Funded by the European Union

21HR28 – DEVELOPMENT OF THE COORDINATION MECHANISM TO SUPPORT E-GOVERNANCE POLICY COHERENCE

Project summary

Project funded by the European Union via the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) of the European Union and implemented by the OECD, in co-operation with the European Commission.

This report has been delivered in April 2023, under the EC Framework Delegation Agreement REFORM/IM2021/005.

01 Project scope

SESSION 2: Beneficiary, objectives and impact

Beneficiary:

Croatia´s Central State Office for Digital Society Development (CSODSD), with positive benefits to other public bodies

Support Croatia with the purpose of:

- Improving the **governance** of the digital transformation of the public sector through **better co-ordination and interoperability** (link with proposed reforms/subcomponents of Croatia's draft Recovery and Resilience plan (RRP), and TSI Regulation, Art. 4).

Impact

- **Increase the maturity of the Croatian government's digital government policy, resulting in better services for citizens and businesses**

SESSION 2: Project outcomes (key components)

Outcome 1: Enable the Central State Office for Digital Society Development (CSODSD) to **establish a functional and efficient management and co-ordination model for public digitalisation initatives.**

- Coherence in the identification, prioritisation, selection, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of digital government projects
- Governance of digital government projects (regulations, institutional frameworks, co-ordination processes)
- Supply management and procurement processes
- Technological capabilities, policies, practices, and human and financial resources

Outcome 2: Support the establishment of an interoperable framework for improved digital public services.

- Data governance and interoperability arrangements in the government of Croatia
- Identifying the Croatian base registers, and the related regional and national regulatory frameworks, stakeholders involved, interoperability processes, semantics, and underlying supporting technical infrastructure
- This outcome is structured in two different phases: Phase 1 on critical and core registers and Phase 2 on additional registers considered relevant for interoperability in the broader public sector context

21HR28: Project Outcomes and Outputs

Project

Development of the Co-ordination Mechanism to Support E-Governance Policy Coherence (21HR28)

Output 0. Inception Report

Outcomes

Outcome 1: Co-ordination model for public digitalisation initiatives

Outcome 2: Improved interoperability for digital public services in Croatia

Outputs

- Output 1: Assessment and Recommendations for public ICT/digital projects in Croatia
- Output 2: Draft of Action Plan to improve co-ordination of public digitalisation initiatives
- Output 3: Proposal for digital government investment guidelines
- Output 4 Interoperability Report
- Output 5 Interoperability Action Plan
- Output 6. Draft Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF)
- Output 7. Draft definition of the main components of the draft e-GIF Interoperability Framework
- Output 8. Draft requirements for the Marketplace of certified interoperability solutions
- Output 9. Draft Guidelines for Government Service Bus (GSB) Data Exchange Standards

Output 10. Communication materials

- Presentation and factsheet
- Communication report

TIMELINE

August 2021 – April 2023	August 2021	Sept. 2021	Oct. 2021	Nov. 2021	Dec. 2021	Jan. 2022	Feb. 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	August 2022	Sept. 2022	Oct. 2022	Nov. 2022	Dec. 2022	Jan- April. 2023
Output 1 Digital Projects Report																		
Act 1.1 As-Is Assessment																		
Act 1.2 Needs assessment																		
Act 1.3 Gap analysis																		
Act. 1.4 To-Be scenarios																		
Act 1.5 Drafting Report																		
Output 2 Action Plan on co-ordination																		
Act 2.1 Network of civil servants																		
Act 2.2 Drafting Action Plan																		
Act 2.3 Finalising Action Plan																		
Output 3 Proposal for digital governance guidelines																		
Act. 3.1 Drafting guidelines																		
Act. 3.2 Finalising guidelines																	Guidelines due (ENG)	Gudelines due (CR)
Output 4 Interoperability Report	Phase 1					Phase 2												
Act. 4.1 As-Is Assessment																		
Act 4.2 Needs assessment																		
Act. 4.3 Gap Analysis																		
Act. 4.4 To-Be scenarios																		
Act 4.5 Drafting Interoperability report																		
Output 5 Interoperability Action Plan																		
Act. 5.1 Drafting Action Plan																		
Act. 5.2 Finalising Action Plan																		
Output 6: Draft Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF)															Fisrt version			Final version to CSO
Output 7: Draft definition of the main components of the draft e-GIF															Fisrt version			Final version to CSO
Output 8: Draft requirements for the Marketplace of certified interoperability solution															Fisrt version			Final version to CSO
Output 9: Draft Guidelines for Government Service Bus (GSB) Data Exchange Standards															Fisrt version			Final version to CSO
Output 10 Communication materials																		
Act. 6.1 Presentation & Factsheet																		
Act. 6.2 Communication report																		

