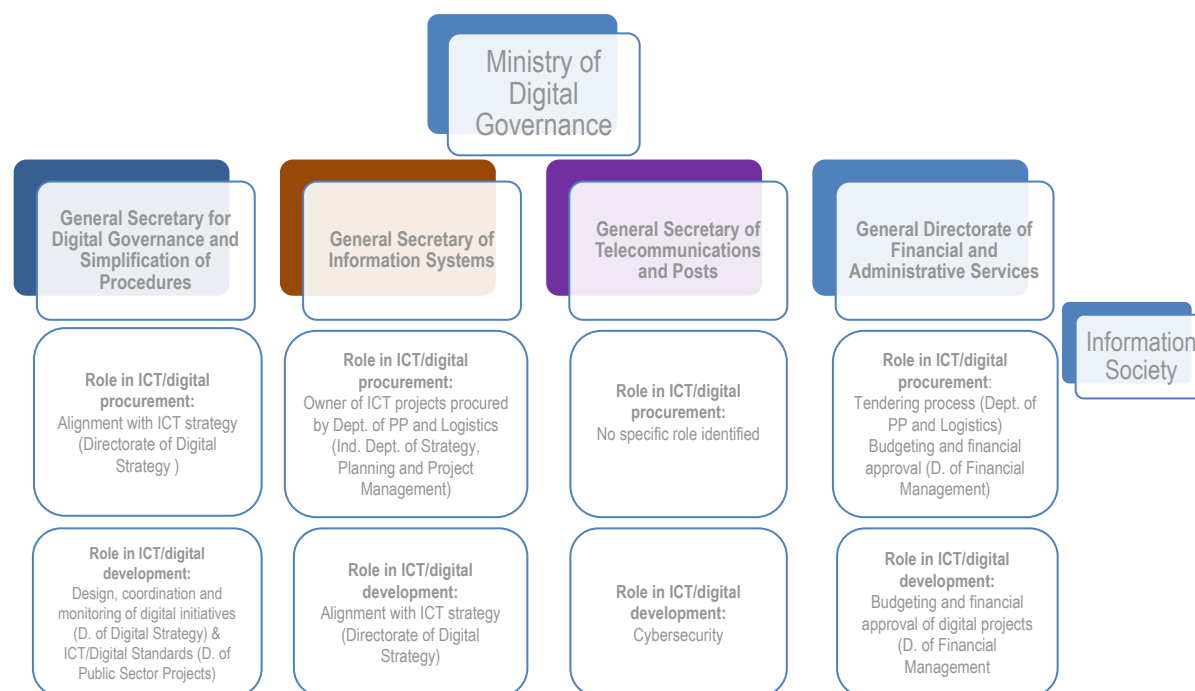
### *Institutional set-up and leadership*

Created in July 2019, the Ministry of Digital Governance<sup>1</sup> (MDG) is the leading body for digital government in Greece. MDG and most of its dependent units were created based on the former Ministry of Digital Policy, Telecommunications, and Information (MDPTI), the body responsible for digital government policies between 2016 and 2019. The Ministry was created under the provisions of the Presidential Order 81 (Government of Greece, 2019<sub>[11]</sub>) which also included the definition of new responsibilities as well as the reorganisation in the machinery of government for the digital policy in Greece – transferring relevant units from the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy and Development, and the Ministry of Education to MDG. This decision unified all digital transformation policies and relevant authorities under one single ministry.

As a dedicated high-level body for the implementation of the digital strategy, MDG is also empowered at legislative and financial levels. Within its regulatory responsibilities, MDG can make concrete proposals for the adoption of decrees, including joint decrees with other ministers, and the issuance of individual regulatory acts.

In terms of the organisational structure and competencies related to the development of digital government projects (including procurement functions), several entities are involved in their delivery, both within the Ministry of Digital Governance and across government. In fact, in many instances, the Ministry of Digital Governance serves as the buyer on behalf of government entities. Within the Ministry itself, various departments are part of the architecture for delivering digital projects, ranging from the strategic leadership to the operational implementation and follow-up (see Figure 3.1).

**Figure 3.1. MDG departments involved in the development of ICT/digital projects**



Source: Own elaboration based on interviews with the Ministry of Digital Governance.

Within the Ministry, the main actors involved in the development of ICT/digital projects, including procurement functions, are the following:

- *General Secretary for Digital Governance and Simplification of Procedures (GSDGSP)*: It is responsible for the coherent design, co-ordination and monitoring of initiatives on digital transformation in alignment with the Digital Transformation Bible. In addition, its goal is to design and implement horizontal policies and actions to promote digital transformation. Its mandate also includes the rationalisation and digitalisation of interactions between citizens and the State.
  - *Directorate of Digital Strategy*: It supports the implementation and monitors the execution of the Digital Transformation Bible. It assesses the pertinence and relevance of projects to be compiled in the Bible, and as such it is in charge of managing a dedicated approval process of digital projects across government. In addition, it aims to promote inclusiveness for all citizens within the digital environment.
  - *Directorate of Sectoral Public Sector Projects*: The operational objective includes ensuring the coherence and efficiencies of digital projects by government entities. It is responsible for drafting standards and documentation of relevant ICT projects.
- *General Secretary of Information Systems (GSIS)*: Overall, this General Secretary manages existing Information Systems across the Greek government (e.g. Government Cloud). With respect to the development and procurement of digital projects, it manages and monitors digital projects procured internally.
- *General Directorate of Financial and Administrative Services (GDFAS)*: This Directorate has overall responsibilities for financial and administrative services in the Ministry.
  - *Directorate of Procurement and Logistics*: It carries out the tendering process for digital projects for internal and external clients.
  - *Directorate of Financial Management*: It is responsible for the budgeting and financial approval of digital projects.
- *General Secretary of Telecommunications and Posts (GSTP)*: Responsibilities around cybersecurity are relevant in the context of digital project implementation.
- *Information Society S.A.*: An independent entity controlled by the Ministry of Digital Governance, which acts as the implementation arm of the Ministry to liaise with public sector organisation for the design, procurement and implementation of large scale digital projects on behalf of the Ministry and entities across the Greek public administration.

In addition to the departments above, an Intermediate Body situated within the Ministry of Digital Governance co-ordinates funding from the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) for digital projects. The structure of ESIF to support digital transformation projects has evolved over time (see Box 3.1).

### Box 3.1. ESIF programming and digital transformation

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) play a key role in Greece's digital transformation, as they provide a large share of the funding available for such projects. As such, the structure of the ESIF management is an important element to consider in the overall governance and implementation of digital transformation projects.

The governance structure of ESIF related to digital transformation has varied over the years. Over the programming period 2007-2013, a dedicated Operational Programme (OP) called "Digital Convergence" was set up to finance ICT investment with a budget envelope of EUR 1.075 billion.

In 2014-2020, the decision was made to reduce the overall number of OPs and related fragmentation of projects. Thus, ICT investment was managed throughout several Managing Authorities and OPs. With the creation of the Ministry of Digital Governance in 2019, an Intermediate Body (IB) was set up to co-ordinate funds related to digital transformation co-ordinated by the Ministry.

For the new programming period 2021-2027, a dedicated Managing Authority for ICT will be set up within the Ministry of Digital Governance. It is expected that this set-up will facilitate the funding and implementation of digital projects.

