



Progress Assessment of ESF Support to Public Administration (PAPA)

Summary report

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*Social
Europe*

Progress Assessment of ESF Support to Public Administration
(PAPA)

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List of abbreviations

CEPEJ – European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice

CZK – Czech koruna (currency)

DG EMPL – Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

ERDF – European Regional Development Fund

ESF – European Social Fund

EU – European Union

EUPAN - European Public Administration Network

EUR – Euro (currency)

HR – Human resources

HRM – Human resource management

ICT – Information and communication technology

ISO – International Organization for Standardization

IT – Information technology

NAV – Hungarian Tax Administration

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

NRA – Polish National Revenue Administration

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

OP – Operational Programme

OSS – One-stop shop

RPT – Portuguese Registry of Transplantation

TO11 – Thematic Objective 11

TOMYs – Greek Public Health Care Centres

YDEP - Welfare Benefit Management Service (in Cyprus)

Introduction

This summary report is submitted for the implementation of the specific contract No VC/2018/0771 for the study '**Progress Assessment of ESF Support to Public Administration**' (PAPA). This report was produced on the basis of the technical specifications and the 30 case study reports developed during this project. The report provides a general comparative overview of the main challenges, drivers and obstacles faced in the implementation of 30 EU-supported initiatives that were selected for the PAPA project. It also reflects on the key project achievements (outputs and outcomes), critical success factors, lessons learned, the role of European Social Fund (ESF) support in achieving the results to date and in the implementation of public administration reforms.

According to the technical specifications, **the purpose of the PAPA study** is twofold:

1. To present 30 specific cases of ESF-funded public administration reform and capacity building initiatives, which were implemented in 17 ESF beneficiary countries under Thematic Objective 11 during the programming period 2014-2020.
2. To show the role of ESF financial support to public administration for the purposes of accountability.

The PAPA study is related to the monitoring and evaluation of ESF investments in public administration during the programming period 2014-2020. Out of 18 eligible EU Member States, 17 countries (BG, CY, CZ, EE, FR, EL, HR, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK) programmed EU support to address challenges under Thematic Objective 11 (TO11) amounting to a total of around EUR 4.2 billion. Monitoring reports (annual implementation reports and progress reports) provide financial and factual information on the implementation of ESF TO11 in beneficiary countries. However, **there is much interest in a more in-depth and specific analysis of how ESF support to public administration** under TO11 has been programmed and implemented. The PAPA study responds to this interest.

The 30 ESF projects analysed during the PAPA project correspond to around 4.12% of overall EU funds allocated to TO11 during the current programming period. The PAPA sample of ESF-supported projects is therefore **not representative of the overall implementation of TO11** in beneficiary countries.

The PAPA project differs from other monitoring and evaluation assignments by focusing on a '**storytelling**' approach rather than executing a schematic assessment of ESF support based on a set of evaluation criteria. The 30 case studies produced as part of the PAPA project assess the design and execution of ESF-funded projects in order to demonstrate the contribution made by ESF support towards public administration reforms and institutional capacity building, for the purposes of accountability and learning.

Overall, the PAPA project provides a good opportunity to achieve the following results:

- **Tracking the journeys of ESF-supported initiatives and projects over time**, based on the application of the storytelling approach (the narrative framework, the principles of compelling stories, the standard template and factsheet, etc.).
- **Understanding the national context of public administration reforms and**

capacity-building initiatives, which greatly affects the results of ESF-supported projects in specific countries.

- **Increasing knowledge in relation to the contribution made by ESF financial support** in these countries, by examining specific ESF-supported initiatives/projects, as well as summarising the results of the 30 case studies.
- **Disseminating the results of the PAPA project** to the main stakeholders and to society at large through translations, publications and a final seminar.

The ambition of this project is not only to prepare 30 cases that explore the role of ESF support in the TO11 beneficiary countries, but to also generate new knowledge and insights by producing compelling stories that detail the design and execution of ESF-supported projects. These stories illustrate the ESF’s contribution to public administration reforms and institutional capacity building in the participating EU Member States, in the context of the European Semester and national reform agendas. To achieve the ambitions of the PAPA project, the team implementing the project **worked closely with the services of the Commission and with national authorities.**

The PAPA project encompassed five tasks:

1	Finalising selection criteria and drawing up a long list of potential case studies. The long list of projects for the case studies was developed in close cooperation with the geographical units of DG EMPL and the Managing Authorities of the ESF in beneficiary countries.
2	Selecting 30 case studies, as well as finalising the case study template, factsheet template, case study guidelines and preparing a pilot case study. The approach was outlined in the case study guidelines and draft standard template, which combined the main characteristics of storytelling (focus on project teams and personalisation while tracking the project from its conception to the delivery of results) with the main elements of schematic assessment (intervention logic, results, impacts, etc.).
3	Preparing 30 case studies and factsheets. To complete this task, country experts carried out desk research in relation to a given project, conducting interviews with beneficiary organisations and other stakeholders, and carrying out field visits.
4	Translating the case studies and factsheets, as well as developing a summary report. Under Task 4, all PAPA case studies and factsheets were translated into the national languages of the beneficiary countries.
5	Presenting the project’s results and organising the final seminar in Brussels in February 2020, gathering together the beneficiaries of the 30 projects selected for the PAPA case studies, as well as other stakeholders.

The case study guidelines also provided guidance regarding personal data protection and intellectual property rights (including a specific privacy statement and a standard letter for potential interviewees). Interviewees were acquainted with the specific privacy statement, which outlined where and how their personal data would be used for the purposes of the PAPA project.

The PAPA case studies, unlike a regular schematic assessment, involve a great deal of personalisation concerning the project teams implementing the various ESF-supported initiatives (including their names, positions, quotes). Final versions of the case studies were shared with those interviewees who were quoted or mentioned in the text in order to obtain their consent with regard to the way in which their personal data is represented. In terms of intellectual property rights, the country experts involved were asked to complete a form on pre-existing rights to visual materials, ensuring that the authors were allowed to use the images included in the PAPA case studies and factsheets.

This summary report is divided into eight main sections. **Section 1** provides the executive summary (in English, French and German). **Section 2** describes the general context of ESF support to public administration. **Section 3** presents the main characteristics and outlook of the 30 projects selected for the case studies of the PAPA project. **Section 4** analyses the policy context and major aims of the projects selected, based on the six thematic dimensions of public administration. **Section 5** summarises the intervention logic of ESF support by drawing upon the key characteristics and similarities between the 30 ESF projects selected. **Section 6** focuses on the implementation of the selected projects, including the project teams, the main obstacles faced and the strategies applied to overcome them. **Section 7** discusses the role of ESF support during the previous and current programming periods in the achievement of project results and the successful implementation of initiatives aimed at public administration reform. Finally, **Section 8** presents the overall conclusions of the summary report and the key lessons learnt from the 30 ESF projects analysed.

Summary factsheets for all 30 projects selected for the PAPA project are **annexed** to this report.

1. Executive summaries

1.1. Executive summary

1.1.1. The context of ESF support to public administration and the PAPA project

Given its scale and scope, public administration – the organisation and management of publicly funded resources – has enormous importance for the daily lives of European citizens, and for the performance and prospects of businesses. The quality of a country's institutions, both governmental and judicial, is a key factor determining its well-being.

Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities was added as a key ESF priority in the programming period 2007-2013. Its objective was to go beyond providing technical assistance for the better management of EU funds, and to assist with ongoing administrative reforms in the countries in which institutions were weaker. Altogether, 14 Member States programmed relevant interventions into their ESF Operational Programmes, a total of around EUR 2 billion in funding.

The European Structural and Investment Funds in the period 2014-2020 explicitly encourage and enable Member States to strengthen their governance under TO11: "enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration". In total, 17 Member States programmed support under this thematic objective, amounting to around EUR 4.2 billion. The majority of that funding – EUR 3.6 billion – is provided by the ESF.

Monitoring reports (annual implementation reports and progress reports) provide financial and physical information on the implementation of ESF TO11 in its beneficiary Member States. However, there is much interest in a more in-depth and specific analysis of how ESF support to public administration under this thematic objective was programmed, and how it is being implemented in the beneficiary countries. In response to this, the 'Progress Assessment of the ESF Support to Public Administration' (PAPA) project undertook to provide more specific information by selecting and describing in detail, at operational level, examples of 30 projects spread across 17 beneficiary countries. The PAPA study differs from other monitoring and evaluation assignments because it focuses on a 'storytelling' approach rather than a schematic assessment of ESF support based on a set of evaluation criteria. To achieve the ambitions of this project, the project team worked closely with the services of the European Commission and with national authorities. The result is a set of 30 detailed case stories with corresponding factsheets.

1.1.2. Outlook of the 30 ESF projects selected


The PAPA project covers all Member States that are the beneficiaries of ESF TO11. The selection of case studies ensures the widest country coverage among the 17 target countries.

The selected cases also cover a wide range of potential beneficiaries, ranging from local and regional to national public sector institutions. Since the mandate for public administration reforms and system-wide institutional capacity-building activities is located at central level, many projects selected for case studies under the PAPA study were implemented by beneficiaries at national level. However, some projects were implemented by local and regional

authorities, particularly in those countries in which ESF support to public administration is provided under regional operational programmes (Italy, Portugal, Czechia and Slovakia). The total budget value of the projects analysed in the PAPA project is EUR 237,126,947.62, out of which the total contribution of ESF support is EUR 173,074,605.97. The 30 ESF projects analysed as part of the PAPA project correspond to roughly 4.12% of overall EU funds allocated to TO11 during the current programming period. The sample of ESF-supported projects presented in the PAPA project is therefore not representative of the overall implementation of TO11 in its beneficiary countries.

MS	Project title
 BG	Development of horizontal and central eGovernment systems in relation to the application of the unified model for the application, payment and provision of electronic administrative services
 BG	Transformation of the model of administrative service delivery
 CY	Establishment and operation of the Central Welfare Benefit Management Service (with the YDEP of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance)
 CZ	Support for the professionalisation and quality of the state civil service and state administration
 CZ	Improvement of the administrative capacities of municipalities on the basis of municipal collaboration
 EE	Programme of special task forces
 EE	Top civil service development programme
 EL	Actions to optimise the flow of criminal, political and administrative proceedings
 EL	Operation of local health units (TOMYs) to restructure primary health care
 HU	Simplification of tax administration procedures and the reduction of administrative burdens
 HU	Strategic support for the recruitment of competitive public service personnel
 FR	Territorial centre for economic cooperation
 HR	Strengthening the capacity of public authorities for the implementation of the Act on the Right of Access to Information
 IT	Methods and tools to support public administration reform
 IT	Resilience and development of the national health care system
 LV	Senior leadership training programme in public administration
 LV	Justice for growth
 LT	Improving the business regulatory system
 LT	The development of a mediation system
 MT	Mystery Shopper - Enhanced performance in public administration leading to service of excellence
 PL	Improving management systems and standards as well as a customer service in tax administration
 PL	Standards of service for investors in self-government
 PT	LabX – the public administration experimentation laboratory
 PT	Integrating the Portuguese Registry of Transplantation with hospital computer systems
 RO	Implementation of a system for public policy development in the area of social inclusion
 RO	Building an innovative tool for the development of evidence-based policy making
 SI	Civil Service Competency Model – the establishment of a uniform competency model
 SI	STOP the bureaucracy
 SK	Efficiency of public expenditures
 SK	Measuring the efficiency of public services: one-stop shops

The ESF-supported projects examined as part of the PAPA study also cover the widest possible scope in terms of topics, following six thematic dimensions of public administration.

	Topical focus of the case	Number of cases
	1. Transparency and accountability	2
	2. Civil service systems and HRM	5
	3. Service delivery and e-government	8
	4. Organisation and management of government	5
	5. Policy making, coordination and implementation	7
	6. Improving the functioning of the judicial systems	3

1.1.3. Results and achievements of the projects

To achieve their overall objective of enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and enabling efficient public administration, ESF-supported actions in EU Member States are based on specific objectives and results indicators. The key areas of TO11-related investments in Member States include:

- Improving the quality of policy making through improved monitoring and analytical capacity, streamlined impact assessment, systems for simplifying and reducing red tape, and the modernisation of budgeting.
- Improving administrative service delivery through diversified access, optimised back-office processes, and interoperable e-government solutions.
- Increasing the effectiveness of Member States' justice systems, e.g. through the training of court staff, the introduction of case management systems and the optimisation of workflow.
- Increasing the transparency of public administration and enabling greater stakeholder involvement.
- Improving the quality, integrity and professionalism of the civil service through adjustments to recruitment, career and performance systems, and targeted training.


Actions that are targeted at individuals aim to improve the skills and competences of civil servants and of other relevant stakeholders at all hierarchical levels, covering a range of sectors and fields of intervention. Actions that are targeted at entities aim to streamline the processes involved in public administration (for example, by introducing innovative management and quality assurance methods to improve the quality and delivery of services), as well as creating/improving more effective organisation and structures and developing/introducing new

resources.






Measuring the progress and outputs of the 30 selected projects was not an easy exercise, for multiple reasons. First, most of the projects selected for PAPA are still being implemented, and some are not even at the stage of finalisation. Second, while quantifiable indicators have been formulated for all projects, quite often they also involve intangible achievements or a change in mind set or culture that may be just as interesting (if not more so), but is harder to quantify.




The results and achievements of the 30 projects can be summarised into five clusters.

