Executive summary

Greece has embarked on an ambitious digital transformation of the public sector to achieve a more sustainable, proactive, and people-centred public governance. The Greek government has progressively implemented digitalisation reforms, as well as strategic approaches to the public sector's operations and services to embed digital government policy and culture and seize related opportunities.

In line with OECD recommendations, Greece is working to strengthen the governance for digital government. With the creation of the Ministry for Digital Governance (MDG), bringing all efforts on digital government, economy, and society under the remit of a single entity, the country's public sector has improved its capacity to steer relevant actors across sectors for a coherent digital government transformation.

The MDG's digital strategy, the so-called Digital Transformation Bible (DTB), prioritises digitalisation as a strategic tool, leveraging cross-governmental and cross-sectoral digital technologies and data to boost national prosperity and well-being. The DTB highlights holistic, strategic efforts (including common enablers and sectoral digital transformation projects) to drive the Greek digital government ecosystem into a new era. These advancements have fuelled demand for increased alignment, coherence, and co-ordination to carry out ICT/digital projects. Although these efforts illustrate the political priority given to digital transformation, persistent issues – and new challenges - require continued attention.

Key Findings

- Silo-based operations within and outside the MDG limit progress on reaping the opportunities of the digital transformation for the public sector.

- Past efforts to digitalise government have failed at the procurement stage, thus generating wasteful costs, forgoing benefits, and undermining broader strategic and policy efforts. Greek authorities need to ensure that the implementation and delivery of digital transformation projects is mastered end-to-end.

- Digital reforms require solid foundations to avoid duplication of efforts. This implies continuous co-ordination and dialogue with horizontally competent and sector-specific authorities. Each public authority already collects data on the performance of its functions. Yet the agility to reuse and exchange these data remains insufficient. Moreover, authorities tend to collect the same data for their individual data systems (when they exist) without considering the possibility of data interoperability. This not only creates data redundancy but is also costly for both citizens and the state. The proper design of technical solutions requires careful analysis and understanding of existing administrative and regulatory processes and the identification of opportunities.

- The planning and funding process shows potential for rethinking, securing alignment in funding allocation and using project approval to guarantee coherence in project delivery.

- Public procurement processes pose particular challenges to the implementation of digital transformation projects. The evidence showed lengthy implementation periods constraining agility in delivery, lack of strategic use of advance procurement practices and missed opportunities in centralised procurement for digital technologies.

- Greece could also benefit from enhanced public sector capabilities in terms of understanding user needs, digital talent and skills availability, and procurement competencies. Finally, Greece can benefit from adopting monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including specific key performance indicators to track progress and outcome realisation.

- The willingness to transform, reflected in recent institutional modifications, and the governance challenges in developing digital and ICT projects, are an opportunity for Greece to embrace strategic approaches to digital government investment. These approaches should consider whole-of-government co-ordination mechanisms and renewed capacities in planning, procuring, implementing, and monitoring initiatives in the public sector to foster agile project delivery.

Key policy recommendations

Strengthening governance for digital government in Greece

- Establish a Project Management Office (PMO) to support the development of a coherent, organic, and structured management of ICT/digital projects.
- Set out clear roles, responsibilities, and mandates for all relevant stakeholders within MDG (from policy setting to project management).
- Promote further co-ordination among relevant authorities involved in digital government, public procurement and public budgeting for digital/ICT project procurement and implementation, including through data interoperability frameworks.

Planning and funding digital investments

- Adopt an ICT portfolio management system for digital/ICT investments, including project approval processes' redesign, and the establishment of clear, transparent prioritisation criteria.
- Integrate ICT portfolio system into the governance of digital government, through existing bodies, which oversee DTB implementation (i.e., Steering Committee and Executive Network).
- Secure coherent funding management of digital projects – to ensure investment decisions remain independent of funding mechanisms.

Procuring and delivering ICT/digital

- Promote the strategic use of public procurement – to increase digital/ICT procurement efficiency and effectiveness.
- Strengthen early market engagement practices to make the most of opportunities, offered by legal frameworks,to engage with market actors during procurement processes' preparation.
- Encourage the use of quality criteria within procurement evaluation (to include functional specifications, rather than simply descriptive and/or technical) to deliver value in ICT products and services procurement processes.
- Foster the use of advanced procurement practices, such as dynamic purchasing systems (DPS) and public procurement of innovation (PPI) to improve standardised goods/tailored solutions purchasing.

- Facilitate access to a supplier-base of start-ups/innovative SMEs (including GovTech communities).

Monitoring and evaluating digital investments

- Define a comprehensive set of key performance indicatorsto assess and monitor digital/ICT projects' development.
- Establish open communication channels with relevant stakeholders, and the wider community, to disseminate digital/ICT projects' performance data.
- Establish a common and standardised methodology to measure user satisfactionto advance systematic and unified evaluation mechanisms that assess users' experience with digital solutions.

Strengthening public sector capabilities

- Strengthen line ministries' capabilities (via digital standards) – to support coherent and aligned implementation of ITC/digital projects: (1) data sharing; (2) agile project management; (3) digital identity; (4) notification systems.
- Promote a user-driven culture throughout the public sector to guide digital transformation projects.
- Encourage training and capacity-building (via agile project management, user research, and user satisfaction measurements).
- Increase capacities to target advanced procurement practices and digital skills (e.g., gap-assessment indicators, pilot promotion)to test specific, scalable approaches.
- Examine the scope for ICT procurement centralisation to benefit from efficiency gains, greater specialisation, and related capacity improvements.

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