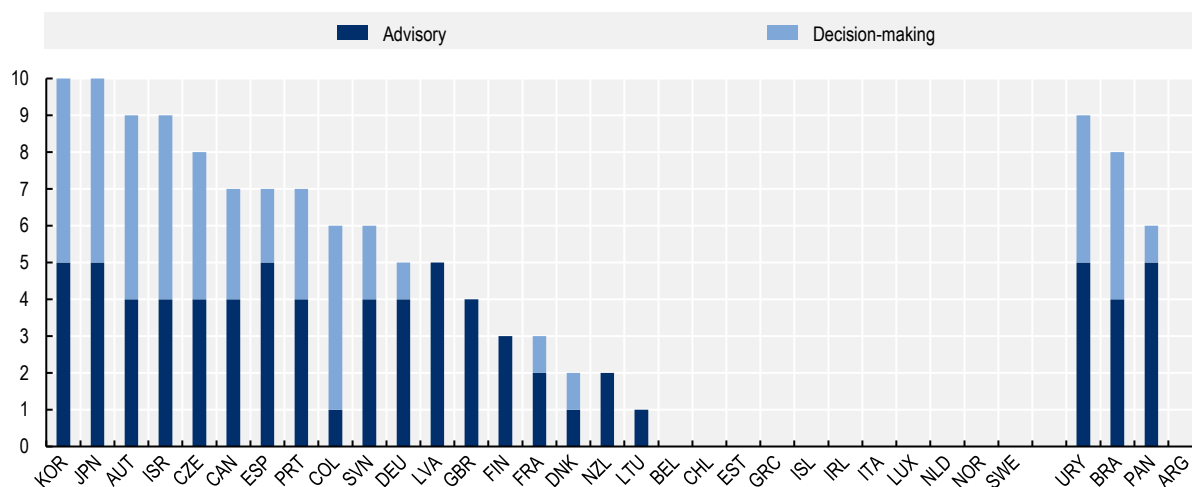
Source: (European Commission, n.d.<sup>[2]</sup>); Interviews with the Ministry of Digital Governance.

### *Co-ordination and collaboration within and outside the Ministry of Digital Governance*

The recent changes in the machinery of government for digital government in Greece are posing challenges to secure alignment and co-ordination across the project life cycle for digital projects (from planning to monitoring) between the relevant departments and units within MDG as well as with key external actors of the digital government ecosystem. Several departments were consolidated without rethinking and streamlining inherited functions. As a result, units remain working under a siloed-based approach given the challenges to set clear institutional roles within MDG and to co-ordination and streamline internal processes. In the absence of such roles, duplication of functions and misalignment when addressing different projects or funding sources are observed. Interviewees indicated a demand for more coherent and aligned process within MDG when addressing the design, planning and approval of digital government projects, in specific concerning the different funding sources (either national or at EU level) and the procedures to rationalise these resources to the beneficiaries.

Two specific General Secretariats are involved in the development of digital transformation projects within MDG, namely GSDGSP (project definition and approval) and GDFAS (funding and procurement of certain projects). Both secretariats and their respective directorates do not have clear procedures and rationalised roles and responsibilities in the development and procurement of digital government projects. Additionally, existing internal procedures related to project development are not formalised in shared guidelines and standards, which constrains knowledge sharing and co-ordination, fostering discretionary decision-making.

**Figure 3.2. Availability and responsibilities of high-level digital government co-ordination bodies**



Source: OECD Survey on Digital Government 1.0 (OECD, 2020<sup>[3]</sup>).

Similar challenges are observed in the interaction between MDG with actors within the digital government ecosystem, namely beneficiaries (public sector organisations for which MDG approves and procures certain projects) and Information Society S.A. When looking at the broader governance of digital government in Greece, to date MDG does not have a cross-government co-ordination instance or body, such as Council of CIOs or similar, in order to have joint decision-making and prioritisation of projects (see Figure 3.2) (OECD, n.d.<sup>[4]</sup>). Such instance can be an effective way to communicate and set common priorities and efforts in line with the DTB, and serve to channel the needs and concerns of line ministries and agencies for an effective implementation of the strategy.

The DTB acknowledges the relevance of upgrading the governance of digital government in Greece. For this, the DTB includes the creation of two co-ordination bodies in order to steer the implementation of the strategy. First, a Digital Transformation Steering Committee will be created to co-ordinate the implementation of the DTB as well as suggest new projects and priorities in the country. The Steering Committee will include a high-level plenary with General and Special Secretaries of the Government, chaired by the Minister of Digital Government. It remains unclear the level of empowerment of the Committee in terms of advisory or decision-making competencies.

To operationalise the Steering Committee, the DTB states the creation of the Digital Transformation Executive Network. The Network acts as a Council of CIOs in the Greek government in order to co-ordinate the implementation of relevant projects comprised in the DTB, and are the main contact points between ministries and the ministry. However, based on the data collected there is no evidence that these bodies are operational at the time of the review.

When looking at the interactions between MDG and Information Society S.A. to intermediate and support line ministries (beneficiaries) in the planning, implementation, procurement and monitoring digital projects, similar issues are noticed. Given the general limited capabilities at sectoral level to develop digital transformation projects, Information Society S.A. plays a pivotal role in translating the beneficiaries' needs into concrete projects to be planned, implemented and monitored on behalf of the beneficiaries. However, the criteria under which Information Society S.A. takes this role are still unclear, as well as the specific share of projects assigned to this entity and concrete mechanisms to ensure an adequate accountability of its functions.

The limited co-ordination between MDG and line ministries is also observed in the absence of agreed mechanisms to monitor the implementation and impact of digital transformation projects as well as to gather feedback from beneficiaries and line ministries concerning the development of such projects. Given the intermediation role of Information Society S.A., there is a disconnection between MDG and the beneficiaries which does not provide sufficient feedback to the Ministry to assess the pertinence and effectiveness of existing procedures and mechanisms for the successful implementation of digital government projects.

### *Procurement bodies for digital projects*

The current governance structure of the Ministry of Digital Governance presents a duplication of bodies in charge of procurement of digital projects. The Department of Procurement and Logistics is in charge of the tendering process on behalf of entities within the Ministry of Digital Governance, in particular the General Secretariat for Information Systems (see Table 3.1). The end users and the scope of these procurement procedures, however, go beyond the Ministry itself and concern any kind of public policy. For instance, the Department of Procurement and Logistics may run the procurement process for a new storage area network and backup equipment for the government cloud.

In parallel, Information Society S.A. executes procurement of digital projects on behalf of the Ministry of Digital Governance or entities across the Greek government. Originally set up as an independent agency, it maintains an independent status under the leadership of the Ministry. It works on the basis of Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with any kind of government entity that wishes to outsource the

development of a digital project (including procurement tasks). This entails the purchase of hardware, software or in the majority of cases integrated systems. There are no pre-defined criteria for determining which digital projects Information Society S.A. will be in charge of. Instead, conversations with stakeholders show that this choice is often motivated politically.

While there are some apparent differences between these two bodies, both operate without a clear distinction in their roles with respect to the procurement of digital projects. Overall, Information Society S.A. can be characterised as the operational arm of the Ministry. The Department of Procurement and Logistics has a broad mandate for all procurement operations of the Ministry. It primarily serves internal clients, but its role has an impact on external entities, too.

As such, there is no clear specialisation in the kinds of digital projects that the two entities engage with. For instance, the two bodies could benefit from pre-defined criteria that determine whether a project falls under the remit of Information Society S.A. or the Department of Procurement and Logistics. This would allow the two bodies to fully specialise and enhance their capacity in a given area. Objective criteria for accepting a digital project would also reduce the discretionary decision-making that affects these entities. Finally, a clearer definition of the roles would allow these bodies to better prioritise their procurement operations, reduce duplications and benefit from enhanced specialised capacity.

While there seems to be duplication of procurement of digital projects within the Ministry of Digital Governance, the level of sophistication of procurement operations seem to vary between these two entities. Namely, Information Society S.A., as a longstanding purchaser of ICT technology, has more experience and capacity, whereas the Department of Procurement and Logistics faces greater challenges with specialised digital competences and more advanced procurement practices suitable to digital projects. The demands placed on the Department of Procurement and Logistics have also expanded rapidly over recent times, as the competences related to digital transformation agenda have been transferred to MDG.