Proposed AG meetings

02 Key findings

Outcome 1: Current Situation - Key issues affecting coordination in public digitalisation initiatives

Policy and legal perspective

- Limited digital policy coherence
- Need of explicit provisions for monitoring and evaluating digital/ICT initiatives
- Need of awareness of digitalization-related policies
- Need to clarify mandates of responsible institution
- Need to increase accountability of responsible institutions

Governance perspective

- Limited positioning of the CSODDS as the public sector digital transformation champion
- Gaps in capacity and resources within the CSODDS
- Steering of the strategic planning process
- Need to strengthen inter-institutional coordination

Operational and human resource perspective

- Fragmentation in public digital project planning
- Limited of clear and shared project approval and prioritisation criteria and mechanisms
- Underutilisation of guidelines in project management
- Incomplete and disjointed project registries
- Limited digital talent and skills
- Slow and rigid procurement mechanisms
- Lack of shared monitoring process

Outcome 2: Current Situation - Key issues affecting coordination in public sector interoperability

- **The changes of the governance for digital government in Croatia in recent years have surfaced the need for greater coherence at different levels**
- **Interoperability and data governance are multi-faceted and as such the touch upon different aspects, which range from leadership roles and the clear attributions of responsibilities across the public sector**
- **Early findings of the Project surfaced cross-cutting issues affecting interoperability in the Croatian public sector in the broader sense:**
  - need for transition from paper-based to digital processes implied the transfer of existent cumbersome procedures into the digital world
  - the fragmentation of registers lead to inconsistent practices and the proliferation of digital solutions which pose challenges to interoperability at different levels
  - lack of a coherent national interoperability framework supported by the adequate organizational governance and the tools needed to establish, publish, promote and mainstream standards and other elements
  - central tools such as the Government Service Bus (GSB) platform and the Metaregister are not fully tapped upon despite their potential to help addressing existent challenges

A journey towards digital government maturity in Croatia

> The **Strategy for Digital Croatia 2032 i**s a unique opportunity to advance towards a **whole-of-government and human-centric government digital transformation:**

- The recently created coordination bodies – the National Council for Digital Transformation and the Working Group of Civil Servants - reflect the political momentum for digital government and are strategic mechanisms to support the implementation of the strategy

> Recommendations for an **end-to-end approach to digital government investments** provide a comprehensive basis for improved **coherence and alignment in digital transformation projects**

- Further actions are needed to adopt and implement suggested actions and guidelines
- The project reflects the need to advance towards the development (and procurement) of standardized, scalable and interoperable solutions (interoperability)

> Data Governance is foundational to build a **data-driven public sector:**

- The project provides insights and technical specifications for data interoperability, but further efforts are needed regarding strategic and tactical aspects that underpin a whole-of-government approach to govern, share and use data in the public sector.

03

Key recommendations and needed actions: Outcome 1

Output 1: Recommendations for co-ordination model for public digitalisation initiatives

Governance and policy coherence for digital government

- **Create and formalise** a comprehensive governance framework for digital government.
  - Strategic coordination - National Council for Digital Transformation
  - Operational coordination - Working Group of Civil Servants
- **Explore the elaboration** of institutional action plans for their digital transformation.