	<p>1. Studies that enhance the evidence base and improve policy preparation: eight government task forces have been created in Estonia, resulting in a number of legislative changes and additional budgetary allocations. A control room and an advisory board have been established in Italy. These enable follow-up on a national simulation and decision-making model for expenditure planning and the allocation of health expenditure across the country's regions. In Latvia, a number of studies were carried out to assess and evaluate the judicial system. In Romania, the development of a methodology to map existing and required social services, poverty and in-work poverty was carried out as part of a project to provide social indicators, while a 'State of the Nation' project contributed to evidence-based policy making.</p>
	<p>2. Digital solutions: projects include the creation of a single portal for access to electronic services in Bulgaria and the development of a computerised social benefits register in Cyprus. Greece achieved the partial optimisation of court proceedings. The main achievements of the case study on Portugal's health care system so far have been the interconnection of services and the ability to directly download laboratory analyses.</p>
	<p>3. Simplification and service delivery: in Slovakia, 56 'one-stop shops' were set up. In Bulgaria, 1,085 administrative regimes have been reviewed for the purposes of simplification. Over 1,100 inter-municipal cooperation projects have been implemented in Czechia. A total of 94 health care centres (TOMYs) were established in Greece. An in-depth study has been completed into customers' satisfaction, expectations and behaviours in relation to the Polish National Revenue Agency. The Portuguese LabX has prototyped and used experimental solutions in 12 projects. Malta has carried out 'mystery shopper' projects at 650 service sites, resulting in recommendations and follow-up measures.</p>
	<p>4. Training and skills development: a total of 21 workshops and webinars were carried out in Croatia. Estonia's Top Civil Service Excellence Centre was further developed to better target the development of senior civil servants. In the Latvian justice project, 7,375 participants have already been involved in training events. The Latvian project in relation to senior civil servants has engaged 183 senior-level participants coming from 71 institutions. A uniform model for civil service competency was established in Slovenia. The main achievement of the Lithuanian mediation project so far has been the development of the examination programme for mediators, which has fed directly into the training curriculum. The now-completed Polish project on local investment activities included the delivery of training and consultancy activities on the</p>

	<p>implementation of an investor service standard, including the development of a simulation game for management staff.</p>
	<p>5. Development of systems, guidelines and tools: a promotion system and special training/mentoring system for public servants with high potential has been created in Hungary. So far, the Italian <i>RiformAttiva</i> project has produced implementation methods and tools (e.g. competency-based human resource planning or operational guidelines for administrative simplification) for 17 pilot administrations. In Lithuania, recommendations and assessment criteria have been developed to improve the performance of 55 business supervisory institutions. A total of 39 evaluations of investment projects and 19 sectoral expenditure reviews have been delivered in Slovakia. Slovenia's 'STOP the bureaucracy' project has produced encouraging results, with a reduction of EUR 362 million in the annual cost of administrative burdens. This has been achieved by implementing many measures aimed at removing administrative during this project.</p>

1.1.4. Main obstacles to the implementation of the PAPA projects

	<p>Resistance and lack of ownership: the main challenge identified in all PAPA case studies and during their participants' discussion at the PAPA final seminar was bureaucratic resistance to change in many administrations. Creating a sense of ownership and demonstrating the added value of the project were crucial elements in overcoming this hurdle.</p>
	<p>Bottom-up vs top down: finding the right balance between central steering and 'local' ownership is a challenge in all projects involving change. On the one hand, it is necessary to ensure major projects are set on the right trajectory, and progress must be strictly managed. On the other hand, it is vital to ensure sufficient ownership and buy-in is achieved 'on the ground'. Where central project teams coordinated by means of streamlining tasks and ways of doing things, this was often found to limit other stakeholders' room for manoeuvre. When standards for the use of uniform tools and instruments are imposed, this is strongly felt as a taking away of power and autonomy.</p>
	<p>Breaking or bridging the silos: in many cases, working together within or across public administration organisations was one of the aims or prerequisites for the success of a project. Coordination and collaboration are traditionally difficult issues. If collaboration must take place not only horizontally (at the same level of government, between ministries or agencies) but also vertically (between actors at national, regional and local levels), this further increases the challenges of coordination. Finally, the exchange of data was found to be a challenge at the very least, and in some cases a major difficulty.</p>
	<p>Scoping and scaling: in several cases, timelines had to be adjusted due to the delays encountered, but also because of changes to the scope and ambition of the original project.</p>
	<p>Administrative capacity and finding experts: finding suitable expertise and capacity within public administration proved to be a challenge in nearly all projects. This issue of administrative capacity is felt most acutely in IT/digital reforms (or those reforms with a large digital component). Within specialised policy sectors, the issue of attracting and</p>

	<p>allocating the right staff has also turned out to be a major difficulty.</p>
	<p>Relying on external contractors: where internal expertise and capacity was not available, external expertise was often brought in. Managing external experts and expertise has been identified as a challenge in itself. The major challenge when internal capacity is limited is not to become completely dependent on external expertise, and to retain at least some expertise in-house.</p>
	<p>Communication of results: the communication of project results, both at a political level and to society as a whole, was a challenge for many projects. Modern trends in public administration are difficult to explain to the wider public, as their acceptance depends on a level of maturity and openness within society.</p>
	<p>Formalism and procedures: excessive formalism and bureaucratisation were often mentioned in various cases as obstacles to be overcome. These difficulties emerged not only during the implementation of projects, but were already apparent in the preparation and application stages, where the process of writing proposals and applying for funding still appears to be somewhat cumbersome and rigid. Formalism and rigid procedures were felt mostly keenly during the procurement stage(s) of various projects. A mixture (overlap) of general EU regulations regarding the ESF, combined with national regulations, resulted in a number of projects beginning with (severe) delays. Despite simplifications in regulations, the issue of administrative burden still remains a valid problem.</p>

1.1.5. The role of ESF support

<p>Financial contribution – a necessary push for public administration reforms: the financial support provided by the EU has been instrumental in nature, and a driver of change in many countries where administrative reform largely depends on external (EU) funding. During the 2007-2013 funding period, the ESF was already perceived as the main instrument for investments in public administration reform in many countries. This perception has continued into the current programming period. All cases indicate that without ESF financial support, the reforms would probably not have been scheduled, or would have taken place at a slower pace, or on a reduced scale.</p>
<p>Agenda setting and mobilising power: previous research indicates many of the activities initiated and developed by capacity-building projects could not have been set in motion without ESF support. Aside from its purely financial element, such support therefore also has the effect of mobilising and setting agendas. This conclusion is confirmed by the evidence presented in the PAPA case studies.</p>
<p>Continuity and predictability: reform takes time and must ensure sustainability. Due to shifting priorities and changing political agendas in Member States, this continuity is often lacking and reforms may be stopped half-way or even reversed. The continuity and predictability of ESF funding have contributed to the success of the changes that have taken place over recent years. This is certainly the case within the programming period 2014-2020, but also over a longer period of time. Two-thirds of the 30 projects assessed under the PAPA study have a direct or closely related precursor project in earlier EU programming periods.</p>
<p>Focus and nature of projects: as already indicated, ESF support also covers 'soft' aspects and capacity building. State budgetary resources are often limited, and ESF funding for 'soft</p>

changes' represents an important enabling factor – without properly trained and prepared staff, buildings and IT systems would not be of much help to the citizens and businesses using state administrative services.

Intervention logic/project management/setting of objectives: due to the requirements of the ESF, project teams set specific objectives, resources and expected outcomes. These included deadlines and milestones to enable the teams to carry the project through to completion, within often a very short time. The reporting requirements placed on projects by the ESF often prompted project teams to plan their activities carefully, to create a policy community, and to actively engage stakeholders at international, national and local levels.

Access to networks: due to the involvement of ESF funding, authorities in the Member States also gained the benefit of European networks such as the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) and ESF networks coordinated by the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion (DG EMPL).

1.1.6. Conclusions and lessons learned

Importance of ESF funding for public administration reform: all of the case studies indicate that without ESF financial support, the reforms would probably not have been scheduled, or would have taken place at a slower pace or on a reduced scale. It is important to note that ESF support was also linked to the main goals and priorities of the strategic and planning documents at national level in the fields of administration and governance. Aside from its purely financial element, ESF support also has the effect of mobilising and setting the agenda, or at least putting the topic of public administration reforms on the (political) agenda.

Leadership (political/administrative): any reform requires strong leadership. This includes not only the top-down dimension of leadership, but also a more devolved and bottom-up approach to implementing change that is often in the hands of administrative teams. The fact that ESF-supported projects are often steered from a higher political level or from the centre of government does not necessarily ensure political backing – but the demonstration of administrative leadership or effective behaviour by project teams are also important to the successful implementation of the projects.

Involvement of stakeholders in the various phases of the project: The selected projects highlight the importance of involving individual stakeholders and enabling inter-organisational cooperation to ensure successful implementation at various phases of the project. Given the fact that these stakeholders often have the deepest (technical) understanding of the issues involved, and will oversee the actual operation of the systems being developed, their inclusion is crucial.

Clear vision and robust planning, combined with agile implementation: future administrative reform and capacity-building projects can be designed on the basis of rigorous diagnostics, but they should be executed in an agile manner. The planning effort can form a robust basis for project control during the implementation phase. It also acts as a fundamental baseline in formulating a comprehensive communication strategy that addresses key project stakeholders. However, within the existing framework of performance management, the activities and instruments of future administrative reform and capacity-building projects could be specified in a somewhat flexible manner, in order to make them adaptable to possible changes and to enable learning or quick corrective actions.

Teams and capacity: experienced teams with some internal capacities, in which responsibilities are clearly allocated, are necessary for the successful implementation of public administration projects. It is important to emphasise that ESF support has enabled some projects to build dedicated teams and to develop necessary internal capacities. The quality of project teams is a critical factor during the execution of projects. It is therefore important to put in place capable teams and to equip them with the necessary resources and tools (using EU financial and technical assistance if necessary) within the framework of future human resource development strategies and/or administrative capacity roadmaps.

Elaborating a full mix of necessary interventions: it is increasingly recognised that the structural and governance challenges facing EU Member States today require a more elaborate combination of legislative/policy actions and improvements than are provided by existing systems of governance. The ESF-supported projects examined for the PAPA study also demonstrate that it is important to implement necessary changes to the legal and policy framework or public administration system, in order to achieve the intended results of the projects and to make them sustainable.

Ensuring the sustainability of project results: The main challenge is to integrate projects into a new way of working, and to mainstream newly-developed ways of working, interactions with users or changes in behaviour into the everyday culture and operations of public administration. There will no longer be a TO11 under ESF+ during the programming period 2021-2027, except for capacity building in the field of employment, education and training systems, social inclusion and protection, as well as health systems and services. This will make it important to leverage all available EU or national funding to maximise the benefits of reform or capacity-building projects in the future.

Demonstrating added value: to ensure the buy-in of relevant stakeholders, projects need to be promoted internally (within public administration) and externally (in relation to service users and the general public). The main challenge indicated in all PAPA cases was the resistance to change of certain administrative elements. Creating a sense of ownership and demonstrating the added value of the projects are indicated to be crucial elements in their success. It is also important to effectively communicate the results of the projects, both at a political level and to society as a whole.

Coordination and knowledge sharing: another lesson learned from the PAPA projects is the need to establish effective inter-institutional collaboration at the outset of the project. This is particularly true in cases where collaboration is required not only horizontally (at the same level of government) but also vertically (between different levels). Detailed coordination arrangements need to be put in place.

The potential for knowledge sharing should be fully exploited in order to maximise buy-in among civil servants, and to overcome 'departmentalism'. Access to international experts and the wider availability of centrally pooled country practices at the EU level can facilitate knowledge sharing between projects aimed at reform or capacity building during the new programming period.

Monitoring and evaluation: most of the PAPA case studies emphasise the lack of systematic evidence and evaluations with regard to the success of administrative reforms. Most countries also lack a central mechanism for monitoring and reporting on the progress of reforms. This situation is true both for national reforms implemented without contribution from the EU, and for reforms implemented with the support of EU funds. While certain reform initiatives/projects may be monitored on a regular basis, coherent monitoring across different sectors or policy

initiatives appears not to take place.

1.2. Résumé analytique

1.2.1. Contexte du soutien du FSE à l'administration publique et le projet PAPA

Par son échelle et sa portée, l'administration publique - l'organisation et la gestion des ressources financées par la collectivité – joue un rôle très important dans la vie quotidienne des citoyens européens, et pour la performance et les perspectives des entreprises. La qualité des institutions d'un pays, sur le plan gouvernemental comme judiciaire, est un facteur clé pour déterminer la bonne santé de ce dernier.

L'amélioration de la capacité institutionnelle des autorités publiques fût intégrée comme l'une des priorités essentielles de la période de programmation 2007-2013 du FSE. Elle a pour objectif de dépasser la simple assistance technique pour une meilleure gestion des fonds européens, et d'aider les réformes administratives en cours dans les pays où les institutions sont plus faibles. Au total, 14 États membres ont programmé des interventions pertinentes dans leurs programmes opérationnels FSE, pour un financement total d'environ 2 milliards d'euros.

Les Fonds structurels et d'investissement européens pour la période 2014-2020 encouragent et aident explicitement les États membres à renforcer leur gouvernance dans le cadre de l'objectif thématique 11 : « renforcer la capacité institutionnelle des autorités et parties prenantes publiques et une administration publique efficace ». En tout, 17 États membres ont programmé des financements dans le cadre de cet objectif thématique, pour un montant d'environ 4,2 milliards d'euros. La majeure partie de ces financements, soit 3,6 milliards d'euros, provient du FSE.

Les rapports de suivi (rapports annuels de mise en œuvre et de progression) présentent des informations financières et physiques sur la mise en œuvre de l'objectif thématique 11 du FSE dans les pays bénéficiaires. Cependant, la possibilité d'avoir une analyse spécifique plus approfondie sur la façon dont le soutien du FSE à l'administration publique a été programmé dans le cadre de cet objectif, et sur la façon dont il est mis en œuvre dans les pays bénéficiaires suscite beaucoup d'intérêt. En réponse à cette demande, le projet « Évaluation sur l'état d'avancement du soutien du FSE à l'administration publique » (PAPA) vise à fournir des informations plus précises en sélectionnant et décrivant en détail, au niveau opérationnel, des exemples provenant de 30 projets réalisés dans 17 pays bénéficiaires. L'étude PAPA se distingue des autres travaux de suivi et d'évaluation, car elle se construit autour d'une approche « narrative » plutôt qu'autour d'une évaluation schématique du soutien FSE basé sur un ensemble de critères d'évaluation. Pour atteindre les objectifs de ce projet, l'équipe projet a travaillé en étroite collaboration avec les services de la Commission européenne et les autorités nationales. Le projet a donné naissance à un ensemble de 30 études de cas détaillées et fiches d'information correspondantes.

1.2.2. Perspectives des 30 projets FSE sélectionnés

Le projet PAPA couvre l'ensemble des États membres qui sont bénéficiaires de l'objectif thématique 11 du FSE. La sélection des études de cas garantit la couverture pays la plus importante parmi les 17 pays ciblés.

EM	Titre du projet
 BG	Développement de systèmes de e-gouvernement horizontaux et centraux concernant la mise en application d'un modèle unifié pour la demande, le paiement et la prestation de services administratifs électroniques
 BG	Transformation du modèle de prestation de services administratifs
 CY	Création et gestion d'un service central de prestations sociales (avec l'YDEP du ministère du Travail, de la Santé et de l'Assurance sociale)
 CZ	Soutien à la professionnalisation et à la qualité du service civil et de l'administration étatiques
 CZ	Amélioration des capacités administratives des municipalités basée sur une collaboration municipale
 EE	Programme des « task-forces » spéciales
 EE	Programme de développement de la haute fonction publique
 EL	Actions visant à optimiser le flux des procédures pénales, politiques et administratives
 EL	Gestion des unités de santé locales (TOMY) pour restructurer les soins de santé primaires
 HU	Simplification des procédures de l'administration fiscale et réduction de la charge administrative
 HU	Soutien stratégique pour le recrutement de personnel compétitif pour la fonction publique
 FR	Pôle territorial de coopération économique
 HR	Renforcement des capacités des autorités publiques pour la mise en œuvre de la Loi relative au droit d'accès à l'information
 IT	Méthodes et outils pour soutenir la réforme de l'administration publique
 IT	Résilience et développement du système national de santé
 LV	Programme de formation pour les hauts fonctionnaires de l'administration publique
 LV	Justice pour le développement
 LT	Amélioration du système de réglementation commerciale
 LT	Création d'un système de médiation
 MT	Client mystère - amélioration de la performance dans l'administration publique pour arriver à un service d'excellence
 PL	Amélioration des systèmes et normes de gestion et du service client dans l'administration fiscale
 PL	Normes de service pour les investisseurs dans des projets d'auto-gouvernement
 PT	LabX - le laboratoire d'expérimentation de l'administration publique
PT	Intégration du registre portugais des transplantations dans les systèmes informatiques des hôpitaux
RO	Mise en œuvre d'un système de développement des politiques publiques dans le domaine de l'inclusion sociale
RO	Construction d'un outil innovant pour le développement de politiques basées sur des éléments probants
SI	Modèle de compétence de la fonction publique - création d'un modèle uniforme de compétences
SI	STOP à la bureaucratie
SK	Efficacité des dépenses publiques
SK	Mesure de l'efficacité des services publics : guichets uniques

Les cas sélectionnés couvrent également un large éventail de bénéficiaires potentiels, incluant des institutions publiques locales et régionales, mais également des institutions nationales. Le mandat pour les réformes de l'administration publique et les activités de renforcement de capacités sur l'ensemble du système institutionnel se trouvant au niveau central, bon nombre des projets sélectionnés pour les études de cas dans le cadre de l'étude PAPA ont été mis en

œuvre par des bénéficiaires au niveau national. Cependant, certains projets ont été mis en œuvre par des autorités locales et régionales, notamment pour les pays dans lesquels le soutien du FSE aux administrations publiques est apporté dans le cadre de programmes opérationnels régionaux (Italie, Portugal, République tchèque et Slovaquie). Le budget total des projets analysés dans l'étude PAPA est de 237 126 947,62 euros, dont une contribution totale du FSE de 173 074 605,97 euros. Les 30 projets FSE analysés dans le cadre du projet PAPA correspondent à peu près à 4,12 % de l'ensemble de fonds européens alloués à l'objectif thématique 11 pour la période de programmation actuelle. L'échantillon des projets financés par le FSE présenté dans le projet PAPA n'est donc pas représentatif de l'ensemble de la mise en œuvre de l'objectif thématique 11 dans ses pays bénéficiaires.

