

“21EL03 – Acceleration of the Greek digital transformation”

October 2023

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Project Identity

Project “21EL03 - Acceleration of the Greek digital transformation” (Ares/2021/ 7575365) under the Contribution Agreement REFORM/IM2021/025 between the European Commission, Directorate General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) and Expertise France.

This Project was the continuation of projects previously implemented by Expertise France: “Support Public Administration and its Digital Transformation” (Ares(2020)804462), November 2019-July 2021, “Support the Greek Public Administration Reform” (Ares(2017)5266672), November 2017-October 2019, and “Support the Greek Central Administration Reform” (Ares(2016)2082179), May 2016-October 2017. The general and specific objectives are set in accordance with Articles 3 and 4 of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) Regulation 2021/240 respectively and the results of the evaluation of the previous project.

The Project was implemented through close cooperation with the Greek authorities and particularly with the Ministry of Digital Governance, as project beneficiary and lasted for 22 months (8 December 2021– 7 October 2023).

Expertise France in co-operation with



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Ministry of Digital
Governance

(Beneficiary)

European Commission,
Directorate General for
Structural Reform Support
DG REFORM

(Contracting Authority)

France

(Reform Partner)

The Greek government in 2019 set Digitalisation as the key element of its Public Administration reform mix

The Need

To support Greece in its efforts to strengthen institutional and administrative capacity - including at regional and local levels – while transforming its public administration.

To improve the Ministry of Digital Governance’s coordination capacity and support the implementation of digital initiatives in key policy areas.

To deliver activities linked to the implementation and monitoring of the national digital strategy “Digital Transformation Book” and/or legislative or policy documents (e.g., Artificial Intelligence, Digital Skills Strategic Plan)

Role of Expertise France

Support the
implementation of
initiatives

Ensure the provision of all
necessary human resources for
the management of the Project

HOW

Designing Developing Implementing Reforms

Mandate of the Ministry of Digital Governance

The Ministry of Digital Governance aspired to introduce and implement digital reforms, which in the long run can deliver tangible change and new opportunities to citizens, communities and businesses.

1

A digital state that offers better services to citizens for all their life events

2

Increased competitiveness of the Greek businesses through digital innovations

3

Improvement of the digital skills of all citizens

Project Architecture

Outcome 1

Improved MDG's coordination and capacity on the implementation and quality of the project portfolio of the digital transformation

Outcome 2

ICT initiatives are implemented in key policy areas according to the DTB

Outcome 3

The Digital Skills Strategic Plan is implemented

Outcome 1

Improved MDG's coordination and capacity on the implementation and quality of the project portfolio of the digital transformation

Recommendations to improve the design and management of ICT public procurement and contract implementation

An overwhelming number of projects form the digital transformation portfolio of the government between 2021-2026. The MDG, line ministries, as well as managing authorities, need support during all the stages of the portfolio life cycle.

- ✓ Supported the MDG in drafting and defending business cases, conducting business analyses, identifying stakeholders and documenting their needs
- ✓ Conducted maturity studies
- ✓ Supported ICT contract implementation
- ✓ Delivered targeted studies related to the project lifecycle and the design of processes and tools around it

Outcome 1

Improved MDG's coordination and capacity on the implementation and quality of the project portfolio of the digital transformation

Capacity building for better coordination and improved implementation efficiency of the digital transformation portfolio

Support the MDG and other beneficiaries to better design ICT projects and accelerate their implementation with actions accompanied by targeted capacity building activities

- ✓ Set up a central support Working Group
- ✓ Provided training to Working Group members
- ✓ Organised capacity building workshops to empower the Working Group
- ✓ Organised and conducted “service design” trainings for DTB beneficiaries

Outcome 1

Improved MDG's coordination and capacity on the implementation and quality of the project portfolio of the digital transformation

Implementation of priority Recommendations from Strategy Assessment initiative

The MDG prioritised the establishment of a methodology on the monitoring of the DTB itself, and the introduction of a high-level Action Plan to link digital transformation objectives to specific DTB initiatives.

- ✓ Defined quantifiable targets & KPIs for each strategic objective of the DTB
- ✓ Proposed a list of key transformation projects / programmes to form the core of the strategy implementation drivers
- ✓ Created a high-level Action Plan with uniform descriptions, proposed benchmarks, KPIs and roadmap, as a “companion document” to the DTB
- ✓ Implemented Recommendations under Topic A.5 “Proper Strategic Planning” of the assessment
- ✓ Implemented Recommendations under Topic D.15 “Existence of a consistent measurement and monitoring framework for DTB” of the assessment

Outcome 2

ICT initiatives implementation in key policy areas according to the Digital Transition Book

Recommendations on the creation, deployment, operation and coordination of Digital Innovation Hubs Network as the main backbone for supporting innovation and digitalization for SMEs and the public sector

The MDG promoted digital innovation in the public sector and coordinated the Digital Innovation Hubs' (DIH) ecosystem in Greece.

- ✓ Developed a coordination charter & deployment plan
- ✓ Supported the design of procedures for the national funding part of European DIH
- ✓ Elaborated a performance monitoring framework (KPI based) & action plan

Outcome 2

ICT initiatives implementation in key policy areas according to the Digital Transition Book

Development of the 5th national action plan on open government

The MDG engaged more stakeholders, especially from the citizens' viewpoint, to identify relevant good practices from other EU member states and to expand its activities beyond just openness of data.