CSODDS empowered to drive digital government

- **Revise and update** the role/mandate of the CSODDS to lead digital transformation in government
- **Build** project management capacities in the CSODDS to improve the strategic overseeing digital projects
  - **Embrace** the use of innovative public procurement mechanisms
  - **Foster** a culture of agility and experimentation in the public sector

End-to-end approach to digital government investments

- **Establish** an ICT project portfolio process
  - **Leverage** the ICT portfolio process as a strategic management and monitoring tool to steer digital investments
- **Foster** the strategic use of innovative procurement in digital transformation
- **Implement** capacity-building initiatives in digital project management across government
- **Measure** user satisfaction

Output 2: Draft of Action Plan to improve coordination of public digitalisation initiatives

> The Draft Action Plan, to be formalised by the Beneficiary after project's finalisation, includes **64 actions** developed around three sets of recommendations presented in Outcome 1:

- **Governance and policy coherence for digital government**
- **CSODDS empowered to drive digital government**
- **End-to-end approach to digital government investments**

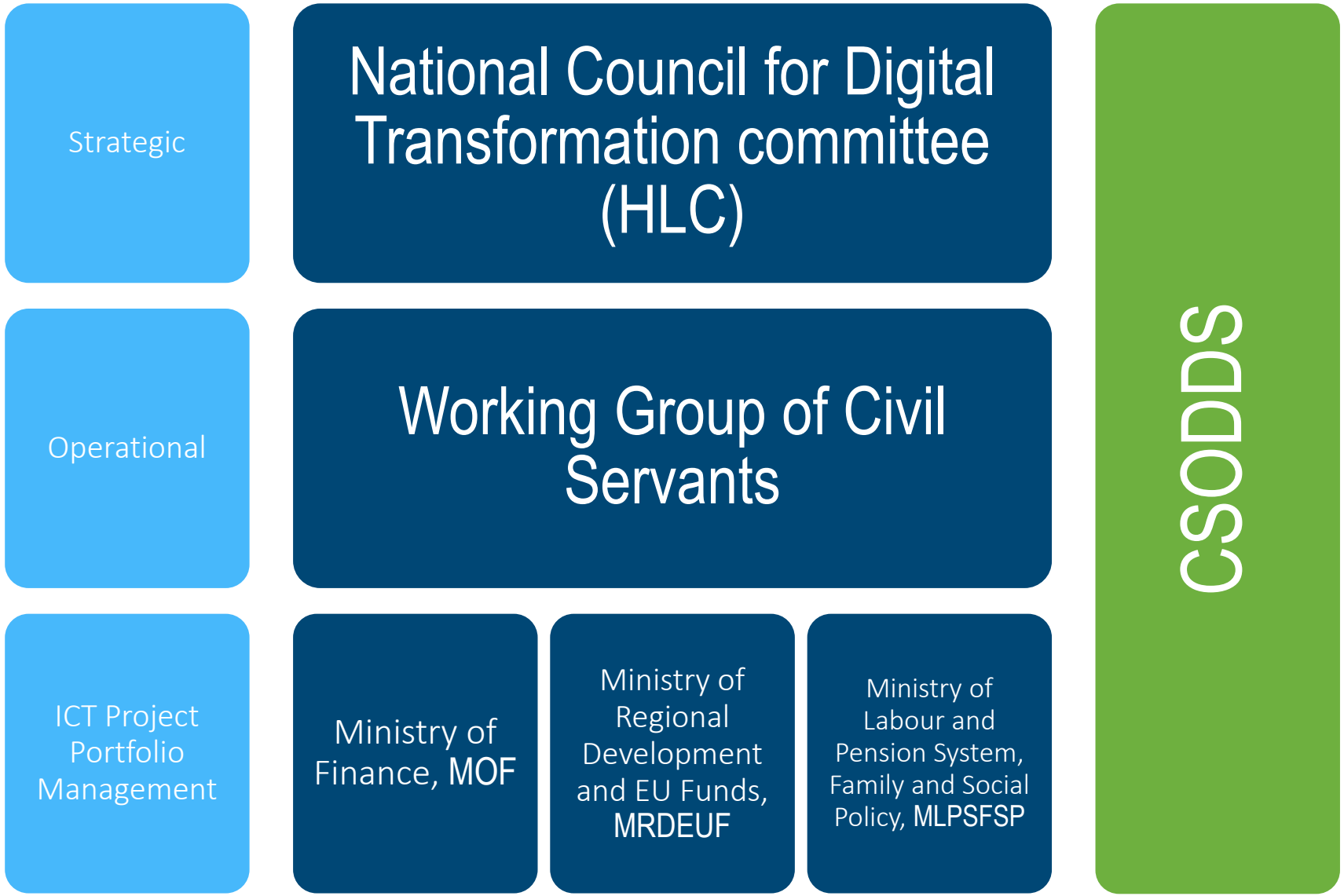
> The Draft Action plan includes a timeline indicating the correlation and prerequisites between actions and provide details included stakeholders involved, timeframe and financial considerations:

Component	Categories	Description
Stakeholders	Leading	Institution responsible for the implementation of the action
	Supporting	Institution with an active role in the implementation to influence the action
	Consulted	Institution with capacity to influence decisions and potential implementation of the action
Timeframe	Short-term	Less than six months
	Medium-term	Between six months and one year
	Long-term	More than one year
Financial	Yes	Funding required
	No	No funding required

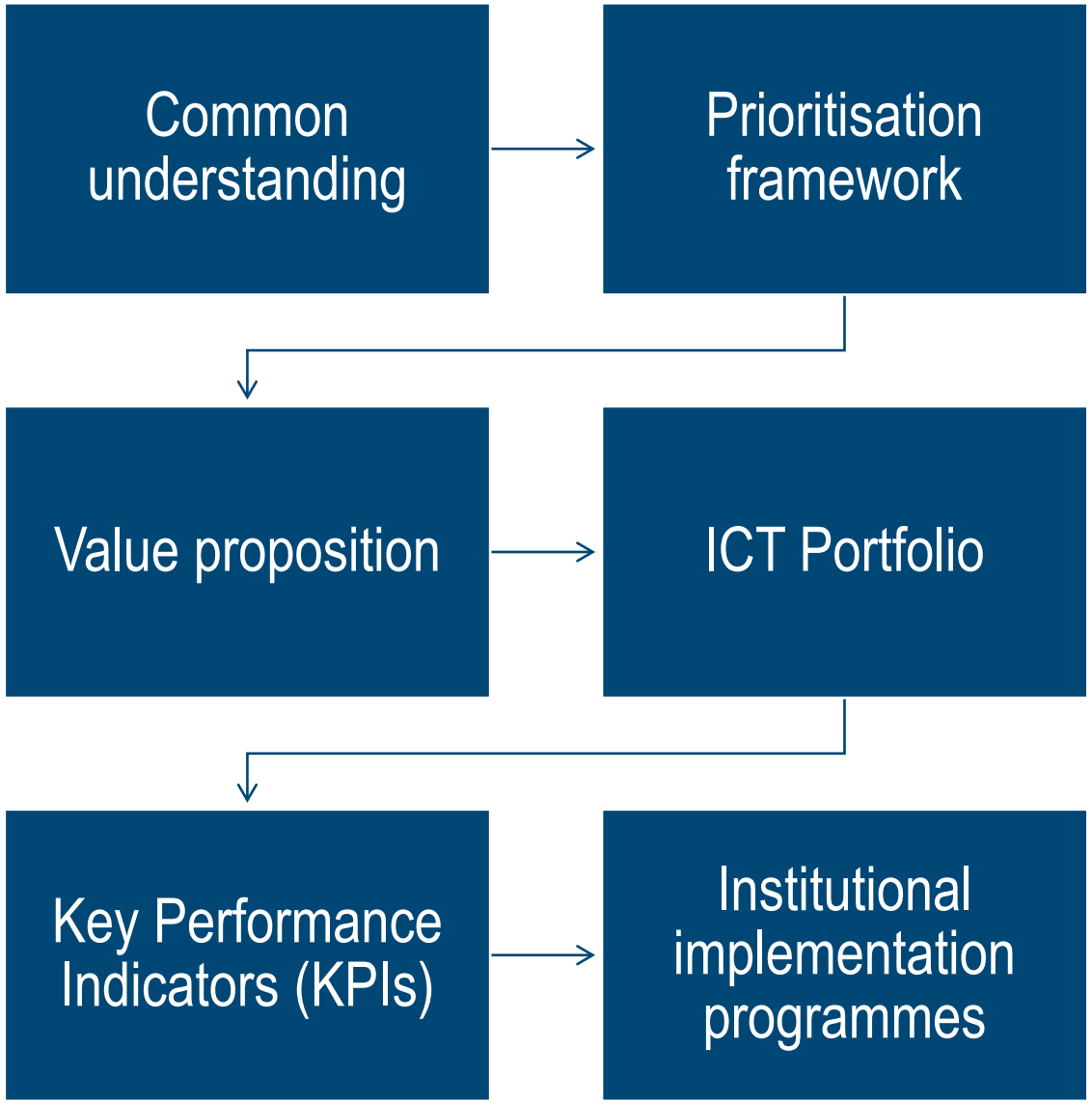
Output 3: Proposal for Digital government investment guidelines