Les projets financés par le FSE examinés dans le cadre de l'étude PAPA couvrent également le champ le plus large possible en termes de sujets, en suivant six dimensions thématiques de l'administration publique.

	Domaine de spécialité de l'étude de cas	Nombre de cas
	7. Transparence et responsabilisation	2
	8. Systèmes de services publics et gestion des RH	5
	9. Prestation de services et e-gouvernement	8
	10. Organisation et gestion du gouvernement	5
	11. Élaboration, coordination et mise en œuvre de politiques	7
	12. Amélioration du fonctionnement des systèmes judiciaires	3

1.2.3. Résultats et réussites des projets

Afin d'atteindre l'objectif global d'amélioration des capacités institutionnelles des autorités et parties prenantes publiques et pour améliorer l'efficacité de l'administration publique, les actions financées par le FSE dans les États membres se basent sur des objectifs et indicateurs de résultats spécifiques. Les grands domaines d'investissement au titre de l'objectif thématique 11 dans les États membres incluent notamment :

- L'amélioration de la qualité de l'élaboration des politiques grâce à un meilleur suivi et une meilleure capacité d'analyse, à l'intégration des évaluations d'impact, à des systèmes permettant de simplifier et réduire la bureaucratie, et à la modernisation des budgets.
- L'amélioration des prestations de services administratifs grâce à un accès diversifié, des procédés optimisés pour le back-office, et des solutions d'e-gouvernement

interopérables.

- L'augmentation de l'efficacité des systèmes judiciaires des États membres, par exemple par la formation du personnel des tribunaux, l'introduction de système de gestion des affaires et l'optimisation du flux de travail.
- L'augmentation de la transparence de l'administration publique et l'augmentation de l'implication des parties prenantes.
- L'amélioration de la qualité, de l'intégrité et du professionnalisme dans la fonction publique, grâce à des ajustements dans les systèmes de recrutement, de carrière et de performance, et grâce à des formations ciblées.

Les actions qui ciblent des individus ont pour objectifs d'améliorer les qualifications et compétences des fonctionnaires et autres parties prenantes concernées à tous les niveaux hiérarchiques, et couvrent un large éventail de secteurs et champs d'intervention. Les actions qui ciblent des entités cherchent à intégrer les procédés de l'administration publique (par exemple, l'introduction de méthodes de gestion et d'assurance qualité innovantes pour améliorer la qualité et la prestation de services), et également à créer (ou améliorer) des organisations et structures plus efficaces et à développer/introduire de nouvelles ressources.

Il n'a pas été facile de mesurer la progression et les réalisations des 30 projets sélectionnés, pour plusieurs raisons. Tout d'abord, la plupart des projets sélectionnés pour l'étude PAPA sont toujours en cours, et certains n'ont même pas encore atteint l'étape de finalisation. Ensuite, si des indicateurs quantifiables ont été formulés pour tous les projets, les projets ont également généré des réussites impalpables, ou un changement d'état d'esprit ou de culture tout aussi intéressants (si ce n'est plus), mais plus compliqués à quantifier.

Les résultats et réussites des 30 projets peuvent se résumer en cinq catégories.



1. Études qui renforcent la base d'éléments probants et améliorent la préparation de politiques : huit groupes de travail gouvernementaux ont été créés en Estonie, ce qui a débouché sur plusieurs changements législatifs et de nouvelles allocations budgétaires. L'Italie a créé une salle de contrôle et un comité consultatif. Ces deux entités permettent le suivi d'un modèle national de simulation et de prise de décision pour la planification et l'allocation de dépenses de santé dans les régions du pays. En Lettonie, plusieurs études ont été organisées afin d'examiner et d'évaluer le système judiciaire. En Roumanie, le développement d'une méthodologie visant à cartographier les services sociaux existants et requis, la pauvreté et la pauvreté au travail, a fait partie d'un projet qui avait pour objectif de fournir des indicateurs sociaux ; un projet « état de la nation » a également favorisé l'élaboration de politiques basées sur des éléments probants.



2. Solutions numériques : les projets incluent notamment la création d'un portail unique pour l'accès aux services numériques en Bulgarie, et le développement d'un registre informatique pour les bénéficiaires sociaux à Chypre. La Grèce a partiellement optimisé ses procédures judiciaires. Les principales réussites de l'étude de cas sur le système de santé du Portugal concernent à ce jour principalement l'interconnexion entre les services et la capacité à télécharger directement les analyses des laboratoires.



3. Simplification et amélioration des prestations de services : la Slovaquie a créé 56 « guichets uniques ». En Bulgarie, 1085 régimes administratifs ont été examinés à des fins de simplification. Plus de 1100 projets de coopération inter-municipale ont été mis en œuvre en Tchéquie. 94 centres de soins de santé (TOMY) ont été créés en Grèce. Une étude approfondie a été organisée autour de la satisfaction, des attentes et des comportements des clients par rapport à l'agence nationale polonaise de collecte des recettes. Le laboratoire portugais LabX a réalisé des prototypes de solutions expérimentales et en a utilisé dans 12 projets. Malte a organisé des projets « client mystère » dans 650 sites de service, ce qui a débouché sur des recommandations et mesures de suivi.



4. Formation et développement des compétences : la Croatie a organisé 21 ateliers et webinaires. L'Estonie a développé son centre d'excellence de la haute fonction publique afin de mieux cibler le développement professionnel des hauts fonctionnaires. 7375 participants ont déjà été impliqués dans les événements de formation du projet letton sur la justice. Le projet letton concernant les hauts fonctionnaires a impliqué 183 hauts fonctionnaires provenant de 71 institutions. La Slovénie a créé un modèle uniforme pour les compétences de la fonction publique. La principale réussite à ce jour du projet de médiation lituanien réside dans la conception du programme d'examen pour devenir médiateurs, qui est allé nourrir directement le programme de formation. Le projet local polonais (maintenant terminé) concernant les activités d'investissement local a permis la création de formations et d'activités de conseil pour mettre en œuvre une norme pour les services investisseurs ; il incluait notamment le développement d'un jeu de simulation pour le personnel d'encadrement.



5. Création de systèmes, lignes directrices et outils : un système de promotion et un système de formation/tutorat pour les fonctionnaires à haut potentiel ont été créés en Hongrie. À ce jour, le projet italien *RiformAttiva* a permis la mise en œuvre de méthodes et outils (par exemple la planification RH basée sur les compétences ou des lignes directrices opérationnelles pour la simplification administrative) dans 17 administrations pilotes. La Lituanie a produit des recommandations et critères d'évaluation pour améliorer la performance de 55 institutions de supervision des entreprises. En tout, 39 évaluations de projets d'investissement et 19 analyses de dépenses sectorielles ont été organisées en Slovaquie. Le projet slovène « STOP à la bureaucratie » a enregistré des résultats encourageants, avec une réduction de 362 millions d'euros sur le coût annuel de la charge administrative. Ce résultat a été obtenu grâce à l'instauration pendant le projet de nombreuses mesures visant à alléger le poids administratif.

1.2.4. Obstacles principaux à la mise en œuvre des projets PAPA



Résistance et responsabilisation : le principal obstacle identifié dans l'ensemble des études de cas PAPA et lors des discussions des participants au dernier séminaire PAPA réside dans la résistance bureaucratique au changement présente dans de nombreuses administrations. La création d'un sentiment de responsabilisation et la démonstration de la valeur ajoutée des projets ont été des éléments essentiels pour aider à franchir cet obstacle.



Approche ascendante contre descendante : dans tout projet impliquant des changements, il est difficile de trouver le bon équilibre entre pilotage central et responsabilisation « locale ». D'un côté, il faut s'assurer que les grands projets sont sur la bonne voie, et la progression doit être gérée de manière stricte. D'un autre côté, il faut également s'assurer qu'il y a suffisamment de responsabilisation et d'adhésion « sur le terrain ». Dans les projets où les équipes centrales de projet ont coordonné les façons d'intégrer les tâches et d'agir, les autres parties prenantes se sont retrouvées avec des marges de manœuvre moindres. Quand on impose des normes pour l'utilisation d'outils et d'instruments uniformes, les parties prenantes le vivent souvent comme une perte de pouvoir et d'autonomie.



Casser ou soutenir les silos : dans de nombreux cas, travailler ensemble au sein ou entre des organisations d'administration publique représentait un des objectifs ou prérequis pour la réussite d'un projet. La coordination et la collaboration sont traditionnellement des questions difficiles. Quand la collaboration doit se produire non seulement horizontalement (au même niveau de gouvernement, entre ministres ou agences) mais également verticalement (entre acteurs au niveau national, régional et local), les obstacles à la coordination sont encore plus nombreux. Enfin, l'échange de données a été ressenti au mieux comme un défi, et dans certains cas comme une réelle difficulté.



Portée et échelle : dans plusieurs cas, il a fallu ajuster les calendriers à cause de retards rencontrés, mais également à cause de changements apportés à la portée ou aux objectifs du projet original.



Capacité administrative et recherche d'experts : trouver une expertise et des capacités adaptées au sein de l'administration publique s'est révélé difficile dans presque tous les projets. La question de la capacité administrative se ressent plus intensément dans les réformes TI/numériques (ou les réformes comportant un élément numérique important). Au sein des secteurs politiques spécialisés, trouver, attirer et allouer du personnel adéquat s'est également révélé très difficile.



Appui sur les prestataires externes : une expertise interne a souvent été sollicitée en l'absence d'expertise et de capacité internes disponibles. La gestion des experts et de l'expertise externes s'est révélée difficile. La principale difficulté quand la capacité interne est limitée consiste à ne pas devenir complètement dépendant de l'expertise externe, et à conserver au moins un certain niveau d'expertise en interne.



Communication des résultats : la communication des résultats des projets, au niveau politique comme de la société dans son ensemble, a été compliquée pour bon nombre de projets. Les tendances modernes dans l'administration publique sont difficiles à expliquer au grand public, leur acceptation dépendant du niveau de maturité et d'ouverture dans une société.



Formalisme et procédures : bureaucratism et formalisme excessif sont souvent mentionnés dans diverses études de cas comme étant des obstacles qu'il faut franchir. Ces difficultés sont apparues lors la mise en œuvre des projets, mais existaient déjà aux étapes de préparation et de candidature ; en effet, la procédure de rédaction des propositions et de demande de financement est encore perçue comme étant relativement lourde et rigide. Le formalisme et les procédures rigides ont le plus souvent été mentionnés lors des étapes d'approvisionnement des différents projets. Le mélange

(overlap) entre les réglementations générales de l'UE concernant le FSE et les réglementations nationales ont entraîné des retards (importants) dans le démarrage de plusieurs projets. Malgré les simplifications apportées aux réglementations, la question de la charge administrative reste réelle.

1.2.5. Rôle du soutien du FSE

Contribution financière - une motivation nécessaire pour les réformes de l'administration publique : le soutien financier apporté par l'UE a été déterminant, et a été un facteur de changement dans de nombreux pays où les réformes administratives dépendaient principalement des financements externes (européens). Sur la période de financement 2007-2013, le FSE était déjà perçu dans de nombreux pays comme l'instrument principal pour les investissements dans les réformes de l'administration publique. Cette perception reste présente sur la période de programmation actuelle. Toutes les études de cas montrent que sans le soutien financier du FSE, les réformes n'auraient sans doute pas été programmées, ou se seraient produites à un rythme plus lent ou à une échelle réduite.

Fixation de programmes et pouvoir de mobilisation : les recherches précédentes montrent que bon nombre des activités initiées et développées par les projets de renforcement des capacités n'auraient pas pu être lancées sans le soutien du FSE. Indépendamment de l'aspect purement financier, ce soutien a également eu pour effet de mobiliser et de fixer les programmes. Les éléments probants présentés dans les études de cas PAPA confirment ce point.

Continuité et prévisibilité : les réformes prennent du temps et doivent garantir la durabilité. À cause de changements dans les priorités et programmes politiques des États membres, cette continuité fait souvent défaut et les réformes peuvent être stoppées à mi-course, voire même annulées. La continuité et la prévisibilité du financement FSE ont participé à la réussite des changements qui se sont produits ces dernières années. C'est le cas pour la période de programme 2014-2020, mais également sur une période plus longue. Deux tiers des 30 projets évalués dans le cadre de l'étude PAPA disposaient d'un projet précurseur direct ou en lien étroit sur les périodes de programmation précédentes de l'UE.

Cœur et nature des projets : comme indiqué précédemment, le soutien FSE couvre également les aspects « doux » (GRH, formation, etc.) et le renforcement de capacité. Les ressources budgétaires des États sont souvent limitées et le financement des « changements doux » par le FSE représente un facteur facilitant important ; sans personnel convenablement formé et préparé, les bâtiments et systèmes TI ne seraient pas très utiles aux citoyens et entreprises utilisant les services administratifs de l'Etat.

Logique d'intervention/gestion de projet/fixation des objectifs : pour répondre aux exigences du FSE, les équipes projet fixent des objectifs, ressources et résultats attendus spécifiques. Ces derniers incluent notamment des dates butoirs et des jalons pour permettre aux équipes de mener à bien les projets, souvent sur un laps de temps très court. Les exigences en matière d'élaboration de rapports imposés par le FSE aux projets incitent les équipes projet à planifier attentivement leurs activités, à créer une communauté politique et à impliquer activement les parties prenantes au niveau international, national et local.

Accès aux réseaux : avec l'implication du financement FSE, les autorités des États membres bénéficient également de l'accès aux réseaux européens comme le réseau européen des administrations publiques (EUPAN) et les réseaux FSE coordonnés par la direction générale pour l'Emploi, les Affaires sociales et l'Inclusion (DG EMPL) de la Commission.

1.2.6. Conclusions et enseignements tirés

Importance du financement FSE pour les réformes de l'administration publique : toutes les études de cas montrent que sans le soutien financier du FSE, les réformes n'auraient sans doute pas été programmées, ou se seraient produites à un rythme plus lent ou à une échelle réduite. Notons que le soutien du FSE était également relié aux principaux objectifs et priorités des documents stratégiques et de planification au niveau national dans les domaines de l'administration et de la gouvernance. Outre son élément purement financier, le soutien FSE a également eu pour effet de mobiliser et de définir les programmes, ou tout du moins de mettre à l'ordre du jour (politique) le sujet des réformes de l'administration publique.

Leadership (politique/administratif) : toute réforme nécessite un leadership solide. Non seulement pour la dimension directive du leadership, mais également pour une approche ascendante plus autonome dans la mise en œuvre des changements, qui est souvent entre les mains des équipes administratives. Le fait que les projets soutenus par le FSE soient souvent pilotés depuis un niveau politique plus élevé ou depuis le centre du gouvernement ne garantit pas pour autant le soutien politique ; néanmoins, il est important que les équipes projet fassent preuve de leadership administratif ou d'un comportement efficace pour que la mise en œuvre des projets soit réussie.