- ✓ Defined stakeholders and their engagement and facilitated the formulation of a participatory 'forum'
- ✓ Presented good practices from other countries
- ✓ Provided recommendations for the definition of new open government commitments' activities
- ✓ Provided recommendations for the preparation of the action plan & its monitoring

Outcome 2

ICT initiatives implementation in key policy areas according to the Digital Transition Book

Definition of objectives and feasibility assessment of priority 'Smart Rural Areas- Smart Villages' actions, to promote sustainable development and quality of life in rural Greece

The MDG planned the identification of specific actions related to the use of ICT and cutting-edge technologies (*e.g. smart and precision agriculture, smart and remote medical care, distant lifelong learning, smart and sustainable tourism, distant cultural development*) aiming to promote sustainable development and quality of life in rural Greece and to increase the efficiency in the delivery of national and European policy goals.

- ✓ Identified and prioritised objectives of the “Smart Rural Areas – Smart Villages” initiative, as defined in the DTB, and proposed corresponding actions
- ✓ Conducted an external environment analysis to prioritise objectives
- ✓ Conducted feasibility studies and prepared guidelines

Outcome 2

ICT initiatives implementation in key policy areas according to the Digital Transition Book

Recommendations to promote AI technology and ensuing automation in both the public and private sectors in terms of establishing a coherent legal framework, domain specific action plans, and public sector ICT system readiness

Identification of key policy areas that could benefit from AI applications, recognition of similar examples from other countries.

- ✓ Provided recommendations for designing and implementing the National AI Observatory
- ✓ Provided guidelines for the implementation of projects with specific AI components
- ✓ Provided a methodological framework for the assessment of technological readiness

Outcome 3

Implementation of the Digital Skills Strategic Plan

Recommendations on drafting the Digital Skills Business Plan, including Actions on promoting Digital Citizenship

The Digital Skills Strategic Plan (DSSP) was revised following input from key stakeholders. The DSSP identifies strategic pillars and objectives for the enhancement of digital skills and competences of citizens, and forms an integral part of the DTB and the government's digital transformation reform efforts.

- ✓ Conducted stakeholder analysis, consultation and prioritisation
- ✓ Designed activities
- ✓ Proposed an action plan and a deployment methodology, as well as KPIs to measure performance

Outcome 3

Implementation of the Digital Skills Strategic Plan

Recommendations on creating the Digital Skills Profile Framework & capacity building initiatives for public sector stakeholders as well as on establishing a methodology and specifications for the design of:

- a) high-quality educational & training courses on digital skills for adults and
- b) digital skills programs for vulnerable population groups

Targeted support and capacity building activities to empower key public sector stakeholders, to promote the deployment of digital profiles and the development of effective educational and training programs based on those sectoral profiles.

- ✓ Developed a 'Digital Skills Profiles Framework' as the basis for development of solutions and effective educational and training curricula
- ✓ Organised and implemented capacity building initiatives for public sector stakeholders to ensure the optimum and homogeneous development of educational and training activities that aimed at enhancing digital skills
- ✓ Defined methodology for e-learning course design based on the 'Digital Skills Profile Framework'
- ✓ Provided recommendations for the creation and deployment of educational & training programs for vulnerable population groups

Activities

During the implementation of the Project, the following working groups & events were organised:

Working groups per Outcome

- Outcome 1

16 working group meetings

- Outcome 2

14 working group meetings

- Outcome 3

18 working group meetings

Workshops, study visits, and other events

Technical Meetings of the Executive Network for Digital Transformation

185 participants

Study visit to Paris

7 participants

Consultation Days for the Executive Network for Digital Transformation

220 participants

Digital profiles workshop

21 participants

Service Design Sprint

31 participants

Key implementation aspects

Cooperation with the beneficiaries was regular and stable, and a high level of involvement of several stakeholders was achieved in all project activities

The results of the mid-term evaluation of the technical support action, which was delivered in March 2023, provided a good insight on project implementation and recommendations on its improvement

Lessons learned

- ✓ Sustaining reforms requires long-term commitment and political will from leaders at various levels of government.
- ✓ Changes in political leadership or shifting priorities can disrupt the continuity of reform efforts.
- ✓ Ensuring sustained support from political leaders and building a consensus across different stakeholders is essential to maintain momentum.
- ✓ Resistance to change within the existing institutional framework can pose a significant challenge to sustaining reforms.
- ✓ Bureaucratic structures and processes, resistance to new ways of working, and entrenched interests can hinder the implementation and continuation of reform initiatives.

Key considerations for the future

- ✓ Commitment and follow-up by the Greek authorities of the results achieved is key to the successful implementation of the reforms. It is clear that the political dimension of the actions receiving technical support and the numerous levels of interaction require sustained commitment and dedicated follow-up from all parties and at all stages of implementation.
- ✓ Strong follow-up mechanisms to ensure continuity in the implementation of the reforms beyond the lifespan of the technical support are essential, as well as links to alternative sources of financing reforms managed by the Greek authorities (e.g. actions co-financed by EU Funds or projects implemented under the Greek Recovery and Resilience Plan). Also, improved circulation of information within the administration, allowing for better penetration of the reforms at all levels and improving coordination and synergies.



Activation of Executive Network
of Digital Transformation

*Athens
February 2023*



Design Sprint Workshops

Athens
September 2023



Study Visit

Paris
March 2023