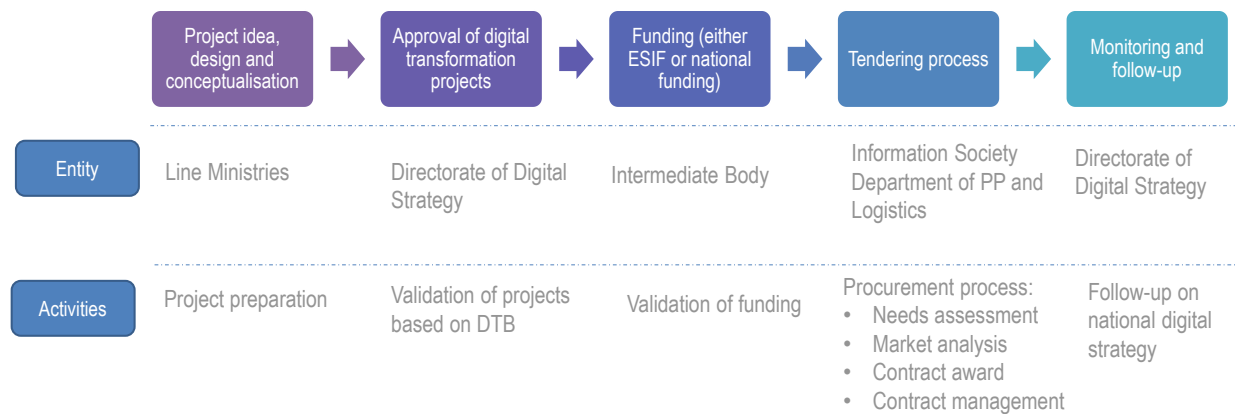
**Table 3.1. Institutional clients of the Department of Procurement and Logistics**

Client	Share of procurement	Policy area
General Secretariat of Information Systems	50% approx.	All public policy
General Secretariat for Digital Governance and Process Simplification	30% approx.	All public policy
General Secretariat of Telecommunications and Post	10% approx.	All public policy
Ministry of Digital Governance	10% approx. approx.	Inner implementation

Source: Data provided by the Ministry of Digital Governance.

## Mapping business processes and operations for the implementation of ICT/digital projects

The implementation and delivery of ICT/digital projects broadly consists of five steps, which include the project idea and conceptualisation, the approval mechanism including the alignment with the national ICT strategy, i.e. the DTB, the selection of funding, the tendering process (in case the project is procured) and finally monitoring and follow-up (see Figure 3.3). This section describes these steps, the underlying processes and the activities of responsible entities in greater detail with a view of gathering a clear picture of the functioning of MDG with respect to the delivery digital transformation projects.

**Figure 3.3. Main steps in the delivery of digital projects**

Source: Own elaboration based on the information provided by the Ministry of Digital Governance.

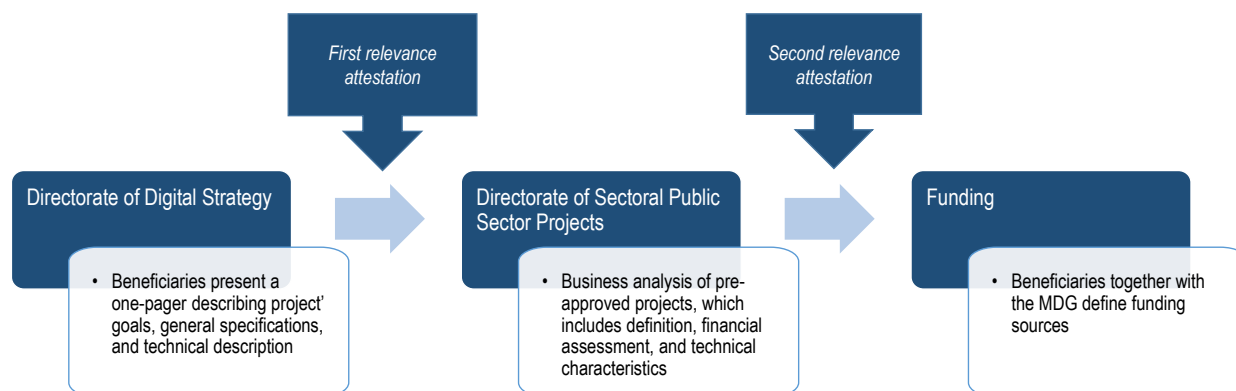
### **Preparation and approval of digital transformation projects**

According to the existing organisational structure and roles, the General Secretariat for Digital Governance and Process Simplification (GSDGSP) has the primary role to prepare, plan, prioritise and fund ICT/digital projects in the Greek public sector. Different units within the GSDGSP, such as the Department of Digital Strategy and the Directorate of Public Sector Projects, are key actors in the process of assessing proposals and setting priorities, as well as have a crucial role in projects' evaluation process.

From a policy perspective, the Digital Transformation Bible (DTB) comprises the key projects and initiatives prioritised on digital government in Greece. The DTB acts as a compendium of around 400 initiatives for the period 2021-2025. The formulation of the DTB, led by MDG, included a consultation process with all line ministries. However, several public sector organisations with a relevant view of the development of digital government in Greece stated that there was limited participation of third parties in the formulation of the Bible.

Additionally, the Directorate of Digital Strategy within MDG, is responsible of conducting a project approval procedure for all ICT initiatives in the public sector regardless of the funding source or implementation body. This process aims to foster the alignment of projects with the DTB (and previously the NDS). According to Law 4727/2020 (Government of the Hellenic Republic, 2020<sup>[5]</sup>), all public sector organisations have to get approval from the Directorate of Digital Strategy in the form of a *relevance attestation* for all projects. In practice, officials acknowledge that the procedure operates for projects with an estimated budget over the threshold of EUR 60 000. Projects below this budget threshold are exempt from the procedure and are entirely under the responsibility of each public sector organisation. For each project, beneficiaries present a one-pager describing project' goals, general specifications and a technical description. Once received, the Directorate of Digital Strategy has 30 days to issue the *relevance attestation*. In case there is no reply from the Directorate to beneficiaries regarding the assessment of the project, the request is presumed as approved. Nevertheless, it is not possible to ensure that all digital initiatives effectively go through this procedure given the lack of awareness of the new procedures in place, and the existing budget thresholds set for approval.

**Figure 3.4. Approval process of digital projects**



Source: Own elaboration based on the information provided by the Ministry of Digital Governance.

After the concept approval, the Directorate of Sectoral Public Sector Projects conducts a more detailed business analysis of pre-approved projects which includes definition, financial assessment and technical characteristics. This analysis leads to a second *relevance attestation* that allows initiatives to move to the funding allocation stage within MDG. Stakeholders involved in this process acknowledge that this second approval process does not serve as a mechanism to ensure adherence to cross-governmental standards and principles for the development of digital government in Greece. The definition of value proposition (business cases) and project approval systems can be an effective way to foster alignment and adoption of guidelines and standards that foster policy coherence in the implementation of the DTB. Similarly, they can serve as a method to better assess and mitigate related risks of implementing of digital transformation projects. However, in Greece the approval process does not comprise a project-by-project risk assessment of the initiatives.

### **Funding of ICT/digital projects**

One of the critical responsibilities of MDG is to provide funding to the projects either comprised in the DTB or which have been approved internally by the Ministry. Currently, there are three funding sources for ICT/digital projects in the Greek public sector:

- *European funds*: managed by MDG, this includes the European Structural and Investments Funds (ESIF) (see Box 3.1 and the upcoming Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF)). The ESIF is one of the most relevant funds managed by MDG for ICT-related initiatives.
- *Centralised national budget*: national budget allocated to MDG to fund specific ICT/digital projects which have to be pre-approved internally by the Ministry.
- *Public sector organisations' budget*: national budget allocated to each public sector organisation which can be spent in ICT/digital projects. This includes resources from the Public Investment Programme.

European funds play a critical role to finance Greece's public sector investments, including digital transformation initiatives and most public infrastructure projects. However, the internal criteria under which projects (including the initiatives comprised in the DTB) are funded with EU or national budget are unclear. Different funding sources create separate pathways for ICT/digital projects, i.e. lack of coherence in planning and prioritisation. This becomes evident for projects which are funded with sectoral budget, for which MDG has no clear oversight and may be leading to projects that continue fostering misalignment, fragmentation and lack of coherence in the absence of guiding standards and development principles.



Given the centralised approach for ICT/digital project approval and funding in Greece can be an effective policy lever for digital government in order to create incentives for system-wide transformation and policy coherence, serving to plan, prioritise, rationalise and monitor the effective development of these projects. However, at the moment there is no clear system in place that can empower MDG to accomplish these tasks. There is no comprehensive oversight of all initiatives to secure its alignment with the strategy, although MDG is planning to implement a portfolio management approach to better manage and co-ordinate resources for ICT/digital projects. Some of the stakeholders acknowledge the need to develop a unit responsible for managing and co-ordinating the Public Investment Programme following the experience of the ESIF.