Implication des parties prenantes aux différentes étapes du projet : les projets sélectionnés soulignent l'importance d'impliquer les parties prenantes individuelles et de permettre une coopération inter-organisationnelle pour garantir une mise en œuvre efficace des différentes étapes du projet. Étant donné que ces parties prenantes ont souvent une excellente compréhension (technique) des questions en jeu, et qu'elles superviseront les activités des systèmes en développement, leur inclusion est essentielle.

Vision claire et planification solide, associées à une mise en œuvre agile : les futurs projets de réforme administrative et de renforcement de capacité peuvent être conçus en se basant sur des diagnostics rigoureux, mais leur exécution doit être agile. La planification peut être une base solide permettant de contrôler le projet dans sa phase de mise en œuvre. Elle fait également office de point de référence essentiel pour formuler une stratégie de communication exhaustive qui s'adresse aux parties prenantes clés des projets. Cependant, dans le cadre actuel de gestion de la performance, les activités et instruments des futurs projets de réforme administrative et de renforcement de capacité pourraient être précisés de manière plus flexible, afin de les rendre adaptables à d'éventuels changements et pour permettre l'apprentissage ou des actions correctives rapides.

Équipes et capacité : des équipes expérimentées disposant de certaines capacités internes et au sein desquelles les responsabilités sont clairement réparties sont nécessaires à la réussite de la mise en œuvre des projets d'administration publique. Il est important de souligner que le soutien FSE a permis à certains projets de monter des équipes dédiées et de développer les capacités internes nécessaires. La qualité des équipes de projet est un facteur essentiel pour l'exécution des projets. Il est donc important pour les stratégies futures de développement des ressources humaines et/ou de cartographies des capacités administratives de mettre en place des équipes capables, et de leur donner les outils et ressources dont elles auront besoin (en utilisant l'aide financière et technique de l'UE, le cas échéant).

Créer un éventail complet d'interventions nécessaires : on dit de plus en plus souvent que les difficultés structurelles et de gouvernance rencontrées actuellement par les États membres nécessitent une combinaison d'actions législatives/politiques et d'améliorations plus élaborées que

ce qui est prévu par les systèmes de gouvernance actuels. Les projets soutenus par le FSE et examinés dans le cadre de l'étude PAPA montrent également qu'il est important d'introduire des changements importants dans le cadre juridique et politique ou dans le système d'administration publique, pour obtenir les résultats attendus des projets et pour les rendre durables.

Garantir la durabilité des résultats des projets : la principale difficulté consiste à intégrer les projets dans une nouvelle façon de travailler, et d'intégrer les façons de travailler, les interactions avec les utilisateurs ou les changements de comportement nouvellement développés dans une culture quotidienne et dans le fonctionnement quotidien des administrations publiques. Comme l'objectif thématique 11 ne sera plus éligible dans le cadre du FSE+ (sauf pour le renforcement de capacité dans le domaine de l'emploi, les systèmes d'éducation et de formation, l'inclusion et de la protection sociale, et les systèmes et services de santé) sur la période de programme 2021-2027, il deviendra vital d'optimiser l'ensemble des financements disponibles européens ou nationaux, et ce afin de maximiser les bénéfices des projets futurs de réforme et de renforcement de capacité.

Montrer la valeur ajoutée : pour garantir l'adhésion des parties prenantes concernées, les projets doivent être « publicisés » en interne (au sein de l'administration publique) et en externe (utilisateurs du service et grand public). La principale difficulté ressortant dans l'ensemble des études de cas PAPA est la résistance au changement de certains éléments administratifs. La création d'un sentiment de responsabilisation et la démonstration de la valeur ajoutée des projets sont ressenties comme des éléments essentiels à la réussite de ces derniers. Il est également important de communiquer efficacement sur les résultats du projet, au niveau politique comme de la société au sens large.

Coordination et partage des connaissances : un autre enseignement tiré des projets PAPA est le besoin d'établir une collaboration inter-institutionnelle efficace dès le début du projet. Ce point est tout particulièrement important quand une collaboration est nécessaire non seulement horizontalement (au même niveau de gouvernement) mais également verticalement (entre différents niveaux). Des arrangements de coordination sont alors nécessaires.

Il faudrait exploiter pleinement le potentiel de partage des connaissances afin de maximiser l'adhésion des fonctionnaires, et pour dépasser « l'administration en silos ». L'accès aux experts internationaux et une plus grande disponibilité des pratiques pays, centralisées au niveau de l'UE, pourraient faciliter le partage des connaissances concernant les projets dans le domaine des réformes ou du renforcement de capacités sur la nouvelle période de programmation.

Suivi et évaluation : la plupart des études de cas PAPA insistent sur le manque d'éléments probants et d'évaluations systématiques concernant le succès des réformes administratives. La plupart des pays manquent également d'un mécanisme central pour le suivi et l'élaboration de rapports sur l'état d'avancement des réformes. Cette situation se retrouve dans les réformes nationales mises en œuvre sans contribution de l'UE, mais également dans celles qui sont mises en œuvre avec le soutien de fonds européens. Si certains projets/initiatives de réforme peuvent être surveillés régulièrement, il semblerait qu'il n'y ait pas de suivi cohérent, régulier entre les différents secteurs ou initiatives politiques.

1.3. Kurzfassung

1.3.1. Unterstützung der öffentlichen Verwaltung durch den ESF und das Projekt „PAPA“ im Kontext

Aufgrund ihrer Größe und Reichweite hat die öffentliche Verwaltung, d. h. die Organisation und Verwaltung staatlich finanzierter Ressourcen, einen enormen Einfluss auf den Alltag der europäischen Bürger und den Erfolg und die Chancen von Unternehmen. Die Qualität der Regierungs- und Justizorgane ist ein wichtiger Faktor für den Zustand eines Landes.

Für den Programmzeitraum 2007-2013 wurde die Verbesserung der institutionellen Kapazitäten von öffentlichen Behörden als weitere politische Priorität des Europäischen Sozialfonds (ESF) eingeführt. Ziel war es, über die bloße technische Hilfe für eine bessere Verwaltung von Fördermitteln der EU hinauszugehen und in Ländern mit schwächeren Institutionen laufende Verwaltungsreformen zu unterstützen. Insgesamt haben 14 Mitgliedstaaten entsprechende Maßnahmen in ihr operationelles Programm für den ESF aufgenommen und für diese Maßnahmen insgesamt rund 2 Mrd. Euro Fördermittel veranschlagt.

Die Europäischen Struktur- und Investitionsfonds waren im Zeitraum 2014-2020 ausdrücklich auch dazu vorgesehen, die Mitgliedstaaten bei der Stärkung ihrer staatlichen Organe gemäß dem thematischen Ziel 11 zu unterstützen: „Verbesserung der institutionellen Kapazitäten von öffentlichen Behörden und Interessenträgern und effizientere öffentliche Verwaltung“. Im Rahmen dieser thematischen Zielsetzung planten insgesamt 17 Mitgliedstaaten Förderprogramme mit einer Gesamthöhe von rund 4,2 Mrd. Euro. Der Großteil dieser Fördermittel – 3,6 Mrd. Euro – wurde vom ESF bereitgestellt.

Monitoring-Berichte (jährliche Umsetzungs- und Fortschrittsberichte) enthalten finanzielle und reale Daten über die Umsetzung des thematischen Ziels 11 des ESF in den Empfängerländern. Dennoch besteht großes Interesse an einer tiefer gehenden und konkreten Analyse, die zeigt, auf welche Weise im Rahmen dieses thematischen Ziels Fördermaßnahmen für die öffentliche Verwaltung in den Empfängerländern mit Mitteln des ESF geplant und umgesetzt wurden. Daher hat sich das Projekt „Fortschrittsbericht zur ESF-Förderung der öffentlichen Verwaltung“ (engl. Progress Assessment of the ESF Support to Public Administration - PAPA) zum Ziel gesetzt, 30 beispielhafte Projekte aus allen 17 Empfängerländern auszuwählen, auf der Arbeitsebene detailliert zu beschreiben und so ein konkretes Bild von diesem Programmsegment zu zeichnen. Dabei unterscheidet sich die PAPA-Studie von anderen Monitoring- und Bewertungsaufträgen, weil sie keine schematische Bewertung der ESF-Förderung anhand eines Kriterienkatalogs anstrebt, sondern eher einem „erzählenden“ Ansatz folgt. Um die Ziele des Projekts zu erreichen, hat das Projektteam eng mit den Dienststellen der Europäischen Kommission und betroffenen nationalen Behörden zusammengearbeitet. Die Ergebnisse sind 30 detaillierte Fallbeschreibungen mit zugehörigen Informationsblättern.

1.3.2. Überblick über die 30 ausgewählten ESF-Projekte

Das PAPA-Projekt umfasst alle Mitgliedstaaten, die Mittel aus dem thematischen Ziel 11 des ESF erhalten haben. Durch die Auswahl der Fallstudien ist gewährleistet, dass die 17 Zielländer so breit wie möglich repräsentiert sind.

MS	Titel des Projekts
 BG	Entwicklung horizontaler und zentraler E-Governmentsysteme in Bezug auf die Anwendung eines einheitlichen Modells für Nutzung, Bezahlung und Bereitstellung elektronischer Verwaltungsdienstleistungen
 BG	Einführung eines neuen Modells für die Bereitstellung von Dienstleistungen durch die öffentliche Verwaltung
 CY	Einrichtung und Betrieb des Zentralen Verwaltungssystems für Wohlfahrtsleistungen (YDEP) gemeinsam mit dem Ministerium für Arbeit, Wohlfahrt und soziale Sicherheit
 CZ	Verbesserung von Professionalität und Qualität im öffentlichen Dienst und in der staatlichen Verwaltung
 CZ	Verbesserung der administrativen Kapazitäten von Gebietskörperschaften auf der Basis kommunaler Zweckverbände
 EE	Programm für spezielle Arbeitsgruppen
 EE	Weiterbildungsprogramm für leitende Beamter
 EL	Maßnahmen zur Optimierung juristischer, politischer und verwaltungstechnischer Verfahren
 EL	Aufbau lokaler Gesundheitszentren (TOMY) zur Umstrukturierung der medizinischen Grundversorgung
 HU	Vereinfachung von Steuerverfahren und Abbau von Verwaltungslasten
 HU	Strategische Hilfe für eine wettbewerbsfähige Personalpolitik der öffentlichen Hand
 FR	Territoriale Zentren für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit
 HR	Stärkung der Kapazität der öffentlichen Verwaltung zur Umsetzung des Gesetzes über das Recht auf Zugang zu Informationen
 IT	Methoden und Instrumente zur Unterstützung von Reformen der öffentlichen Verwaltung
 IT	Stabilität und Entwicklung des nationalen Gesundheitssystems
 LV	Weiterbildungsprogramm für Führungskräfte in der öffentlichen Verwaltung
 LV	Entwicklung des Justizsystems
 LT	Verbesserung des Regulierungssystems für Unternehmen
 LT	Aufbau eines Schlichtungssystems
 MT	Testkäufer - Exzellenter Service durch bessere Leistungen der öffentlichen Verwaltung
 PL	Bessere Verwaltungssysteme, Standards und besserer Kundenservice in der Steuerverwaltung
 PL	Standards für die Unterstützung von Investoren in der regionalen Selbstverwaltung
 PT	LabX – Labor für Modellversuche in der öffentlichen Verwaltung
PT	Integration des portugiesischen Transplantationsregisters in die Computersysteme von Krankenhäusern
RO	Umsetzung eines Systems zur Entwicklung politischer Strategien zur sozialen Eingliederung
RO	Entwicklung eines innovativen Instrument für die faktengestützte Politikgestaltung
SI	Kompetenzmodell für den öffentlichen Dienst - Entwicklung eines einheitlichen Kompetenzmodells
SI	STOPPT die Bürokratie
SK	Effiziente Verwendung öffentlicher Mittel
SK	Verfahren zur Messung der Effizienz des öffentlichen Dienstes: zentrale Anlaufstellen

Außerdem betreffen die ausgewählten Fälle eine große Bandbreite potenzieller Projektträger, d. h. Institutionen der öffentlichen Hand auf kommunaler, regionaler und nationaler Ebene. Da die Zuständigkeit für Reformen der öffentlichen Verwaltung und systemweite Maßnahmen zum Ausbau der institutionellen Kapazitäten auf der zentralen Ebene angesiedelt ist, wurden viele der für die PAPA-Studie ausgewählten Projekte von Trägern auf nationaler Ebene durchgeführt. Allerdings gab es auch einige Projekte kommunaler und regionaler Behörden, insbesondere in den Ländern, in denen die ESF-Fördermittel für die öffentliche Verwaltung im Rahmen eigener

operationeller Programme vergeben wurden (Italien, Portugal, Tschechien und die Slowakei). Die für das PAPA-Projekt analysierten Projekte hatten einen Haushalt von insgesamt 237 126 947,62 Euro, von denen insgesamt 173 074 605,97 Fördermittel aus dem ESF stammen. Die 30 untersuchten ESF-Projekte machen rund 4,12 % der EU-Fördermittel aus, die im aktuellen Planungszeitraum insgesamt für das thematische Ziel 11 ausgegeben wurden. Daher ist die im PAPA-Projekt vorgestellte Auswahl von mit ESF-Mitteln geförderten Projekten für die Umsetzung des thematischen Ziels 11 in den Empfängerländern nicht repräsentativ.

Die vom ESF geförderten Projekte, die im Rahmen der PAPA-Studie untersucht wurden, sind auch inhaltlich sehr vielfältig und folgen sechs thematischen Dimensionen der öffentlichen Verwaltung.

	Thematischer Schwerpunkt	Anzahl der Projekte
	13. Transparenz und Rechenschaftspflicht	2
	14. Systeme und Personalpolitik der öffentliche Hand	5
	15. Dienstleistungen und E-Government	8
	16. Organisation und Verwaltungsmanagement	5
	17. Entwicklung, Koordination und Umsetzung politischer Maßnahmen	7
	18. Verbesserung der Funktion des Justizsystems	3

1.3.3. Ergebnisse und Erfolge der Projekte

Um das allgemeine Ziel der Verbesserung der institutionellen Kapazitäten von öffentlichen Behörden und Interessenträgern und einer effizienteren öffentlichen Verwaltung zu erreichen, haben die ESF-geförderten Maßnahmen in den EU-Mitgliedstaaten spezifische Ziele und Erfolgsindikatoren entwickelt. Dabei konzentrierten sich die auf das thematische Ziel 11 bezogenen Investitionen in den Mitgliedstaaten vor allem auf die folgenden Bereiche:

- Verbesserung der Politikgestaltung durch eine Erhöhung der Kontroll- und Analysefähigkeit, vereinheitliche Verfahren zur Folgenabschätzung, Systeme zur Vereinfachung und zum Abbau von Bürokratie und Modernisierung der Haushaltsplanung.
- Verbesserung der Verwaltungsdienstleistungen durch zusätzliche Zugangsmöglichkeiten, optimierte Back-Office-Systeme und kompatiblen E-Government-Lösungen.
- Erhöhung der Effizienz der Justizsysteme der Mitgliedstaaten, z. B. durch die Weiterbildung von Gerichtsmitarbeitern, die Einführung von Systemen zum Fallmanagement und die Optimierung von Arbeitsabläufen.

- Eine transparentere öffentliche Verwaltung und stärkere Beteiligung betroffener Interessengruppen.
- Verbesserung von Qualität, Integrität und beruflicher Qualifikation der Beamtenschaft durch neue Einstellungs-, Beförderungs- und Bewertungssysteme und zielgerichtete Aus- und Weiterbildung.