- The purpose of these draft guidelines is to **streamline and improve the management of digital projects and investments** in Croatia's public sector**.**
- Include an overview of **stakeholders' roles**, and a description of the **building blocks** needed to advance the proposed coordination mechanism.
- Propose a **governance model for digital investments** for each phase of the project lifecycle (identification, prioritisation, approval, monitoring and evaluation).

Output 3: Relevant Stakeholders for the Digital government investment guidelines



Output 3: Digital government investment guidelines building blocks



Output 3: Towards an ICT project portfolio management

Common standards

- Digital project definition
- Prioritisation framework (prioritisation principles and the short-term investments priorities)

Identification

- Through the WG project beneficiaries self-report digital projects
- Key input for the prioritised project portfolio

Prioritisation

- Based on the identified projects the CSODDS proposed a prioritised project portfolio for HLC approval

Approval

- Approval process to secure funding based on digital standard compliance and value proposition.
- In collaboration with MOF

Monitoring

- Track digital project implementation, identifying potential risks and informing a proactive decision-making.

Evaluation

- Assessing impact of digital investment projects
- Including user and impact evaluations

04

Key recommendations and needed actions: Outcome 2

Outcome 2: Recommendations for improved interoperability for digital public services

Governance and policy coherence

- **Create and formalise** a National e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF):
  - Including a **governance model** and the publication of **basic components** including:
    - Standards Catalogue
    - Base register catalogue
    - Services Catalogue
    - Semantic Data Models Catalogue

Policy levers for system-wide transformation

- **Embed the e-GIF standards** from catalogues in public procurement procedures in order to foster the adoption of interoperable IT solutions.
  - **Reference the e-GIF standards and building blocks** in public procurement
  - **Create a marketplace** of pre-approved and certified IT solutions

Data Standards

- **Publish registers data as OGD** considering privacy and personal data protection
- **Implement** eDelivery infrastructure
- **Design** a semantic data model in order to group and structure data points
- **Address** data integration on data value chains.