### ***Project implementation (from planning to contract implementation)***

Once the project has been approved (i.e. the coherence with the Digital Transformation Bible has been certified) and the funding has been validated, it is ready for implementation and procurement. At this stage, a digital project may be implemented by Information Society S.A. or supported by the Department of Procurement and Logistics during the procurement phase. In alternative, the procurement may be conducted directly by line ministries. Given the lack of internal capacities on project management, procurement and implementation, most ICT/digital projects are supported by Information Society S.A. and MDG's Department of Public Procurement and Logistics to help procure the project and manage the implementation phase. The project implementation consists of several sub-steps, including those related to the procurement process, i.e. the needs analysis, the market analysis, the tendering process and the contract execution. The following analysis focuses on the project implementation as carried out by Information Society S.A. and the Department of Procurement and Logistics.

#### *Needs analysis (including stakeholder involvement, with special attention to the end-users)*

The needs analysis should balance the needs of the project owner (the beneficiary, e.g. a Ministry within the Greek government) as well as the potential end-users (e.g. citizens, businesses or civil servants) to procure a solution that corresponds to the needs of these two stakeholder groups. This phase is particularly relevant in the context of ICT procurement, as many decisions (e.g. choice between service or supply, contract versus a framework agreement) are best determined with a clear view of the underlying needs.

Whenever the procurement process of a project is conducted by Information Society S.A., the project beneficiary provides a basic outline of his or her needs at the moment of submitting a proposal to Information Society S.A. In a second step, a project team is established composed of team members from the beneficiary and Information Society. Such project team is tasked with further defining the needs and translate these into a concrete project description and related tender specifications. Depending on the capacity of the beneficiary, the initial description of project needs may be more or less advanced.

In other instances, particularly when the procurement process is managed in house by MDG, ad hoc collaboration mechanisms are set up between the Department of Procurement and Logistics and the beneficiaries within the Ministry of Digital Governance. For instance, departments within the General Secretariat of Information Systems often act as liaison with the procurement officials to help specify needs and formulate technical specifications as well as suggest a Request for Proposals (RfP) using templates by the Ministry of Digital Governance.

#### *Understanding and meeting end-user needs*

Digitally mature governments place users at the core of digital transformation processes. They establish continuous and iterative engagement mechanisms with end-users to fully understand and meet their needs instead of making top-down assumptions about their demands and expectations. Such an approach requires a continuous interaction with end-users, which can be an effective way to achieve processes and

services that respond and adapt timely to users, fostering trust in the public sector (OECD, 2020<sup>[6]</sup>; OECD, 2021<sup>[7]</sup>).

In the context of project definition and pre-procurement analysis in Greece, limited involvement and interactions with end-users is observed when planning and implementing ICT/digital projects. Although the DTB underlines the relevance of user-driven approaches for service design and delivery and some public sector organisations have involved users through the different phases of project development, the general absence of formal mechanisms to gather and channel user feedback into the design and implementation of ICT/digital projects constrains a wider user-driven culture in Greece (regardless of the public sector organisation responsible for its implementation i.e., MDG or Information Society S.A.).

Experience from the implementation of recent systems has shown that the period between planning and implementation can stretch into many years. The delays can have varied causes including problems with the design of the system to procurement. Procurement processes are long drawn because of multiple reasons including lack of coordination between the authorities, non specification of a clear mandate, lack of technical resources etc. Delays related to procurement often result in the mushrooming of several smaller systems. These ad hoc systems perform one part of the functions envisaged by the original system but in a fragmented fashion. This tends to seriously undermine regulatory reform efforts because of incomplete and incoherent functionalities. Fostering a user-driven approach in ICT/digital projects in Greece calls for an agile culture when designing, procuring and implementing these projects. This requires looking at the mechanisms to test, learn, improve and iterate towards refining the initial requirements and the solution, fostering more meaningful and impactful results (see Box 3.2). From a public procurement perspective, the use of more complex and iterative mechanisms such as competitive dialogues and innovation partnerships can be an effective way to foster agility within the procurement process. Widely promoted by the European Commission, such procurement mechanisms are not widely adopted in the Greek public sector yet as indicated by the Department of Procurement and Logistics at MDG as well as Information Society S.A.

### **Box 3.2. Agile principles in the procurement of ICT/digital projects**

Digital transformation calls for additional efforts to equip the public sector with the pace required to transform services and public sector operations. The fast-pacing nature of digital technologies requires an agile and iterative approach to the development of digital solutions in order to secure outcomes that meet user needs and maximise public value.

To address these challenges, the UK Government Digital Services with the support of the OECD developed the ICT commissioning playbook, focusing on ICT procurement reform and its part in the wider digital transformation of the public sector in countries around the world. Its goal is to show how traditional procurement approaches can evolve towards agile procurement. The playbook presents practical steps and case studies to overcome common problems in the procurement of ICT goods and service:

1. Set the context: define the problem to be solved before designing the solution.
2. Start by understanding user needs: embed a user-centred, design-led, data-driven approach.
3. Design procurements and contracts that meet users' needs: Work with your research team and get to know all of your users.
4. Be agile, iterative and incremental
5. Work as a multidisciplinary team
6. Make things open

7. Build trusting and collaborative relationships, within and outside of government
8. Share what you have with others and reuse what others have
9. Move from specifying solutions to defining outcomes
10. Public Procurement for Public Good: meet functional needs while supporting the public good
11. Operate and deliver

Source: (GDS/OECD, 2019<sup>[6]</sup>).

### *Market analysis and market engagement*

The second crucial step for preparing a procurement lies in engaging with the market to determine technologies and capabilities of market providers. Having a solid understanding of the market is even more important in the ICT sector, as the technology evolves very fast. Public buyers need to closely engage in order to stay abreast of new trends, be able to draft technical requirements that closely correspond to the both to the beneficiary's needs and end users. Market engagement is especially key to success for non-standard or irregular purchases or for purchases that result in realisation of unique ICT results, and solutions. Both the public buyer (contracting authority) and the potential service provider (bidder) can benefit from market consultations. While the public buyer might obtain a free opinion, reduce the risks of objections and get more information about the subject matter of the contract and the respective market segment, service providers have the opportunity to present their innovative solutions, ideas and better understand the needs of contracting authority. The market consultation should be a two-way open dialogue, instead of a "one-way broadcast".

The approach taken for market analysis and engagement varies depending on whether Information Society S.A. or the Department of Procurement and Logistics are running the procurement procedure. Information Society S.A. typically engages in open, early and targeted channels of communication with the market to understand market capacities, including presentations and demos of new technology and products by potential suppliers. Such exchange of information with the market helps them in being able to localise and assess potential solutions and future developments. It also gives potential suppliers the opportunity to allow public sector requirements to be integrated into their planning (research & development) and lay early groundwork for innovative solutions. Finally, market engagement addresses new potential suppliers in addition to traditional and well-known ones and this also includes SMEs whose focus is not on the public sector.

Furthermore, the Greek public procurement law foresees a formal written stakeholder public deliberation procedure (*δημόσια διαβούλευση*), which takes place before issuing a particular tender, and aims at sharing expectations and inviting comments, suggestions, and new ideas from potential suppliers and market actors (including SMEs, academic institutions, innovators, etc.). This public consultation procedure foresees the publication of a mature version of the RFP (Request for Proposal) on the official National Public Procurement Platform (ESIDIS) site for at least 2 weeks to collect comments by market actors. The received input is formally recorded, analysed, and considered for incorporation in the final version of the tender document.