Die auf Personen gerichteten Maßnahmen haben das Ziel, die Fähigkeiten und Kompetenzen von Beamten und anderen relevanten Akteuren auf allen Ebenen der Hierarchie zu verbessern. Diese Maßnahmen sind sehr vielfältig und betreffen die unterschiedlichsten Sektoren. Die auf Organisationen gerichteten Maßnahmen haben das Ziel, die Arbeitsabläufe in der öffentlichen Verwaltung zu vereinheitlichen (zum Beispiel durch die Einführung innovativer Management- und Qualitätssicherungsmethoden, mit denen bessere Dienstleistungen erbracht werden können), effizienterer Organisationen und Strukturen zu schaffen und neue Ressourcen zu entwickeln bzw. einzuführen.

Es war aus mehreren Gründen nicht einfach, die Fortschritte und Ergebnisse der 30 ausgewählten Projekten zu messen. Zum einen sind die meisten dieser Projekte noch nicht abgeschlossen und manche haben noch nicht einmal die Umsetzungsphase erreicht. Zum anderen wurden für alle Projekte zwar quantifizierbare Indikatoren formuliert, daneben aber auch häufig weniger konkrete Ergebnisse, z. B. eine geänderte Einstellung oder Organisationskultur, die zwar ebenso interessant ist (oder sogar interessanter), sich aber nur schwer quantifizieren lässt.

Die Ergebnisse und Erfolge der 30 Projekte lassen sich zu fünf Gruppen zusammenfassen.



1. Studien, die Faktengrundlagen schaffen und die Politikgestaltung

verbessern: In Estland wurden acht Arbeitsgruppen eingerichtet, die eine Reihe von Gesetzesänderungen auf den Weg gebracht und die zusätzliche Zuweisung von Haushaltsmitteln erreicht haben. In Italien wurden eine Steuerungszentrale und ein Beirat geschaffen, die das neue landesweite Simulationsmodell zur Bedarfsplanung und Zuweisung von Mitteln für die Gesundheitssysteme der einzelnen Regionen des Landes kontrollieren. In Lettland wurden eine Reihe von Studien zur Analyse und Bewertung des Justizsystems durchgeführt. In Rumänien wurde im Rahmen eines Projekts zur Erstellung von sozialen Indikatoren eine Methodologie zur Erfassung der bestehenden bzw. notwendigen Sozialdienste, der Armut und Erwerbstätigenarmut entwickelt. Ein anderes Projekt zur „Lage der Nation“ dient ebenfalls dem Ziel einer faktengestützten Politikgestaltung.



2. Digitale Lösungen: Zu diesen Projekten gehört die Schaffung eines zentralen Portals für den Zugang zu elektronischen Dienstleistungen in Bulgarien und die Entwicklung eines computergestützten Registers für Sozialleistungen in Zypern. In Griechenland wurden bestimmte Aspekte von Gerichtsverfahren optimiert. Die wichtigsten Ergebnisse des untersuchten Projekts zum portugiesischen Gesundheitssystem waren bisher die Verknüpfung von Dienstleistungen und ein Verfahren zum direkten Herunterladen von Laboruntersuchungen.



3. Vereinfachung und bessere Dienstleistungen: in der Slowakei wurden 56 zentrale Anlaufstellen eingerichtet. In Bulgarien wurden 1085 Verwaltungsvorschriften auf mögliche Vereinfachungen hin analysiert. Über 1100 Kooperationsprojekte zwischen Gebietskörperschaften wurden in Tschechien umgesetzt. In Griechenland wurden insgesamt 94 Gesundheitszentren (TOMY) geschaffen. In einer detaillierten Studie wurden Zufriedenheit, Erwartungen und Verhalten der Kunden gegenüber der nationalen polnischen Steuerbehörde ermittelt. Das portugiesische LabX hat in 12 Projekten experimentelle Lösungen entwickelt und umgesetzt. Malta hat „Testkunden“ in 650 Verwaltungsstellen geschickt, und aus deren Berichte Empfehlungen und Verbesserungsmaßnahmen entwickelt.



4. Aus- und Weiterbildung: in Kroatien wurden insgesamt 21 Workshops und Webinare veranstaltet. Das estnische Exzellenzzentrum für Führungskräfte im öffentlichen Dienst wurde weiterentwickelt und besser an die berufliche Weiterbildung von leitenden Beamten angepasst. Im Rahmen des lettischen Justizprojekts haben bereits 7375 Justizmitarbeiter an Weiterbildungsmaßnahmen teilgenommen. Das lettische Ausbildungsprojekt für leitende Beamte hat bisher 183 hochrangige Teilnehmer aus 71 Einrichtungen weitergebildet. In Slowenien wurden ein einheitliches Modell zur Verbesserung der Kompetenzen im öffentlichen Dienst geschaffen. Das bisher wichtigste Ergebnis des litauischen Schlichtungsprojekts ist die Entwicklung eines Prüfverfahren für Schlichter, das direkt in die Lehrpläne eingeflossen ist. Im Rahmen des inzwischen abgeschlossenen polnischen Projekts zum Thema lokale Investitionen wurde eine Standard für Dienstleistungen für Investoren entwickelt und die Mitarbeiter lokaler Behörden in dessen Anwendung geschult und beraten, unter anderem durch die Entwicklung eines Simulationsspiels.



5. Entwicklung von Systemen, Leitfäden und Tools: in Ungarn wurde ein System zur Beförderung, spezialisierten Weiterbildung und Mentorenbetreuung für Beamte mit besonderem Potenzial geschaffen. Die im Rahmen des italienischen Projekts „RiformAttiva“ entwickelten Methoden und Tools (z. B. eine auf Kompetenzen gestützte Personalpolitik oder betriebliche Leitlinien zum Bürokratieabbau) werden bereits in 17 Modellbehörden eingesetzt. In Litauen wurden Empfehlungen und Bewertungskriterien entwickelt, mit denen die Arbeit von 55 Beratungsstellen für Unternehmen verbessert werden soll. In der Slowakei wurden 39 Investitionsprojekte bewertet und 19 sektorenweite Kostenprüfungen durchgeführt. Das slowenische Projekt „STOPPT die Bürokratie“ hat ermutigende Ergebnisse erzielt und die Jahreskosten durch Verwaltungslasten um 362 Mio. Euro gesenkt. Dazu wurden im Rahmen des Projekts zahlreiche Maßnahmen zum Bürokratieabbau umgesetzt.

1.3.4. Die größten Hindernisse bei der Umsetzung der für die PAPA-Studie untersuchten Projekte



Widerstand und Engagement: In allen Fallbeispiele der PAPA-Studie und auch beim Abschlussseminar mit den Projektteilnehmern wurde der bürokratische Widerstand gegen Veränderungen, der in vielen Behörden herrscht, als größtes Hindernis identifiziert. Um dieses Problem zu überwinden, muss bei den Betroffenen eigenes Engagement für das Projekt und Verständnis für dessen Mehrwert geweckt werden.



Steuerung von unten oder von oben: die richtige Balance zwischen zentraler Steuerung und „lokalem“ Engagement war in allen Projekten, mit denen Veränderungen erzielt werden sollten, ein Problem. Einerseits muss gewährleistet werden, dass große Projekte in die beabsichtigte Richtung zielen und auch deren Erfolg muss eng kontrolliert werden. Andererseits sind aber auch ausreichendes Engagement und Unterstützung „von unten“ unabdingbar. Wie im Rahmen dieser Studie festgestellt wurde, schränkt es häufig den Spielraum anderer Akteure ein, wenn zentrale Projektteams Aufgaben und Arbeitsweisen vereinheitlichen und koordinieren. Der Zwang, einheitliche Tools und Instrumente zu verwenden, wird häufig als Entzug von Befugnissen und Autonomie wahrgenommen.



Bunker aufbrechen oder verbinden: in vielen Fällen war die Zusammenarbeit innerhalb oder zwischen Organen der öffentlichen Verwaltung entweder das Ziel des Projekts oder eine Voraussetzung für dessen Gelingen. Koordination und Zusammenarbeit sind traditionell schwierige Themen. Wenn nicht nur horizontal (auf derselben Ebene zwischen Ministerien oder Behörden), sondern auch vertikal (zwischen Stellen auf nationaler, regionaler und kommunaler Ebene) zusammen gearbeitet werden muss, nehmen die Koordinationsprobleme weiter zu. Schließlich war auch der Austausch von Daten zumindest eine Herausforderung und in manchen Fällen ein echtes Problem.



Umfang und Projektgröße festlegen: in mehreren Fällen konnten Fristen nicht eingehalten werden, weil es zu Verzögerungen kam, aber auch weil Umfang und Zielsetzung des ursprünglichen Projekts geändert werden mussten.



Kapazitäten der Verwaltung und mangelnde Expertise: fast alle Projekte hatten Probleme damit, innerhalb der öffentlichen Verwaltung Mitarbeiter mit dem entsprechenden Fachwissen und die nötigen Kapazitäten zu finden. Dabei machen sich fehlende Kapazitäten am stärksten im Bereich IT und bei digitalen Reformen (oder Reformen mit starker digitaler Komponente) bemerkbar. In spezialisierten Politikbereichen hat sich die Anwerbung und der richtige Einsatz geeigneter Mitarbeiter als wichtiges Problem erwiesen.



Abhängigkeit von externen Auftragnehmern: wo intern Expertise und Kapazitäten fehlten, wurden häufig externe Experten hinzu gezogen. Aber auch der richtige Einsatz von externen Beratern und Fachkenntnissen ist nicht einfach. Das größte Problem bei begrenzten internen Ressourcen besteht darin, sich nicht komplett von externen Experten abhängig zu machen und zumindest einen Teil des Fachwissens im Haus zu halten.



Verbreitung der Ergebnisse: viele Projekte hatten Probleme damit, die Projektergebnisse auf politischer Ebene und in der Öffentlichkeit erfolgreich zu kommunizieren. Moderne Trends in der öffentlichen Verwaltung lassen sich der breiten Öffentlichkeit nur schwer vermitteln, der oft auch das nötige Vorwissen und Offenheit fehlen.



Überbewertung formaler Vorgaben und Verfahren: Die Überbewertung von Form und bürokratischen Vorgaben wurde in mehreren Fällen als Projekthindernis wahrgenommen. Diese Schwierigkeiten traten nicht erst bei der Umsetzung der Projekte auf, sondern waren bereit in der Vorbereitungs- und Planungsphase deutlich, in denen das Schreiben von Projektanträgen und die Beantragung von Mitteln umständlich und unflexibel gestaltet sind. Das Festhalten an formalen Anforderungen und Verfahren behinderte auch die Ausschreibungsphase(n) vieler Projekte. Aufgrund einer Kombination aus den allgemeinen Vorschriften der EU zum ESF und den speziellen Regeln der Mitgliedstaaten konnten einige

Projekte erst (stark) verspätet beginnen. Obwohl die Vorschriften bereits vereinfacht wurden, bleiben die Verwaltungslasten hoch.

1.3.5. Die Rolle der ESF-Förderung

Der finanzielle Beitrag – ein notwendiger Anstoß für Reformen der öffentlichen Verwaltung: der finanzielle Beitrag der EU war hilfreich und diente in vielen Ländern, in denen Verwaltungsreformen stark von einer externen (EU-)Finanzierung abhängen, als Motor für Veränderungen. Bereits im Förderzeitraum 2007-2013 galt der ESF in zahlreichen Ländern als wichtigstes Finanzierungsinstrument für Reformen der öffentlichen Verwaltung. Diese Wahrnehmung hat sich auch im laufenden Planungszeitraum gehalten. Alle Fallbeispiele zeigen, dass die Reformen ohne finanzielle Mittel aus dem ESF vermutlich überhaupt nicht, oder zumindest langsamer oder in geringerem Umfang umgesetzt worden wären.

Weichenstellung und Mobilisierung: wie frühere Studien zeigen, wären viele der Maßnahmen, die im Rahmen von Projekten zum Kapazitätsausbau initiiert und entwickelt wurden, ohne Unterstützung durch den ESF nie begonnen worden. Neben dem rein finanziellen Aspekt kann diese Unterstützung also auch mobilisieren und neue Themen auf die Tagesordnung setzen. Dieses Ergebnis wurde durch die im Rahmen der PAPA-Studie erhobenen Daten bestätigt.

Kontinuität und Berechenbarkeit Reformen brauchen Zeit und müssen nachhaltig angelegt sein. Wenn sich Prioritäten und die politische Agenda in den Mitgliedstaaten ändern, fehlt diese Kontinuität und Reformen werden auf halbem Wege gestoppt oder sogar zurückgedreht. Die Kontinuität und Berechenbarkeit der ESF-Finanzierung hat zum Erfolg vieler Reformprozesse in den letzten Jahren beigetragen. Dies trifft sicher auf den Programmplanungszeitraum 2014-2020 zu, gilt aber vermutlich schon länger. Zwei Drittel der 30 Projekte, die für die PAPA-Studie ausgewertet wurden, hatten in früheren Förderprogrammen der EU ein direktes oder eng verwandtes Vorgängerprojekt.

Schwerpunkt und Art der Projekte: wie bereits erwähnt, können im Rahmen des ESF auch „weiche“ Aspekte des Kapazitätsausbaus gefördert werden. Da die staatlichen Haushaltsmittel häufig beschränkt sind, stellen die Fördermittel des ESF für „weiche Reformen“ einen wichtigen Faktor für eine bessere Verwaltung dar – ohne qualifizierte und gut ausgebildete Mitarbeiter haben die Bürger und Unternehmen, die Leistungen der öffentlichen Verwaltung in Anspruch nehmen, nichts von neuen Gebäuden oder IT-Systemen.

Interventionslogik, Projektmanagement, feste Zielvorgaben: die Anforderungen des ESF zwingen die Projektteams, konkrete Ziele, Ressourcen und die erwarteten Ergebnisse festzulegen. Dazu gehören Fristen und Meilensteine, die es den Teams erlauben, das Projekt oft innerhalb sehr kurzer Zeit abzuschließen. Die Berichtspflichten, die der ESF für Projekte vorsieht, haben häufig dazu beigetragen, dass Projektteams ihre Maßnahmen sorgfältig planen, sich politische Verbündete suchen und aktiv den Kontakt mit Interessenvertretern auf internationaler, nationaler und lokaler Ebene suchen.

Zugang zu Netzwerken: durch die Beteiligung des ESF erhalten Behörden in den Mitgliedstaaten die Chance, sich an europäischen Netzwerken, wie dem Europäischen Netz der öffentlichen Verwaltungen (EUPAN) und den von der Generaldirektion Beschäftigung, Soziales und Integration (DG EMPL) koordinierten ESF-Netzwerken zu beteiligen.

1.3.6. Fazit und gewonnene Erkenntnisse

Bedeutung der ESF-Förderung für Reformen der öffentlichen Verwaltung: alle Fallstudien zeigen, dass die Reformen ohne finanzielle Mittel aus dem ESF vermutlich überhaupt nicht, oder zumindest langsamer oder in geringerem Umfang umgesetzt worden wären. Dabei ist zu beachten, dass die Unterstützung durch den ESF auch mit den wichtigsten Zielen und Prioritäten der Strategie- und Planungspapiere auf nationaler Ebene im Bereich Verwaltung und Regierungsführung verknüpft war. Neben dem rein finanziellen Aspekt hat die ESF-Förderung auch einen mobilisierenden Effekt oder trägt zumindest dazu bei, das Thema Verwaltungsreform auf die (politische) Tagesordnung zu setzen.