Action Plan : Key Recommendations

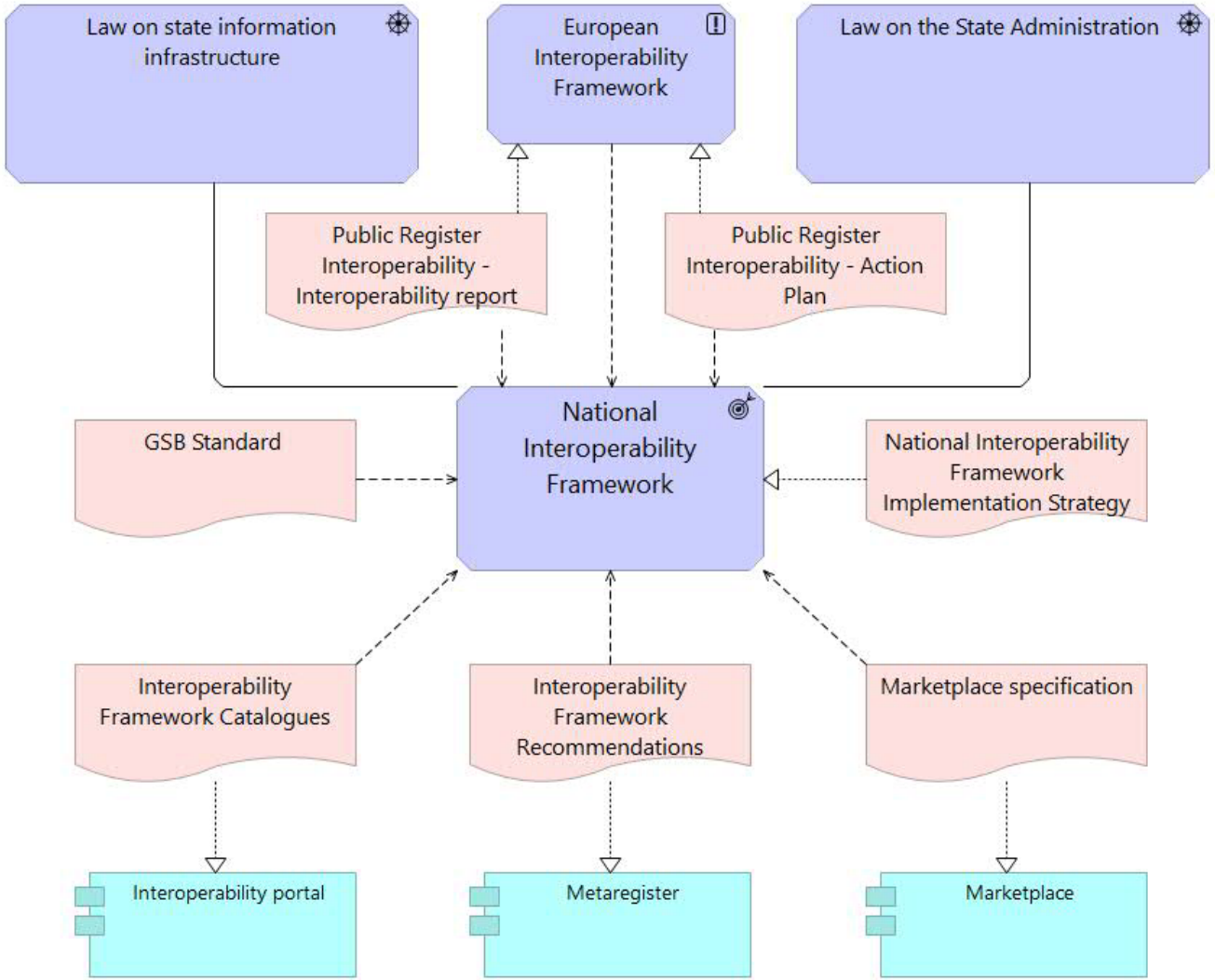
- **Component 1: Interoperability enablers**
  - Objective 1.1: Interoperability framework
  - Objective 1.2: Digital certificates, signatures, authentication and authorization
  - Objective 1.3: Base register data exchange
  - Objective 1.4: e-Business, e-Communication and e-Notarization
  - Objective 1.5: Business entity registration
  - Objective 1.6: Population and Civil Statuses Register
  - Objective 1.8: Legal issues

- **Component 2: Digital Service Enablers**
  - Objective 2.1: Register integration to GSB
  - Objective 2.2: Integrated payroll and government employees master data
  - Objective 2.3: Seamless digital processes
  - Objective 2.4: Register data quality & authentic sources
  - Objective 2.5: Register technical improvements
  - Objective 2.6: BI platform and reporting
  - Objective 2.7: Register data available as open data

Interoperability Framework

- Create and formalize a national e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) to better support government's e-services interoperability management.
- The proposed National e-Government Interoperability Framework should be integrated through a set of basic components and accompanied by a suitable governance model and tools to publish and manage its components.
- Legal interoperability: Implement consistently Once-Only and Digital-First principles and introduce Electronic Forms specifications and Digital Readiness Check when drafting new legislative
- Define legal provisions (e.g in the Law on Digital Information Infrastructure - ZODII) to reference the standards and building blocks from the e-GIF catalogues in public procurement procedures in order to foster the procurement of interoperable IT solutions.
- The creation of marketplace of pre-approved and certified IT solutions could also help to streamline the procurement of IT solutions while securing adherence to central interoperability standards.