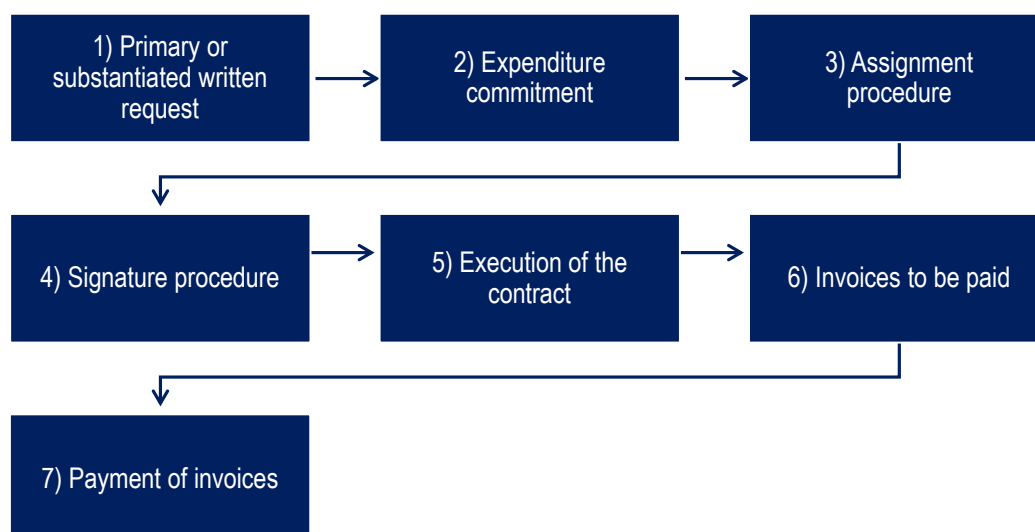
Information Society S.A. carries out this public deliberation procedure on a systematic basis for tenders above a certain threshold. The Department of Procurement and Logistics does not have systematic approach to market analysis and market engagement, but also makes use of the public deliberation procedure.

### *Tendering process*

Once the needs analysis and the market analysis are completed, the formal tender procedure can be launched. The Department of Procurement and Logistics outlined several formal procedural steps for its procurement procedures of digital projects (see Figure 3.5). It should be noted that the formal procedure reflects a narrow understanding of the procurement process that does not take into account the pre-tender stage (i.e. needs analysis and market analysis), as outlined above. However, it is important to formalise also the pre-tender stages to highlight their relevance, in particular in the context of procurement of digital projects.

It appears that the tendering process is largely carried out as open procedures and with limited focus on quality criteria. This is common for public procurement procedures in Greece. In the context of ICT procurement, however, the use of more complex procurement procedures (e.g. competitive dialogue) may be suited in some instances, particularly if the contracting authority is seeking to buy an innovative and/or unique solution that requires an agile approach towards the understanding of the problem, the needs and the basic requirements in order to test, iterate and scale up.

**Figure 3.5. Formal procedural steps for the procurement of digital projects by the Department of Procurement and Logistics**



Source: Information provided by the Ministry of Digital Governance.

### *Contract execution*

As per Greek legal framework, contract execution for supplies requires the set-up of a Monitoring and Acceptance Committee responsible for supervision, quality control and final acceptance of products and services. In the case of services, such a Committee is optional, and the functions of contract monitoring can be performed by the competent authority. Typically, the Monitoring and Acceptance Committee is composed of the contract beneficiaries, but external experts may also be involved, particularly in the case of complex contracts where the Monitoring and Acceptance Committee may not be able to evaluate the deliverables of the contract.

In the case of digital projects run by Information Society S.A., a multi-disciplinary team is set up to oversee the implementation of the contract, composed of the so-called project management team. Such project management team includes a team leader, end user representatives and domain experts appointed by the project beneficiaries, as well as a Project Manager, ICT Expert, Legal/Contracting Expert and Financial

Expert, appointed by Information Society S.A. There may be additional teams involved in ensuring the successful project completion and exploitation, such as a Business Steering Committee, responsible for overseeing and providing guidance with the business aspects of a project, and domain experts, responsible for the assessment of deliverables.

Contract management of digital projects procured by the Department of Procurement and Logistics is overseen by a dedicated department, i.e. the Department of Tenders and Contracts within the Department of Procurement and Logistics. Annual or ad hoc committees are in charge of monitoring the stages of delivery and assessing the outcome or final product of the project. Ad hoc committees are usually set up for digital works. In addition to these committees, the project management team, which includes the Directorate that runs the project, is tasked with monitoring contract implementation.

### ***Project management***

Fostering institutional and human capabilities to effectively manage complex digital transformation projects is essential for successful and timely delivery. In a context of increased need to design projects driven by users' expectations and demands, project management methodologies that balance structured project development with effective mechanisms to understand and address user needs is critical. Countries have advanced in the development and adoption of agile development practices to address the project life cycle from an end-to-end perspective, creating spaces to foster engagement with users and to test, iterate and learn accordingly.

In the context of ICT/digital project management in the Greek public sector, existing culture and practice promote the use of the waterfall project management. In terms of responsibilities for project management in MDG, the Department of Digital Strategy oversees the promotion and adoption of best practices for their dissemination in ICT projects / activities, such as ICT project management methodology "Project Management Methodology (PM2)" elaborated by the European Commission in collaboration with the other relevant services of the Ministry (European Commission, Directorate-General for Informatics, 2021<sup>[9]</sup>). However, at the time of this study there was no evidence of adoption and use of agile methodologies, for example through the agile extension produced for PM2 (European Commission, Directorate-General for Informatics, 2021<sup>[10]</sup>).

The limited adoption of agile project management principles and standards is impeding a culture of experimentation, testing and iteration. Such a development approach is critical when addressing the implementation of large and complex digital transformation projects. Similarly, there is a limited culture and room for experimentation practices and the use of proof-of-concept in the design and delivery of digital solutions, reflecting on the challenges to develop institutional capacities for delivery. Embracing a user-driven approach calls for flexibility in product development, promoting scalability, and encouraging continuous learning and improvement.

### ***Systems and data (e-procurement)***

The procurement of digital projects is supported by Greece's e-procurement infrastructure, composed of the Electronic System for Public Procurements (ESIDIS) and the Central Electronic Registry for Public Procurements (KIMDIS). KIMDIS functions as the platform to announce tender opportunities as well as the registry for award decision, the contract, amendments (if applicable) and payment orders. In contrast, ESIDIS is the transactional e-procurement platform. The use of ESIDIS is mandatory for all contracts above EUR 30 000 while publication on KIMDIS should occur for all contracts above EUR 2 500. As such, digital transformation projects procured by MDG are carried out via the ESIDIS and KIMDIS platform, both for the publication of procurement opportunities, as well as for tenders above the above-mentioned thresholds. In addition to transparency provided by the e-procurement system, the Department of Procurement and

Logistics publishes information about its tenders on the website of MDG. Similarly, Information Society S.A. uses its website to announce tenders as well as market consultations.

KIMDIS and ESIDIS cover the procurement cycle up to the award of the contract, but the contract management phase is not supported by e-procurement functionalities. Furthermore, information in the Greece e-procurement system is not provided in an “open” format, thereby making it difficult to use for monitoring or analysis purposes.

The ESIDIS also provides some statistical and reporting capabilities to procurement stakeholders. Namely, publishes a short monthly report and an annual report, which includes the basic statistics for goods & service and public works. Data is available since 2017 (Ministry of Economy and Development of Greece, 2019<sup>[11]</sup>). Furthermore, the annual report, called *ESIDIS Annual Bulletin*, prepared by the General Directorate for Public Procurements (GDPP) within the Ministry of Development and Investments, discloses more information on the procurement procedures published and conducted in ESIDIS (Ministry of Development and Investments of Greece, 2020<sup>[12]</sup>).

## Workforce assessment

### *Digital talent and skills*

A successful digital transformation is sustained and enabled by a digitally competent public workforce. Equipping civil servants with the right skills and capabilities requires promoting a culture of continuous transformation, flexibility and proactiveness. According to the OECD Framework for Digital Talent and Skills (OECD, 2021<sup>[13]</sup>) (see Box 3.3) setting the organisational conditions for digital talent in the public sector, fostering multi-dimensional skills to achieve mature digital governments as well as taking actions to retain and promote digital capacities of the workforce are three fundamental facets for having competent civil servants in the digital age.

When looking at the development of digital talent in the Greek public sector, in particular related to the implementation and procurement of ICT/digital projects, interviewees acknowledge a limited progress given the absence of concrete policies and initiatives to promote digital skills in the public sector. This includes a limited organisational culture of collaboration and co-operation (fundamental for the implementation of cross-governmental initiatives) fostered by the systematic changes in the governance of machinery of digital government in Greece. Interviewees acknowledge that these changes have not been encompassed with policies to retain and attract digital talent at MDG and more broadly in the public sector. According to the evidence collected, this implied that some institutions and departments have not opened new positions during the last ten years, resulting in the ageing of the workforce and limited public sector capabilities to deliver digital projects. Additionally, it calls for a top-level culture of openness, testing and innovation to create safe spaces to try, learn, improve, iterate and eventually fail. Such a culture is also fundamental when looking at mechanisms to involve and understand user needs (OECD, 2021<sup>[13]</sup>).