Steuerung (politisch/administrativ): jede Reform braucht eine konsequente Steuerung. Dies betrifft nicht nur die Dimension der Lenkung von oben, sondern auch eine delegierte Steuerung von unten, weil die Umsetzung von Veränderungen oft in den Händen von administrativen Teams liegt. Dass die vom ESF-geförderten Projekte oft von einer höheren politischen Ebene oder aus der Regierung heraus gesteuert werden, gewährleistet nicht unbedingt den nötigen politischen Rückhalt - für die erfolgreiche Umsetzung des Projekts sind die demonstrative Unterstützung durch die administrative Leitungsebene oder die effektive Arbeit der Projektteams ebenso wichtig.

Beteiligung wichtiger Akteure in allen Phasen des Projekts: Die ausgewählten Projekte zeigen, wie wichtig es für eine erfolgreiche Umsetzung in allen Projektphasen ist, die betroffenen Akteure zu integrieren und die Kooperation zwischen unterschiedlichen Organisationen zu gewährleisten. Da diese Akteure die Bereiche, um die es geht, (technisch) am besten kennen und die Systeme, die entwickelt werden, später auch praktisch anwenden sollen, ist ihre Einbeziehung unerlässlich.

Klare Visionen, solide Planung und flexible Umsetzung: künftige Verwaltungsreformen und Projekte zum Kapazitätsausbau sollten zwar auf der Grundlage einer rigorosen Diagnose geplant werden, bei der Umsetzung ist aber auch Flexibilität gefragt. Die Planungsarbeit bietet eine solide Basis für die Projektsteuerung in der Umsetzungsphase. Und sie ist ein guter Ausgangspunkt für eine umfassende Kommunikationsstrategie, mit der alle wichtigen Projektakteure erreicht werden. Allerdings könnte die Maßnahmen und Instrumente künftiger Verwaltungsreformen im Rahmen des bestehenden Leistungsmanagements etwas flexibler spezifiziert werden, damit sie an veränderte Bedingungen angepasst werden können und Lernprozesse oder schnelle Korrekturen ermöglichen.

Teams und Kapazität: erfahrene Teams mit genügend internen Kapazitäten und klar verteilten Zuständigkeiten sind für die erfolgreiche Umsetzung von Projekten in der öffentlichen Verwaltung unverzichtbar. Dabei ist zu betonen, dass es die Fördermittel des ESF waren, die in einigen Projekten den Aufbau spezialisierter Teams und die Entwicklung der notwendigen internen Kapazitäten erst ermöglicht haben. Die Qualität des Projektteams ist ein kritischer Faktor. Daher ist es wichtig, im Rahmen der eigenen personalpolitischen Strategien und/oder Fahrpläne für den Ausbau administrativer Kapazitäten kompetente Teams zusammen zu stellen und ihnen (wenn nötig mit finanzieller und technischer Hilfe der EU) die Ressourcen und Hilfsmittel zur Verfügung zu stellen, die sie brauchen.

Sorgfältig ausgearbeitete Kombination notwendiger Maßnahmen es dringt langsam ins allgemeine Bewusstsein, dass die strukturellen und politischen Probleme, denen die EU-Mitgliedstaaten heute gegenüber stehen, nur durch eine durchdachte Kombination gesetzgeberischer bzw. politischer Maßnahmen und Verbesserungen gelöst werden können,

die über herkömmliche Regierungstechniken hinausgehen. Die vom ESF geförderten Projekte, die für die PAPA-Studie untersucht wurden, zeigen auch, dass die Projekte nur dann die gewünschten Ergebnisse erzielen und nachhaltig wirken können, wenn sie durch entsprechende Veränderungen der gesetzlichen und politischen Rahmenbedingungen oder der öffentlichen Verwaltung begleitet werden.

Nachhaltigkeit der Projektergebnisse gewährleisten: Es ist nicht leicht, die Ergebnisse von Projekten in neue Arbeitsabläufe umzumünzen und neu entwickelte Verfahren, Interaktionen mit Benutzern oder Verhaltensweisen großflächig in der Kultur und im Arbeitsalltag einer Behörde zu verankern. Da das thematische Ziel 11 im Rahmen von ESF+ im Programmzeitraum 2021-2027 nicht mehr förderfähig ist (mit Ausnahme von Maßnahmen zum Kapazitätsausbau in den Bereichen Beschäftigung, allgemeine und berufliche Bildung, soziale Eingliederung und Sozialschutz und Gesundheitswesen), ist es umso wichtiger, alle europäischen bzw. nationalen Fördermittel wirksam einzusetzen, um so die Nutzen von künftigen Reform- oder Kapazitätsausbauprojekten zu maximieren.

Mehrwerte aufzeigen: um das Engagement aller betroffenen Akteure zu gewährleisten, müssen Projekte intern (innerhalb der öffentlichen Verwaltung) und extern (gegenüber den Bürgern, die deren Dienstleistungen nutzen, und der allgemeinen Öffentlichkeit) beworben werden. Das größte Problem in allen PAPA-Fallstudien war der Widerstand bestimmter Elemente innerhalb der Verwaltung gegen Veränderungen. Unsere Daten weisen darauf hin, dass es entscheidend zum Erfolg beiträgt, wenn bei den Betroffenen eigenes Engagement für das Projekt und Verständnis für dessen Mehrwert geweckt wird. Außerdem ist es wichtig, die Ergebnisse des Projekts sowohl auf politischer Ebene als auch in der breiten Öffentlichkeit zu kommunizieren.

Koordination und Informationsaustausch: dass es unumgänglich ist, gleich zu Beginn des Projekts effiziente Verfahren zur behördenübergreifenden Zusammenarbeit einzurichten, ist eine weitere Lehre, die aus den untersuchten PAPA-Projekten gezogen werden kann. Dies gilt besonders in Fällen, in denen die Zusammenarbeit nicht nur horizontal (auf derselben Regierungsebene), sondern auch vertikal (zwischen verschiedenen Ebenen) stattfindet. Dabei müssen detaillierte Koordinationsverfahren entwickelt werden.

Außerdem muss das Potenzial zum Informationsaustausch voll genutzt werden, um zu gewährleisten, dass sich die betroffenen Beamten voll für das Projekt engagieren und ihr „Revierdenken“ überwinden. Durch den Zugang zu internationalen Experten und die zentrale Zusammenstellung bewährter Verfahren aus den Mitgliedstaaten auf europäischer Ebene, kann der Wissensaustausch zwischen einzelnen Reform- oder Kapazitätsausbauprojekten im neuen Programmzeitraum erleichtert werden.

Monitoring und Auswertung Wie die meisten PAPA-Fallstudien zeigen, fehlen oft systematische Daten und Auswertungen über den Erfolg von Verwaltungsreformen. Viele Länder haben auch keinen zentralen Mechanismus, mit dem Daten über den Fortschritt vor Reformen erfasst bzw. gemeldet werden. Dies gilt sowohl für nationale Reformen, die ohne Förderung der EU umgesetzt werden, als auch für mit EU-Mitteln geförderte Projekte. Zwar werden manche Initiativen bzw. Projekte regelmäßig ausgewertet, jedoch scheint es keine einheitlichen Monitoring-Verfahren für unterschiedliche Sektoren oder Politikbereiche zu geben.







































2. The context of ESF support to public administration reform

2.1. The importance of modernising public administration

In 2010, the European Union adopted a 10-year strategy entitled **Europe 2020**. It aims to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the Union as a way to overcome the structural weaknesses in Europe's economy, to improve its competitiveness and productivity, and to underpin a sustainable social market economy. **The European Semester** enables EU Member States to coordinate their economic policies while addressing the social and economic challenges that face the EU. Each year, the European Commission undertakes a detailed analysis of each country's reform plans and proposes country-specific recommendations. National governments respond to these recommendations by making appropriate policy decisions.

The modernisation of public administrations was listed as one of the key priorities for the successful implementation of the EU2020 Strategy and its associated structural reforms in the EU Member States. Since 2013, Annual Growth Surveys and, where applicable, Economic Adjustment Programmes, have recognised the need for national governments to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services, as well as the transparency and quality of public administration and the judiciary.

Table 1. Breakdown of country-specific recommendations by groups of Member States in 2013

Type of country-specific recommendation	Member States that received recommendations:			Number of Member States receiving this recommendation
Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of public administration	 BG  ES  IT	 CY  EL  RO	 CZ  HR  SK	9
Judiciary reform	 BG  HU  RO	 ES  LV  SI	 EL  MT  SK	9
Improving the business environment	 BG  HU  RO	 EL  IT	 ES  PL	7
Anti-corruption	 BG  HR	 CZ  HU	 EL  IT	6
Public procurement	 BG  HR	 EL	 HU	4
Absorption of ESI funds	 BG	 RO	 SK	3

Source: Draft thematic guidance fiche for desk officers, Institutional capacity building (thematic objective 11), version 2 – 22 January 2014. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_fiche_thematic_objective_11_en.pdf (accessed: 17 January 2020).

The importance of such reforms has also been underlined in **the Commission's country-specific recommendations**, as one of the main instruments applied during the European Semester. Country-specific recommendations were linked to support for public administration under TO11 during the programming period 2014-2020. Between 2012 and 2015, 20 Member States received country-specific recommendations in the field of public administration. The table above provides details of the country-specific recommendations received by 14 countries in relation to TO11 in 2013.

In addition, the European Commission set a number of **thematic ex-ante conditionalities** for the programming period 2014-2020. The conditionality of developing "a strategic policy framework for reinforcing a Member State's public authorities' administrative efficiency and their skills" was elaborated for TO11. It requested that these frameworks contain:

- An analysis of the existing situation.
- Strategic planning of legal, organisational and/or procedural reform actions in the areas of quality management, the simplification of administrative procedures, human resources management and training policies, monitoring and evaluation.

The Commission set out a number of criteria to assess the fulfilment of this conditionality, including:

- An analysis and strategic planning of legal, organisational and/or procedural reform actions.
- The development of quality management systems.
- Integrated actions for the simplification and rationalisation of administrative procedures.
- The development and implementation of human resources strategies and policies covering the main gaps identified within this field.
- The development of skills at all levels of the professional hierarchy within public authorities.
- The development of procedures and tools for monitoring and evaluation.¹

To fulfil this ex-ante conditionality, many countries had to implement specific measures, making the necessary modifications to their strategic policy frameworks.²

2.2. EU support to public administration under Thematic Objective 11

During the 2007-2013 programming period, institutional capacity building became a key policy priority for the ESF.³ This support was intended to go beyond mere technical assistance for the better management of EU funds, and instead was intended to assist with ongoing administrative reforms. Altogether, about EUR 2 billion of support was allocated from the ESF and the

¹ European Commission, *Guidance on Ex ante Conditionalities for the European Structural and Investment Funds*, PART II, 13 February 2014, p. 321. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/eac_guidance_esif_part2_en.pdf (accessed: 30 January 2020).

² European Commission, *ESF support to administrative modernisation, Draft discussion paper*, 2017. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/1096/2889 (accessed: 30 January 2020).

³ Council decision of 6 October 2006 on Community strategic guidelines on cohesion (2006/702/EC). Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32006D0702&from=EN> (accessed: 17 January 2020)

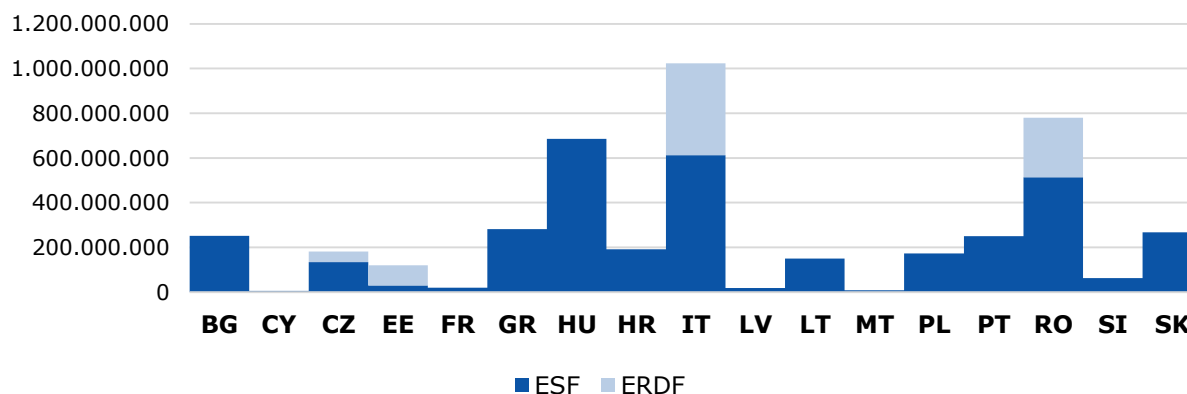
European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to measures supporting the quality of public administration in 19 EU Member States. A total of 13 countries programmed ESF support for the strengthening of institutional capacity, of which one country (Italy) allocated ESF support to seven different regional Operational Programmes (OP).

During the subsequent programming period, 2014-2020, enhancing institutional capacity became one of the thematic priorities for the ESIF. TO11 of the Common Provisions Regulation is aimed at “**enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration**”.⁴ The enhancement of institutional capacity is understood to operate at two levels: (1) enhancing the capacity of institutions and stakeholders of public administration, and (2) increasing the efficiency of public administration.

In accordance with the principles of excellent public administration, TO11 is not only a technical matter of training civil servants or improving the functioning of public organisations; it also relates to “how public authorities interact with and deliver services to businesses and citizens”.⁵ In contrast with technical assistance interventions, the focus of TO11 is on “genuine reform and systemic change to improve intrinsic public administration performance, independent from EU funds management”.⁶

During the 2014-2020 programming period, out of the 18 EU Member States who were eligible, 17 countries programmed support to address challenges under TO11: a total of around EUR 4.2 billion. In France, only interventions of the technical assistance type were programmed, in its outermost regions.

Figure 1. Support for institutional capacity building under TO11 in the programming period 2014-2020



Source: European Commission, *ESF support to administrative modernisation, Draft discussion paper*, 2017. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/1096/2889 (accessed: 30 January 2020).





⁴ Regulation No. 1303/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.









⁵ Draft thematic guidance fiche for desk officers, Institutional capacity building (thematic objective 11), version 2 – 22 January 2014, p. 4. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_fiche_thematic_objective_11_en.pdf (accessed: 17 January 2020).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

An overview of OPs under TO11 arranged by Member State for the period 2014-2020 is presented in the table below. Funding was committed to an overall total of 45 OPs, with some countries programming funds for more OPs than others. Italy and Portugal programmed funds for 19 and 7 OPs, respectively.