Interoperability Framework Structure



Source: the authors

Seamless digital processes

- Obstacles for digital request submission or result delivery should be removed (e.g. replace current paper forms, digitalize certificates issued by the register)
- Services should implement User-centricity, Once-only, and Privacy-by-design principles (e.g. Once-only rule should be implemented and the data should be exchanged instead of requesting customer to produce redundant data.)
- Services should provide seamless end-to-end digital experience. e-Service should be oriented towards a life situation, should be easily understandable, intuitive and simple for use, and user experience should be unified and equalized across all channels.
- Distinguishing between authentic data (to be used as universal source for future needs) and non-authentic data (to be synchronized from authoritative sources) can help to ensure registers provide services that rely on relevant authentic data and a clear synchronization policy .
- The registration process should be integrated with all competent registers (e.g. so that registration in Register of non-profit organizations follows automatically after the primary registration is completed)
- Publish register data as Open Data (except for registers containing personal data)

Digital Certificates, e-Business & eDelivery

- Building blocks should provide standard functionality based on standard technical specifications They should enable usage of all technical solutions that adhere to their standard technical specifications, and integrate with all other EU and national building blocks
- E-Authentication should be integrated with public services and business registers and enable authentication of citizens and economic entities representatives using all EIDAS compliant certificates.
- Implement eDelivery infrastructure (eDelivery standards and access point implementation) and ensure large files data exchange using standard European building block that would be used for all future dataset exchanges from other registers
- There should be interoperable national Qualified Electronic Registered Delivery Services (QERDS) infrastructure open to both government sector and private sector.
- Businesses should register their Qualified eDelivery (QERDS) endpoint as an official communication channel in the business register, whilst government entities should register their service provider in the register defined by Ordinance on office operations

Population and Civil Status Registries

- The civil status registries should be reformed, and a single platform covering all citizen life-events such as birth, citizenship, marriage (including life partnership), divorce, parenthood, and death would need to be created. All data should be presented in a structured way including also relations to family ties.
- The Population register should identify all persons having a place of residence in Croatia and should be updated with authentic data from administrative registers based on the once only principle. The information in the register reflects the current situation
- Citizens' personal data should be synchronized with other registers, such as the register of buildings and dwellings, and land and property
- There is a need to remodel descriptive/textual entries created in civil status register digitisation process and convert them into coded records that will be added to the textual entries using the AI approach.
- These measures would help to make the public administration more efficient, streamline the citizen-government interaction, and design and deliver public services which as more user-driven, seamless and proactive.

Business Register Integration System Platform

- Consider the creation of an integrated national Business Register Integration System (BRIS) platform that would integrate all types of registered business entities (companies, crafts, OPGs, …).
- Integrated BRIS platform would also include the creation of a Unique Business Entity Identifier for every business entity, which could over the time function as EU BRIS identifier.
- Competence over the registration of particular business entity types should NOT be changed
- BRIS identifier would enable instant and seamless integration of registered business entities with other national and EU e-Business service components and authorization mechanisms
- Besides fostering development of e-Business/e-Government practices and solutions, the platform would deliver savings in the long run as multiple registration channels, registers and integrations with register's governing bodies would be removed.

Key Takeaways

- The proposed National e-Government Interoperability Framework should be integrated through a set of basic components published on the interoperability portal, accompanied by a suitable governance model and introduce Digital Readiness Check when drafting new legislative
- Public procurement of interoperable solution should be fostered Marketplace and Standards and Building Blocks Catalogues
- Building blocks based on standard technical specifications should be used to provide standard functionality and coherent user experience.
- Services should implement User-centricity, Once-only, and Privacy-by-design principles and provide seamless end-to-end digital experience
- Creation of an integrated national Business Register Integration System (BRIS) platform that would integrate all types of registered business entities (companies, crafts, OPGs, …) should also include the creation of a Unique Business Entity Identifier
- Businesses should register their Qualified eDelivery (QERDS) endpoint in the business register, whilst government entities should register access points in the Ordinance on office operations register

05 Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt

- Political and leadership support are fundamental for success during the implementation stage
- Early and continuous stakeholder engagement can help to build the ground for the implementation of policy recommendations during and after project closure
- Connecting project findings and recommendations with key policy goals, agendas, government processes and coordination structures can help to formalize Beneficiary's commitment for action and to ensure the sustainability agreements acquired during project implementation
- Bringing local experts with experience in public sector in host country and EU regulations can further bring value to the analysis and better target policy recommendations to the country's needs and context
- Action-oriented deliverables such as Action Plans would benefit from integrating BI tools from the project design (DPD) to help in their implementation after project finalisation


Funded by
the European Union


OECD