Looking at the digital capabilities across the Greek public sector, a gap is observed between MDG departments, including Information Society S.A., and line ministries and institutions on specific digital skills that are critical for a successful digital transformation e.g., skillsets on project management, technical specification and understanding of digital projects, and user-research and multidisciplinary work to understand and meet user needs. The disparity in digital capacities between MDG and other public sector organisations has contributed to the limited empowerment and ownership that line ministries on the implementation of ICT/digital projects, concentrating these tasks within MDG.

The recently published DTB states digital talent and skills as one of its six strategic axes. However, the DTB focuses largely on digital skills in the society and economy, with only two specific activities directed to civil servants. First, the development of a national framework for digital talent in the Greek public sector following the principles of the European Digital Competence Framework (see Box 3.4). Second, the

incorporation of core digital competencies within civil servant job profiles, and the development of training programmes on digital skills for public servants.

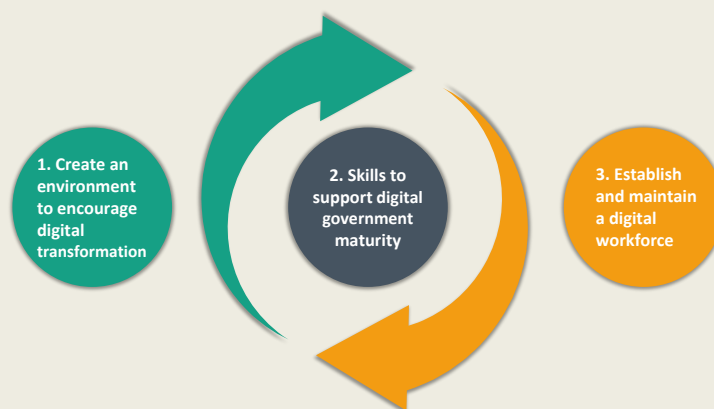
However, a more comprehensive approach could be developed for a skilled and competent digital workforce. The DTB mentions the implementation of training activities to civil servants, but without looking into the broader need to address working practices, culture, attraction and retention of digital skills policies. This may be complemented with activities to promote diversity in digital teams where different professional and academic backgrounds can provide a better understanding of user needs and effective practices to develop digital transformation projects. Similarly, the development of formal and informal training, mentoring programmes and job mobility within government could help counterbalance the existing limited digital talent observed in the Greek public sector, and which is hindering an effective and sustainable transformation.

### Box 3.3. The OECD Framework for Digital Talent and Skills in the public sector

The OECD Framework for Digital Talent and Skills in the public sector contributes to the discussion around skills at the individual and team level, reflecting the role of talent and skills in establishing digital government maturity. The framework draws and contributes to an expectation that coherent policy efforts are embedding the talent and skills for digital transformation throughout the public sector and society. The structure of the framework consists of three pillars:

1. **Create an environment to encourage digital transformation:** The context for those working on digital government and the background required to promote digital transformation. It addresses cultural, leadership, and organisational drivers of digital talent and skills.
2. **Skills to support digital Government maturity:** The required skills to keep digital government maturity, covering all public servants, particularly professionals and leadership roles. Within the broader context of 21st-century skills in society, the framework presents four areas of skills to support digital government: user skills, socio-emotional skills, professional skills, and leadership skills.
3. **Establish and maintain a digital workforce:** The practical steps and enabling activities required to establish and maintain a workforce that encompasses the skills to support digital government maturity. This pillar addresses recruitment methods, career planning, workplace mentoring, training, and the private sector's role.

Figure 3.6. OECD Framework for Digital Talent and Skills in the public sector



Source: (OECD, 2021<sup>[13]</sup>).



### Box 3.4 European Digital Competence Framework 2.0 (DigComp 2.0)

Published in 2016 the European Digital Competence Framework 2.0 (DigComp 2.0) is an update of the first edition conceptual reference model released in 2013. DigComp 2.0 identifies the key components of digital competence in 5 areas:

- *Information and data literacy*: To articulate information needs, to locate and retrieve digital data, information and content. To judge the relevance of the source and its content. To store, manage, and organise digital data, information and content.
- *Communication and collaboration*: To interact, communicate and collaborate through digital technologies while being aware of cultural and generational diversity. To participate in society through public and private digital services and participatory citizenship. To manage one's digital identity and reputation.
- *Digital content creation*: To create and edit digital content. To improve and integrate information and content into an existing body of knowledge while understanding how copyright and licences are to be applied. To know how to give understandable instructions for a computer system.
- *Safety*: To protect devices, content, personal data and privacy in digital environments. To protect physical and psychological health, and to be aware of digital technologies for social well-being and social inclusion. To be aware of the environmental impact of digital technologies and their use.
- *Problem solving*: To identify needs and problems, and to resolve conceptual problems and problem situations in digital environments. To use digital tools to innovate processes and products. To keep up-to-date with the digital evolution.

Source: (Vuorikari R, 2016<sub>[14]</sub>).

### ICT public procurement workforce

Adequate capacity of the public procurement workforce is a key element to ensure a sound procurement system, and is particularly important in the context of procuring digital technologies. Indeed, the OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement calls upon countries to develop a procurement workforce with the capacity to continually deliver value for money efficiently and effectively. (OECD, 2015<sub>[15]</sub>) (see Box 3.5).

### Box 3.5. OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement: Capacity

IX. The OECD recommends countries to develop a procurement workforce with the capacity to continually deliver value for money efficiently and effectively.

- i) Ensure that procurement officials meet high professional standards for knowledge, practical implementation and integrity by providing a dedicated and regularly updated set of tools, for example, sufficient staff in terms of numbers and skills, recognition of public procurement as a specific profession, certification and regular trainings, integrity standards for public procurement officials and the existence of a unit or team analysing public procurement information and monitoring the performance of the public procurement system.



- ii) Provide attractive, competitive and merit-based career options for procurement officials, through the provision of clear means of advancement, protection from political interference in the procurement process and the promotion of national and international good practices in career development to enhance the performance of the procurement workforce.
- iii) Promote collaborative approaches with knowledge centres such as universities, think tanks or policy centres to improve skills and competences of the procurement workforce. The expertise and pedagogical experience of knowledge centres should be enlisted as a valuable means of expanding procurement knowledge and upholding a two-way channel between theory and practice, capable of boosting application of innovation to public procurement systems.

Source: (OECD, 2015<sup>[15]</sup>).

Reinforcing the workforce of public procurement demonstrates an opportunity for future improvement in the field of ICT procurement in Greece. As per the information gathered during the OECD fact-finding missions, Information Society S.A. has category specialists that are equipped with technical knowledge on the specific digital goods and services to be procured under the ICT procurement.

The Department of Procurement and Logistics is equipped with personnel dealing with public procurement, but it appears to be less specialised in particular product categories. Importantly, it faces shortages in personnel due to an increased workload that is often difficult to predict in advance. Knowledge of procurement law and market awareness are considered some of the most important skills for the job, but profiles with strong competences in both public procurement and digital technology are limited.

A series of interviews with various stakeholders show that there are no mechanisms or strategies in place to promote the professionalisation of the workforce working on ICT procurement. The assessment of the public procurement workforce has never been carried out in the field of ICT procurement. There are no competency models nor capability-building system aligned with competency models. Such competency models provide a strong tool to understand what kind of gaps are present in the workforce, and devise appropriate strategies to address these gaps (e.g. training strategy, recruitment, etc.).

As a starting point, MDG and Information Society could benefit from carrying out two types of assessments: i) current state of play of professionalisation and ii) competencies of the workforce who is in charge of implementing ICT procurement at the entities including the Ministry of Digital Governance and Information Society S.A. These assessments will contribute to measuring the organisational maturity of these entities in the ICT procurement.

Beyond the assessment of specific competences within MDG, the professionalisation of buyers within a given institution is most effective when embedded in an enabling framework at country level. Such an enabling framework gives adequate recognition to public procurement as a standalone profession, and goes hand in hand with the necessary support tools and structures to support procurement professionalisation, i.e. training academies, workshops, pilot initiatives, etc. To assess such enabling framework, the Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS) with its Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of Public Procurement, is a useful instrument to carry out the assessment of the current state of play of professionalisation in procurement (see Box 3.6).