Table 2. Overview of relevant OPs per Member State (ESIF 2014-2020)

Member State	CCI	CCI title	Priority axis (as defined in OP)
 Bulgaria	2014BG05SFOP001	Operational Programme Good Governance	1; 2; 3
 Cyprus	2014CY05M9OP001	Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion	4
 Czechia	2014CZ05M9OP001	Operational Programme Employment	3; 4
	2014CZ16RFOP002	Integrated Regional Operational Programme	3
 Estonia	2014EE16M3OP001	Operational Programme for Cohesion Policy Funding 2014-2020	12
	2014EE16M3OP001	Operational Programme for Cohesion Policy Funding 2014-2020	12
 Greece	2014GR05M2OP001	Reform of the Public Sector	1; 2; 3; 7; 8; 9
	2014GR16M2OP001	Competitiveness, Entrepreneurship and Innovation OP	2
 Croatia	2014HR05M9OP001	ESF Operational Programme Efficient Human Resources 2014-2020	4
 Hungary	2014HU05M3OP001	Public Administration and Civil Service Development OP	1, 2
	2014HU16M2OP002	Competitive Central-Hungary OP	9
 Italy	2014IT05M2OP002	National Operational Programme on Governance and Institutional Capacity	3
	2014IT05M2OP002	National Operational Programme on Governance and Institutional Capacity	1
	2014IT05SFOP004	POR Friuli Venezia Giulia ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP005	POR Lazio ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP007	POR Lombardia ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP008	POR Marche ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP009	POR Abruzzo ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP010	POR Umbria ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP012	POR Veneto ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP014	POR Sicilia ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP015	POR Toscana ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP016	POR Basilicata ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP017	ROP PA Bolzano ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP018	ROP PA Trento ESF	4
	2014IT05SFOP020	ROP Campania ESF	4 (D)
	2014IT05SFOP021	POR Sardegna ESF	4
	2014IT16M2OP002	ROP Puglia ERDF ESF	4
	2014IT16M2OP003	National Operational Programme on Legality	4

Member State	CCI	CCI title	Priority axis (as defined in OP)
	2014IT16M2OP006	ROP Calabria ERDF ESF	4
 Lithuania	2014LT16MAOP001	Operational Programme for EU Structural Funds Investments for 2014-2020	10
 Latvia	2014LV16MAOP001	Growth and Employment	3
 Malta	2014MT05SFOP001	Investing in human capital to create more opportunities and promote the wellbeing of society	4
 Poland	2014PL05M9OP001	OP Knowledge Education Growth	2; 4
 Portugal	2014PT16M2OP001	Regional OP Norte	9
	2014PT16M2OP002	Regional OP Centro	8
	2014PT16M2OP003	Regional OP Alentejo	9
	2014PT16M2OP004	Regional OP Azores (Autonomous Region)	11
	2014PT16M2OP006	Regional OP Madeira (Autonomous Region)	10
	2014PT16M2OP007	Regional OP Algarve	8
	2014PT16M3OP001	Competitiveness and Internationalisation OP	V
 Romania	2014RO05SFOP001	Operational Programme Administrative Capacity	1; 2
	2014RO16RFOP002	Regional Operational Programme	11
 Slovenia	2014SI16MAOP001	Operational Programme for the Implementation of the EU Cohesion Policy in the period 2014–2020	11
 Slovak Republic	2014SK05SFOP001	Operational Programme Effective Public Administration	1; 2

Source: European Commission, *Role and effect of external support to public administration*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8141&furtherPubs=yes> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

The majority of this funding – EUR 3.6 billion – is provided by the ESF. Based on Regulation No. 1304/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 December 2013 on the ESF, ESF support for TO11 is delivered through two **Investment Priorities**:

- Investment in the institutional capacity and efficiency of public administration and public services carried out at national, regional and local levels with a view to reforms, better regulation and good governance.
- Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment, and social policies; this includes sectoral and territorial pacts to mobilise reform at national, regional and local levels.

The first priority includes:

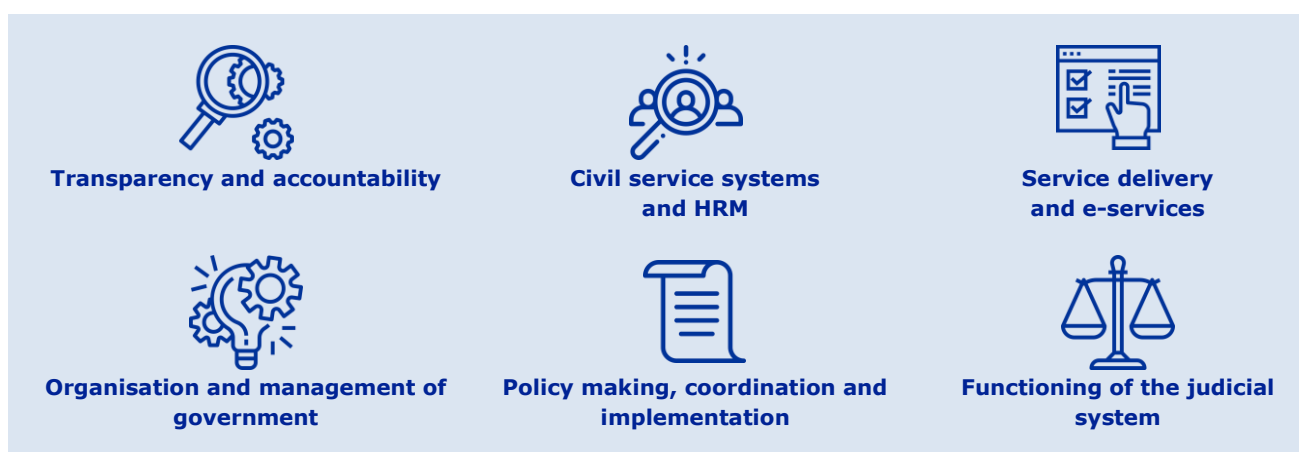
- Reforms to ensure better legislation; synergies between policies and the effective management of public policies; and transparency, integrity and accountability in public administration and the spending of public funds.
- The development and implementation of human resources strategies and policies.
- The enhancement of efficiency in administrative services.

The second priority encompasses:

- Enhancing the capacity of stakeholders such as social partners and non-governmental organisations, to help them to more effectively deliver their contribution to employment, education and social policies.
- The development of sectoral and territorial pacts in the domains of employment, social inclusion, health and education at all territorial levels.⁷

2.3. The focus of EU support by topical area

Every OP consists of several **priority axes**. Each priority axis corresponds to a specific fund, and to at least one thematic objective. The number and themes of the priority axes in each OP differs between EU Member States. Themes range from administrative service delivery, e-governance and the development of HR skills, to the creation of a more transparent and efficient judiciary. They can be grouped according to the following thematic dimensions of public administration:



It should be mentioned that in this categorisation, digitalisation is treated as a cross-cutting dimension because the digitalisation of specific services or functions can occur within several different themes. Also, if relevant, one project could be assigned to several themes.
















An extensive study of public administration reforms and the role of external support (including EU funding) for the enhancement of the quality of public administration (EUPACK) was completed in 2018. This study provides some relevant insights and acts as a starting point for the PAPA project, and consequently this summary report provides a brief overview of key aspects of the first EUPACK project.

Based on the data gathered during the EUPACK study, the total amount of EU funding allocated for public administration reform during the programming period 2007-2013 was around EUR 10 billion, and that planned during the programming period 2014-2020 was almost EUR 1.9 billion (between 2014 and Q1 2017 only). Between 2014 and Q1 2017, 1,358 ESF projects and 106

⁷ Commission staff working document, *Elements for a Common Strategic Framework 2014 to 2020*, Brussels, 14 March 2012, SWD(2012) 61 final, Part II. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docoffic/working/strategic_framework/csf_part2_en.pdf (accessed: 17 January 2020).

ERDF projects were mapped in the field of public administration in the TO11 beneficiary countries. The table below summarises the breakdown of funds to participating countries for the period of 2014-Q1 2017.

Table 3. Planned budget for public administration reform, external funds and national co-funding, EU funds (ESF/ESIF)

Country	Period 2014-Q1 2017
 Bulgaria	71,847,163
 Croatia	253,041,121
 Czechia	77,603,137
 Estonia	33,066,332
 Greece	142,946,226
 Hungary	840,660,046
 Italy	94,898,396
 Latvia	19,929,510
 Lithuania	17,492,728
 Malta	0*
 Poland	49,780,701
 Portugal	39,858,698
 Romania	125,000,887
 Slovakia	49,826,809
 Slovenia	78,528,259
Total	1,894,480,014

Source: European Commission, *Role and effect of external support to public administration*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8141&furtherPubs=yes> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

Remark: * by the end of Q1 2017, no ESF-supported project on public administration reform had been selected in Malta. The project 'Mystery Shopper – Enhanced performance in the Public Administration leading to Service of Excellence', which was analysed as part of the PAPA project, was only approved in 2018, together with other ESF-supported projects aimed at strengthening the efficiency of public administration and public services. The total budget for these projects was around EUR 14.3 million.

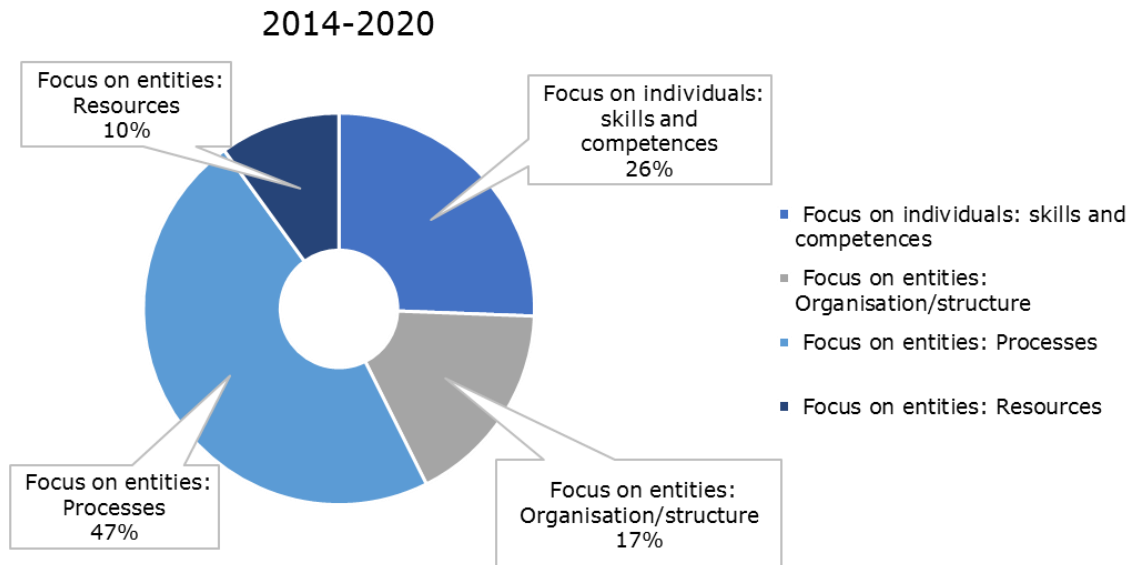
During the first half of the 2014-2020 programming period (i.e. between 2014 and Q1 2017), priority was given to the theme of 'Digitalisation' (39% of funds, compared to 14% of funds in the period 2007-2013). 'Service delivery' and 'Training' received somewhat lower funding during the first half of the 2014-2020 programming period (with 16% and 13% respectively).⁸ Based on the projects sampled in each Member State, 'Digitalisation' and 'Service delivery' are recurrent themes across almost all Member States, while 'Transparency' and 'Accountability' are a strong focus for Lithuania, but less so in other Member States.⁹

⁸ European Commission, *Role and effect of external support to public administration*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8141&furtherPubs=yes> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

⁹ Ibid.

During the current programming period, the main focus of EU support has rested on 'Entities: processes' (48%), with less emphasis on 'Individuals: skills and competences' (26%). For a detailed breakdown, see the Figure 2 below. Between one programming period and the next, there was a shift from a focus on individuals towards a stronger focus on entities. Overall, a shift was observed from the training of individuals towards a focus on entities and organisations through their systems and processes.¹⁰

Figure 2. Share of support per primary component of capacity building, 2014 to 2020



Source: European Commission, *Role and effect of external support to public administration*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8141&furtherPubs=yes> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

In terms of the type of support provided during the current programming period, the largest shares of funds are invested in infrastructure (37%) and change management (26%), followed by training (19%) and research/analysis (14%). A significant reduction was observed in the funds allocated to training compared to the previous period. In analysing the primary type of support provided by the mapped projects in each Member State between 2014 and the cut-off date of the end of March 2017, the study observed an increasing share of investments in Infrastructure and a decreasing allocation of funds to Research/analysis in most Member States.¹¹

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

3. Characteristics of the 30 ESF projects selected

3.1. How the 30 projects were selected

The 30 ESF-supported projects selected for the PAPA project do not necessarily only represent 'good practice' examples.¹² Instead, they represent both efforts that ultimately did or did not succeed, illustrating challenges to the effective implementation of ESF-supported reforms and capacity-building initiatives. The results achieved by these major reform projects are highly dependent on contextual factors. These include political support, government attention and the leadership of change. It is also difficult to maximise the effectiveness of EU funding in the field of public administration in cases where there is an absence of long-term vision and adequate strategic planning at national level.¹³

The projects in each participating Member State were proposed by the individual country experts. These were discussed at meetings with the geographical desk representatives at DG EMPL of the European Commission (face-to-face with 14 of the countries, the rest by phone and via e-mail). The aim of these meetings was to assess the suitability of the proposed projects, based on the information gathered by the relevant geographical desk on the status, relevance and significance of the project. After an initial discussion, the desks contacted each country's Managing Authority on the suitability of the proposed projects. This consultation resulted in some suggested projects being rejected, and new projects being added to the list. This approach finally resulted in a long list of 59 projects. This long list was later refined from 59 to 30 cases.

The final selection of 30 projects was based on seven **criteria**, detailed in Table 4 below. Two of these were regarded as 'guiding principles'; three were 'selecting principles'; and two were 'indicative, informative principles'.

Table 4. Selection criteria for case studies

	1. Geographical coverage	Guiding principles
	2. Relevance to the EU agenda and national reform agenda	
	3. Maturity of the case	Selecting principles
	4. Topical coverage	
	5. Target group/beneficiary	
	6. Financial volume of projects	Indicative, informative principles
	7. Focus of support	

¹² A few of the PAPA projects (such as the Slovenian project 'Civil Service Competency Model – the establishment of a uniform competency model') have become recognised as 'good practices' during the implementation of the PAPA project.

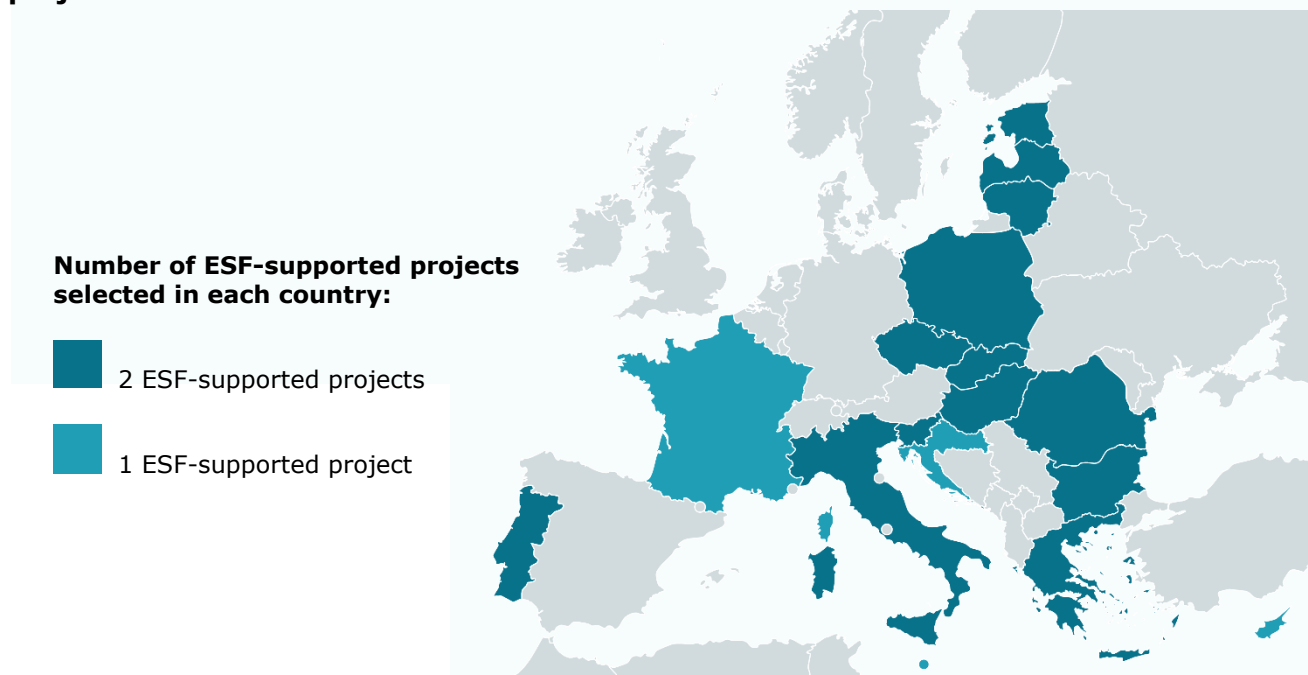
¹³ European Commission, *Role and effect of external support to public administration*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8141&furtherPubs=yes> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

The two guiding principles ensured that all 17 countries were represented in the PAPA case studies (criterion 1), and are relevant to both EU and national reform agendas (criterion 2). The relevance of projects was the subject of discussions between the DG EMPL geographical desks and the countries' Managing Authorities. Criteria 3, 4 and 5 were the selecting principles. Criterion 3 helped to shortlist cases that were mature enough to be documented as 'stories' according to the narrative framework approach. The cases were also fairly evenly distributed among the topical areas (criteria 4) and among target groups (criteria 5). Meanwhile, criterion 6, which concerns the financial volume of projects, and Criterion 7, on the focus of support, were mainly informative rather than decisive during the selection of the PAPA case studies.

