

IMPLEMENTATION OF E-COHESION



General characteristics

 No. of **targeted national/regional operational programmes** covering ERDF/CF: **1**

 No. of **e-Cohesion systems**: **1**

At a glance:

e-Cohesion system: e-Toetus

Introduction of the system: Operational since 2015.

Type of the system: National system - it covers the only national OP and does not support any Interreg programmes.

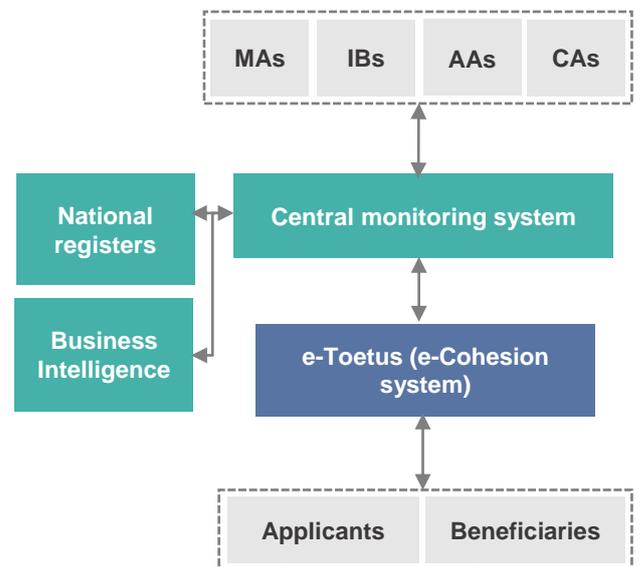
Implementation mode: Highly centralised.

Use during 2021-2027: Ongoing development (based on existing system).

Fund coverage of the system: ERDF CF

Context and structure of e-Cohesion

- E-Cohesion in Estonia is **highly centralised** – e-Toetus is the only system used in the country and covers the only OP "Operational Programme for Cohesion Policy Funding 2014-2020";
- E-Toetus is **highly interoperable** on the national level; it is linked with a **central monitoring system**, through which it is connected with many **national governmental registers**, such as e-procurement system, tax register, business register, etc.;
- E-Toetus is not integrated with the **European Commission's System for Fund Management (SFC2014)**;
- The e-Cohesion system supports the key processes related to implementation as well as the application process;
- Estonia has an all-encompassing digitalisation strategy, which enables them to implement the **once-only encoding** principle on a national level, following the 'single source of truth' logic across public digital administrative databases.



Key principles of e-Cohesion: interoperability and once-only encoding

 **Principles: Extensive reuse of information; no interoperability with EU tools.**

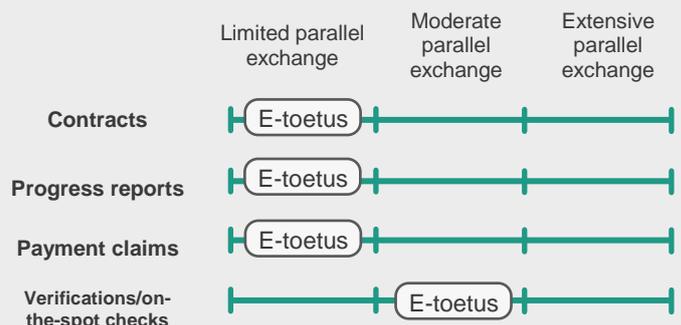
E-toetus **supports once-only encoding on the project-level**. Data and documents provided by beneficiaries are shared with all relevant authorities.

The system **extensively supports the pre-filling of information**:

- Information is pre-filled based on data entered during the project application and during previous steps of the operation and from some national registers;
- The pre-filling of information is highly valued** – all beneficiary respondents using E-toetus aware of this functionality perceived it as useful to their operations (resulting in efficiency gains and reducing the number of errors).

 **Parallel data exchanges: Limited exchange of information outside of the system.**

While being the officially provided solution, the use of E-toetus is not mandatory. **Beneficiaries indicate that they use the system for most key processes very extensively**, with limited data exchanges taking place outside the system.



Implementation of e-Cohesion features



Key processes: Support of project cycle from start to finish.

- E-toetus supports all operations related to project application and implementation (progress reports, modification requests, payment claims and management verifications/on-the-spot checks);
- Payment claims and progress reports are key processes of E-toetus – nearly all beneficiary respondents indicate that they submitted all of their relevant data and documents only through the system for these processes.



Functionalities: Support for all required functionalities, including interactive forms.

- E-toetus supports all functionalities associated with user-friendliness (interactive forms, automatic calculations, checks for incorrect/missing data, system-generated alerts, online status tracking, validity of e-signature and availability of previous data);
- Nearly all beneficiary respondents aware of the functionalities provided by E-toetus consider them as useful, meaning that they result in notable time gains and reduce the number of errors for their users.

Results of the introduction of e-Cohesion

Effectiveness – results and simplification

- The introduction of E-toetus has resulted in **extensive improvements and simplification**;
- Nearly all respondents agree that the introduction of the system has led to significant improvements in various areas and has simplified the way they handle information compared with paper-based processes or email exchanges;
- E-toetus has **extensively improved information exchanges between authorities and beneficiaries** – nearly all respondents report that its use has reduced repeated transmission of the same information, indicating that once-only encoding is highly valued by users of the system.



Efficiency – benefits vs costs

- The **benefits of using E-toetus compared to its costs are extensive** across beneficiaries' key processes;
- Nearly all respondents indicate that the benefits (reduced administrative burden, simplified procedures) of using the system outweigh any associated costs (the time and effort required to use it).

User-friendliness

- E-toetus shows **extensive user-friendliness** – most beneficiaries perceive the system as easy to navigate and operate, and consider it as clear and self-explanatory;
- Indication for high satisfaction among users of e-Cohesion systems is whether authorities continue to develop and improve the existing system. In the case of E-toetus, **most beneficiary respondents feel that the system's functionalities and its overall functioning are being continuously improved, indicating extensive improvements.**