### Box 3.6. MAPS Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of Public Procurement

The Methodology for Assessing Procurement Systems (MAPS) is an international standard and the universal tool to evaluate any public procurement system worldwide. The Supplementary Module on Professionalisation of Public Procurement that allow governments, whether they are central or sub-national, to assess the current state of play of professionalisation of the public procurement workforce. This assessment takes into account professionalisation in following four foundational pillars, based on the MAPS structure:

- Pillar I. Legal, Regulatory, and Policy Framework
- Pillar II. Institutional Framework and Management Capacity
- Pillar III. Public Procurement Operations and Market Practices
- Pillar IV. Accountability, Integrity and Transparency of the Public Procurement System

Source: (MAPS Secretariat, 2021<sup>[16]</sup>), (OECD, 2017<sup>[17]</sup>).

The European competency framework for public procurement professionals (ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>), launched by the European Commission in December 2020, could be used to carry out the assessment of competencies of the workforce. ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> provides practical tools to advance the professionalisation agenda such as the competency matrix including 30 key competencies for public buyers, a self-assessment tool for each competency, and generic training curriculum (See Box 3.7). Greece could use or customise these 30 competencies as a basis for a self-assessment designed to highlight specific gaps in procurement competence. For example, the proficiency descriptions of C7: *Category specific* could be tailored to the case of ICT procurement. These tools of ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> are also available in Greek language.

### Box 3.7. European competency framework for public procurement professionals (ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup>)

ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> is a tool designed by the European Commission to support the professionalisation of public procurement. ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> consists of three elements:

- Competency Matrix, which defines 30 procurement-related and soft competences along four proficiency levels;
- Self-Assessment Tool that allows users to set targets for the different competences and assess their proficiency levels against them and identify any gaps;
- Reference Training Curriculum which lists all learning outcomes that public procurement professionals should know and be able to demonstrate after having attended a training for a certain proficiency level.

The Competency Matrix describes 30 competencies (knowledge, skills and attitudes) that public procurement professionals should demonstrate in order to perform their job effectively and efficiently and carry out public procurement procedures that bring value for money. The competences are grouped in two main categories: procurement specific competences, and soft competences. Each competence is described along four proficiency levels based on the breadth of knowledge and skills: Basic, Intermediate, Advanced, and Expert.

The Self-Assessment Tool is composed of several key elements including a self-assessment questionnaire and a calculation tool for computing assessment results.

The Reference Training Curriculum lists all learning outcomes that public procurement professionals should know and be able to demonstrate after having attended a training for a certain proficiency level.

ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> is a flexible, voluntary and customisable tool. Getting value from ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> does not require using each and every component of the framework, nor does it require the use of each and every competence defined in the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> Competency Matrix.

Source: (European Commission, 2020<sup>[18]</sup>).

As a result of this proposed workforce assessment, Greece would be able to develop a structured capability-building programme for ICT procurement. Priority should be given to the topics related to competencies which were identified as relative weakness of the ICT procurement workforce in the assessment result. Greece could make reference to international good practices such as the ProcurComp<sup>EU</sup> Reference Training Curriculum, or other successful training programmes. The European Training Programme developed by the Austrian Federal Procurement Agency (BBG) provides inspiration for a comprehensive programme dedicated to procurement excellence (see Box 3.8).

### Box 3.8. Setting a curriculum for procurement excellence: Public Procurement Excellence Programme

The Austrian Federal Procurement Agency (BBG), one of the Central Purchasing Bodies (CPB) in Austria, has collaborated with the Vienna University of Economics and Business (WU) to develop comprehensive training programme for procurement experts from different EU Members and EU partner countries, called Public Procurement Excellence Programme (PPE). The EU-sponsored programme has attracted European and international procurement experts since its first edition in 2019-20. A second edition is scheduled for 2021-22.

This programme offers a unique combination of an academic and a practical approach. The goal is to provide state-of-the art knowledge, tools and methods for modern public procurement, including policy objectives like SME-friendly, green and innovative procurement. PPE 2021 contains the following 32-day modules:

**Table 3.2. Modules of Public Procurement Excellence Programme 2021**

No	Module	Duration (day)
1	Efficient Tools for Centralised Public Procurement	1
2	Introduction to Public Procurement	1
3	Characteristics of Centralised Public Procurement	1
4	Legal Framework of Public Procurement	1
5	International Organisations and Public Procurement	1
6	Consequences of Corruption in Public Procurement	1
7	Introduction to Innovation Management	1
8	E-Procurement and Digitisation in Public Procurement	1
9	Strategic Purchasing and Supply Chain Management	0.5
10	Business Economics for Public Procurement	2
11	Performance Management	0.5
12	Efficient Tools for Centralised Public Procurement	1

13	Effective Tender & Contract Strategies	2
14	Professional Management of the Tendering Phase	1
15	Project and Process Management	2
16	Importance of Socio-Political Objectives in Public Procurement	0.5
17	Inclusion of SMEs in Public Procurement	1
18	Public Procurement Promoting Innovation	1
19	Sustainable Public Procurement in Practice	1
20	Contract and Supplier Management	1.5
21	Convincing Communication & Presentations	1.5
22	Negotiations in Public Procurement	1.5
23	Establishment of a Sustainable Alumni Network	0.5
24	Focus: Management 4.0	0.5
25	Presentation of Business Projects	0.5
26	Closing Conference & Graduation	0.5

These modules are complemented with additional two modules: Agile Leadership (3 days) and Business project (2 days). The participants can obtain a degree of Certified Public Procurement Expert.

Source: (Austrian Federal Procurement Agency (BBG), 2021<sup>[19]</sup>).

## Monitoring and assessing results

An effective digital transformation requires sound monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to secure benefits realisation, promoting transparency and accountability on investments and expected outcomes. The OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies calls for institutional capacities to monitor progress and assess performance of digital government initiatives as a key mechanisms for institutional learning and feedback for decision-making (OECD, 2014<sup>[20]</sup>), as seen in Box 3.9.

### Box 3.9. OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies: Managing and monitoring project implementation

Reinforce institutional capacities to manage and monitor projects' implementation, by:

- I. adopting structured approaches systematically, also for the management of risks, that include increase in the amount of evidence and data captured in the course of project implementation and provision of incentives to augment data use to monitor projects performance;
- II. ensuring the availability at any time of a comprehensive picture of on-going digital initiatives to avoid duplication of systems and datasets;
- III. establishing evaluation and measurement frameworks for projects' performance at all levels of government, and adopting and uniformly applying standards, guidelines, codes for procurement and compliance with interoperability frameworks, for regular reporting and conditional release of funding;
- IV. reinforcing their public sector's digital and project management skills, mobilising collaborations and/or partnerships with private and non-governmental sector actors as necessary;
- V. conducting early sharing, testing and evaluation of prototypes with involvement of expected end-users to allow adjustment and successful scaling of projects.

Source: (OECD, 2014<sup>[20]</sup>).

Establishing and measuring KPIs of ICT/digital projects can also be complemented by formal evaluation mechanisms to understand and assess user experience with digital services, i.e. user satisfaction metrics. An iterative and agile culture for digital transformation in the public sector embrace the measurement of performance, satisfaction and impact as a feedback loop to learn, improve and deliver better results.

Evidence from conversation with stakeholders indicates that MDG does not have a comprehensive approach to monitor and assess the performance and satisfaction of users with ICT/digital projects. Despite references in the DTB to the relevance of measuring and monitoring results, MDG only has internal and/or anecdotal indicators and has not defined a specific set of KPIs across the development and operation of digital transformation projects. Similarly, MDG lacks concrete mechanisms to track, publish and use such performance information to foster compliance and accountability in the development of ICT/digital projects. The general absence of reliable and timely information on performance also contributes to diffusing ownership between the different departments and units taking part in the process, nor to make these and external stakeholders such Information Society S.A. to deliver timely and effectively.

Stakeholders in the Greek public sector acknowledge that user feedback in internal process and service delivery is limited. Similarly to the evidence and results for Greece in the OECD Digital Government Index in 2020 (OECD, n.d.<sup>[4]</sup>), MDG does not have formal mechanisms to gather user feedback on ICT/digital projects nor to channel this information into the feedback and improvement policies. The absence of such mechanisms impedes to assess the relevance of these projects in the context of increased importance for digital government efforts to be driven by the needs and expectations of users (see Box 3.10 and Box 3.11).

### **Box 3.10. Chile's citizen satisfaction survey**

Since 2015, the Modernisation Secretariat of the Ministry of Finance has focused on increasing the efficiency and efficacy of public institutions as well as citizen satisfaction with public service delivery in Chile. The Secretariat (formerly the Modernisation of the Public Sector Programme) has collaborated with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to fund modernisation projects for key Chilean public institutions, setting specific KPIs in citizen satisfaction to measure the degree of impact and success of the initial ten projects.

In order to assess these projects as well as to facilitate comparative analysis, the Secretariat developed a standardised yet adaptable methodology and survey to capture how satisfied citizens are with the products and services these institutions deliver. Along with providing net and gross satisfaction rates, the survey characterises types of users, channels and products and services. It also determines which specific institutional and/or service delivery attributes have a significant impact on citizens' experience with public services, serving as a powerful tool for high-level officials and policy makers in addressing to what extent service delivery is truly responding to citizens' needs in Chile.

While each Chilean public agency conducts its own citizen satisfaction measurement, a common methodology has been agreed to facilitate comparative and longitudinal analysis while providing strategic insights for service delivery policy making. As of today, and with the endorsement of the Budget Office, the survey has increased its scope, comprising 49 public institutions and covering around 88% of total demand for service delivery in the country (not including health and education services). Institutions are measured every second year, reaching a total of 100 000 surveys conducted to date to capture citizens' perception with face-to-face, digital and/or telephone channels. The methodology, related studies and results in both data visualisations and open data are available at <https://satisfaccion.gob.cl>.

Source: Own elaboration, adapted from OECD (2020<sup>[6]</sup>).

### Box 3.11. Ireland: Client Satisfaction Survey in procurement by OGP

In 2013, Ireland established the Office of the Government Procurement (OGP) to procure eight categories of common goods and services on behalf of public services, including digital technology. OGP also guides policy and procurement standards, integrating both policy and procurement operations into one office.

The OGP carries out client satisfaction survey regularly. The most recent one was carried out in December 2020, with all users of the OGP service contacted via email. A total sample of 386 responded to the survey from a wide range of clients.

The overall results of the Client Survey were very positive with gains against baseline figures experienced across the vast majority of areas measured. The survey demonstrates high levels of awareness by clients of what OGP does and clarity in how to engage with the organisation. It also shows what OGP services are being most used by clients, identifies the reasons stated why some clients are only using some of the organisation's services, draws out what services drive highest levels of satisfaction, and indicates areas for further improvement. Overall client satisfaction has improved in the two years since the last survey, with the professionalism and responsiveness of staff rated highly. 41% of clients say they would highly recommend the OGP. 83% of clients see the benefits of using OGP services and 90% of respondents who used OGP solutions saying they will do so again.

On the other hand, OGP identified a number of key areas for development, including; further development of the OGP website, communication of expectations on procurement timelines, reducing complexity in procurement processes, communicating the benefits of using OGP arrangements and ensuring future frameworks are targeted to meet needs of, and widely communicated to, potential users.

Source: (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2021<sup>[21]</sup>).

Furthermore, it is essential to evaluate the effectiveness of procurement procedures by MDG to drive performance improvements. Measuring and analysing performance indicators contributes to identifying potential bottlenecks in public procurement processes, which might hinder the smooth implementation of public procurement procedures. Availability and clarity of data are key elements to calculate performance indicators not only for monitoring the progress of procurement processes but also for making better policy in general. Indeed, the OECD Recommendation on Public Procurement calls upon countries to collect consistent, up-to-date and reliable information on public procurement, and develop indicators to measure performance, effectiveness and savings of the public procurement system to support strategic policy making on public procurement as seen in Box 3.12 (OECD, 2015<sup>[15]</sup>).

### Box 3.12. OECD Recommendation of the Council on Public Procurement: Evaluation

**X. RECOMMENDS** that Adherents drive performance improvements through **evaluation** of the effectiveness of the public procurement system from individual procurements to the system as a whole, at all levels of government where feasible and appropriate.

To this end, Adherents should:

- I. **Assess periodically and consistently the results of the procurement process.** Public procurement systems should collect consistent, up-to-date and reliable information and use data on prior procurements, particularly regarding price and overall costs, in structuring new



needs assessments, as they provide a valuable source of insight and could guide future procurement decisions.

- II. **Develop indicators to measure performance, effectiveness and savings of the public procurement system** for benchmarking and to support strategic policy making on public procurement.

Source: (OECD, 2015<sup>[15]</sup>).

As discussed above, the e-procurement system provides limited data that can be used for monitoring purposes, particularly given that it lacks an 'open' format. In fact, the system does not allow to collect the information related to public procurement in open and machine-readable formats with friendly search functions. Therefore, it is difficult for users to collect the information on ICT procurement from ESIDIS.

Furthermore, based on conversation with stakeholders it emerges that structured monitoring and evaluation system of public procurement has not been in place in the field of ICT procurement in Greece. MDG does not publish the annual report on ICT public procurement, nor sets up performance indicators to measure performance of ICT public procurement. This situation prevents MDG from tracking and evaluating the performance of individual procurement procedures as well as the ICT public procurement system as a whole. Greece has a great opportunity to improve the data availability and set up performance indicators related to ICT procurement. The Ministry of Digital Governance manages the data on individual procurement processes of ICT procurement in ESIF in the EXCEL format in including useful datasets which, however, involve the complexity in interpretation.

Greece could benefit from setting up performance indicators to measure performance of ICT procurement, and publishing the annual report on ICT procurement, under the initiative of MDG. The monthly and annual reports published by the Ministry of Development and Investments as well as the annual report on public procurement published by other countries like Serbia will provide insights not only on developing performance indicators but also on the structure and performance indicators to be included in the annual report of ICT procurement (see Box 3.13).

In addition to regular reporting on ICT procurement activities, MDG is recommended to set up a system of KPIs to track individual procurement procedures. This is particularly important in the context of upcoming projects from the RRF, as MDG will need to have a comprehensive overview of the status of digital transformation projects. Suggestions for specific performance indicators will be discussed in the final section of Chapter 5.

### **Box 3.13. Annual report on public procurement in the Republic of Serbia**

The Public Procurement Office of Serbia issues an Annual Report on Public Procurement in the Republic of Serbia with the purpose of implementing monitoring over the application of public procurement legislation. The report shall be published and submitted to the Government and National Assembly no later than March 31 of each fiscal year, in accordance with Article 180 of the Public Procurement Law (LPP).

The report shows a wide range of information and statistics on public procurement procedures implemented in Serbia in a very concise way. The indicators include: Number of procurement procedures, Procurement volume and its share as a share of GDP, breakdown by sector, breakdown by types of public entities, breakdown by region, largest public entities, breakdown by procurement category (goods, services, and works), breakdown by public procurement procedures (such as open procedure, negotiated procedure without publication of a call for tenders etc.), breakdown of the legal

basis for the application of the negotiated procedure without public announcement calls, breakdown of the legal basis for the application of the exceptions, Number of procurement procedures and procurement volume of framework agreements and their share against the total, five most common categories of framework agreements, Number of procurement procedures and procurement volume of centralised public procurement and their share against the total, five most common categories of centralised public procurement, Number and volume of contracts awarded to SMEs, Number and volume of contracts awarded to female-owned businesses, share of contracts awarded to foreign bidders, share of contract award criteria (lowest price criteria versus MEAT criteria), and share of completed and suspended procurement procedures.

The report also describes the activities of the Public Procurement Office: EU accession process, international co-operation, certification of the public procurement workforce, trainings, help desk, opinions and interpretation of the LPP, irregularities and measures taken to prevent and detect corruption, conflicts of interest and other irregularities.

Source: (Public Procurement Office of the Republic of Serbia, 2021<sup>[22]</sup>).

## Note

<sup>1</sup> See: <https://mindigital.gr/>.

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