3.2. Main outlook and characteristics of the selected projects

Applying the above criteria ensured that the study covered all EU Member States that were beneficiaries of ESF TO11 during the programming period 2014-2020. These Member States differed significantly in terms of the volume of ESF support allocated to public administration, as well as in their progress in implementing such operations during the programming period.¹⁴ At least one project was selected from each of the 17 targeted countries (BG, CY, CZ, EE, FR, EL, HR, HU, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, PT, RO, SI, SK). Figure 3 below illustrates the geographical distribution of the 30 projects selected.

Figure 3. Geographical distribution of ESF-supported projects selected for the PAPA project

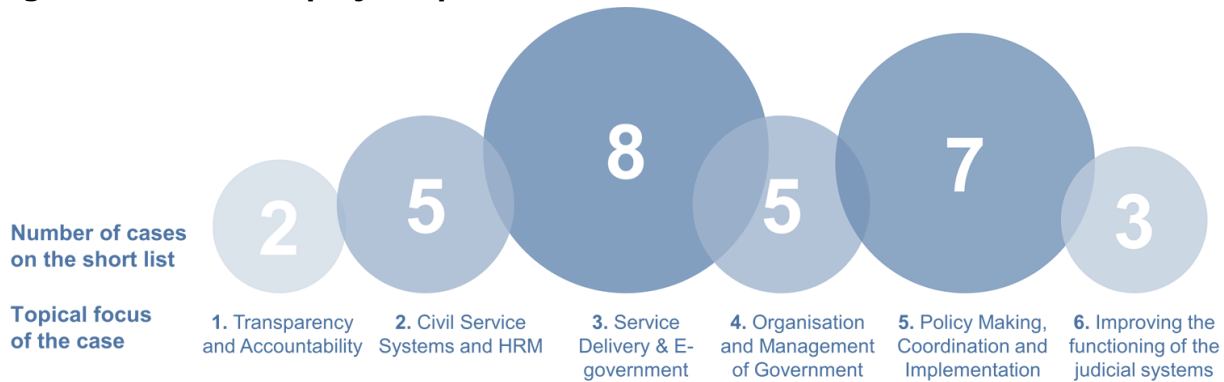


Source: the PAPA dataset.

¹⁴ For example, project selection rates in CY, HR, MT, and PT stood out in terms of the lack of progress achieved in these TO11 beneficiary countries. European Commission, *Synthesis Report of ESF 2017 Annual Implementation Reports, Final report*, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/synthesis-report-esf-2017-annual-implementation-reports> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

The cases were also selected to cover the widest possible **topical scope**, in accordance with the six dimensions of public administration discussed in section 2.3. The breakdown of ESF-supported projects by public administration theme is fairly similar to the overall distribution of public administration reforms within the EU between 2016 and 2018. During this period, individual Member States most actively pursued reform initiatives in the field of service delivery and digitalisation, and the specific field of transparency and accountability received somewhat less attention.¹⁵

Figure 4. Number of projects per thematic field



Source: the PAPA dataset.

Note: digitalisation is a cross-cutting, horizontal topic.

The selected projects also covered a wide range of potential **beneficiaries**, ranging from local and regional to national public sector institutions. Based on the findings of the EUPACK study, EU support to public administrations in Member States has predominately been absorbed at national level, with only a small share going to regional and local levels.¹⁶ Since the mandate for public administration reforms and system-wide institutional capacity-building activities is located at the level of central government, it is not surprising that many of the projects selected for case studies in the PAPA study have been implemented by central government authorities. However, the PAPA sample does include some regional and local projects, particularly in countries where ESF support to public administration is provided under regional OPs. Hence, a few of the selected projects are coordinated by regional and local authorities (see Figure 5 below).

Figure 5. Distribution of projects by level of government



Source: the PAPA dataset.

¹⁵ PPMI, EY, *Public administration reform trends and reform dynamics in EU27*. Unpublished EUPACK2 report, 2019.

¹⁶ European Commission, *Role and effect of external support to public administration*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8141&furtherPubs=yes> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

The PAPA sample of 30 ESF projects consists of 14 mono-beneficiary projects implemented without partners, and 16 multi-beneficiary projects implemented with partners. The majority of ESF projects included in the PAPA sample were coordinated by the Centre of Government (Chancellery/Government Office, the administration of the Council of Ministers) in the case of seven ESF projects; by a central government ministry (14 ESF projects); or by a central government agency (six projects). Other beneficiary organisations of the ESF projects included a regional development agency, an institute, and an association of local authorities (see Table 5 below). Partner organisations in the multi-beneficiary ESF projects often included a central government agency, service or office (in seven ESF projects); a central government ministry (in four projects); and a university, institute, hospital or another service provider (four projects). In a few cases, partner organisations came from the Centre of Government; a state company; regional authorities; a regional development agency; an association of local authorities; courts and other judicial bodies; as well as international organisations. Overall, although most of the PAPA projects were centrally steered, their implementation often involved different types of partners from various levels of government.

Table 5. Types of beneficiaries in the PAPA sample of 30 ESF TO11 projects

Type of institution	Beneficiary organisation of projects in the following countries:	Partner organisation in the following countries:
Centre of government (Chancellery/Government Office, the administration of the Council of Ministers)	BG EE(2) IT LV MT RO	SK
Central government ministry	CZ EL(2) HU IT LT(2) PL RO SI(2) SK(2)	BG CZ EE LV
Central government agency, service or office	BG CY HU HR LV PT	BG HU IT LV LT PL(2)
State company		HU(2) LT
University, institute, hospital or another service provider	PT	IT PT RO(2)
Regional authorities		IT
Regional government agency	FR	PL
Association of local authorities	CZ	BG CZ SK
Courts and other judicial bodies		LV
International organisations (IMF or OECD)		SK

Source: the PAPA dataset.

The sample of ESF-supported projects studied in the PAPA project encompasses a wide variety of **target groups** (see Table 6 below). The majority of these projects focused on decision

makers and institutions at national level (eight ESF projects); the general population/citizens (seven projects); regional and local-level institutions (six projects); and public administration institutions at all levels (six projects). Other important target groups for these ESF projects included civil service authorities and their staff (five projects); businesses and their associations (four projects); various groups of professionals (four projects); providers of public services and their employees (three projects); and vulnerable groups in society (three projects). This diversity indicates that in addition to enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities, some ESF interventions under TO11 addressed social inclusion by developing more appropriate administrative structures and/or improving the provision of public services to specific target groups (including the unemployed and disabled).

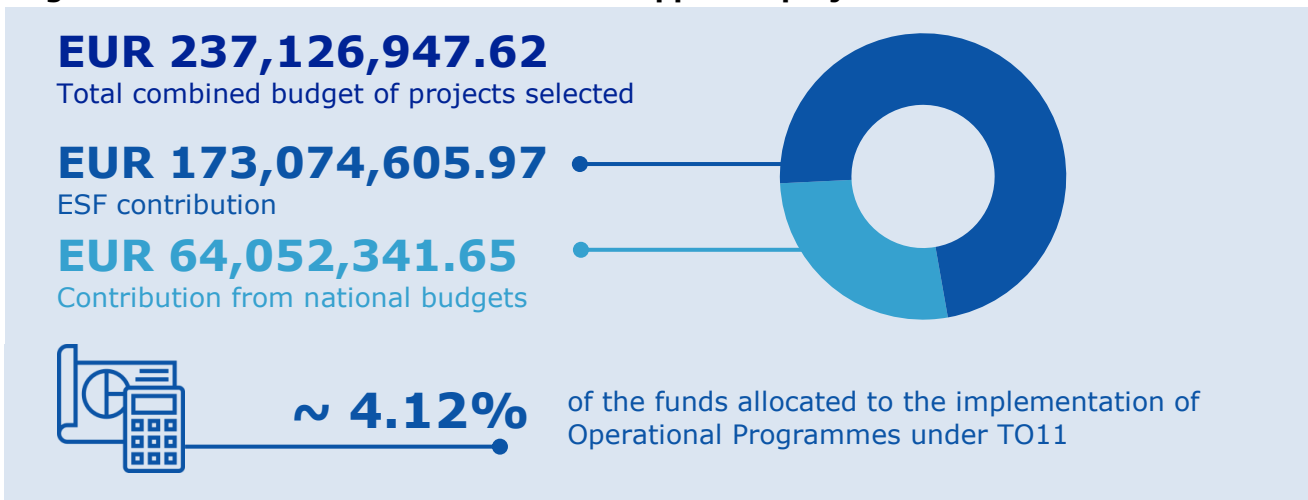
Table 6. Target groups in the PAPA sample of 30 ESF TO11 projects

Target groups	PAPA projects in the following countries:			
Policy makers, national-level institutions and their employees	EE(2)	HU	LV	LT
	MT	PL	RO	
Regional and local-level institutions, their associations and employees	CZ	FR	IT(2)	PL
	RO			
Public administration institutions at all levels and their employees	BG(2)	HR	PT	RO
	SK			
Civil service authorities and their employees (including top civil servants)	CZ	EE	HU	LV
	SI			
Courts and other judicial institutions, their employees	EL	LV		
Providers of public services and their employees	BG(2)	IT		
Businesses and their associations	HU	FR	HR	SI
	SK			
NGOs and civil society organisations	EE	FR		
Users of public services	BG	EL		
Vulnerable groups (unemployed, disabled, etc.)	CY	EL	FR	
Professional groups	HR	LV	LT	PT
General population, citizens	CZ	HU	HR	LT
	SI	SK(2)		

Source: the PAPA dataset.

As noted earlier, the financial volume of ESF support to a particular project was an informative criterion, rather than a decisive one. The combined total budgetary value of the projects analysed in the PAPA case studies is EUR 237,126,947.62. Of this, the total volume of support provided by the ESF was EUR 173,074,605.97. Overall, the 30 ESF projects analysed as part of the PAPA project correspond to around 4.12% of total EU funds allocated to TO11 during the current programming period. Therefore, the PAPA sample of ESF-supported projects is not representative of the overall implementation of TO11 in its beneficiary countries. See Figure 6 below for an overall breakdown of financial contributions to projects under TO11.

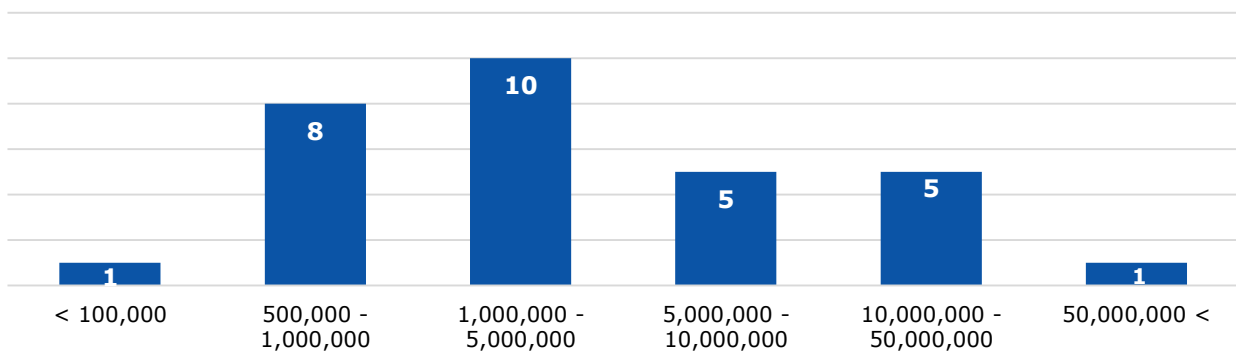
Figure 6. Financial contributions to ESF-supported projects



Source: the PAPA dataset.

In terms of **budget size**, ESF projects ranged from small projects (the smallest project being EUR 80,000) to large projects (with the budget of the largest project totalling to EUR 68,510,183.72). For details, see Figure 7 below. Based on the data collected during the PAPA project, the average share of a project’s funding that was met by the national contribution per project was 18.5%. Five projects were funded entirely by ESF funds, without any national contribution. The highest share of national contribution was 50.3% (the PT project involving hospital computer systems for the Registry of Transplantation).

Figure 7. Distribution of ESF-supported projects in the PAPA sample by total budget size (in terms of total budget)
















Source: the PAPA dataset.





At the time they were selected for the preparation of case studies, the 30 ESF projects in the PAPA project were at **different stages of implementation**. As of December 2019, only seven projects had been completed; the implementation of a further 22 projects was still in progress.¹⁷ A detailed list of the 30 ESF-funded projects is provided in Table 7 below.

¹⁷ Since the beneficiary that executed the project 'Territorial centre for economic cooperation' in French Guiana declared bankruptcy, this project was not included in this statistics.

Table 7. List of the 30 ESF projects selected for the PAPA project

MS	Project name	Focus	Level	Budget size
 BG	Development of the horizontal and central eGovernment systems in relation to the application of the Unified Model for Application, Payment and Provision of Electronic Administrative Services	Service delivery and e-services	National	EUR 3,579,035.83
	Transformation of the model of administrative service delivery	Service delivery and e-services	National and local	EUR 2,543,605.53
 CY	Establishment and operation of the Central Welfare Benefit Management Service (with the YDEP of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance)	Organisation and management of government	National	EUR 12,139,739.00
 CZ	Support for the professionalisation and quality of state civil service and state administration	Civil service systems and HRM	National	EUR 6,850,000
	Improvement of administrative capacities of municipalities on the basis of municipal collaboration	Organisation and management of government	Local	EUR 12,600 000
 EE	Programme of special task forces	Organisation and management of government	National	EUR 2,200,000.00
	Top Civil Service development programme	Civil service systems and HRM	National	EUR 3,713,956
 EL	Actions to optimise the flow of criminal, political and administrative proceedings	Justice	National	EUR 745,855.43
	Operation of local health units (TOMYS) to restructure primary health care	Service delivery and e-services	National & local	EUR 68,510,183.72
 HU	Simplification of tax administration procedures and the reduction of administrative burdens	Service delivery and e-services	National	EUR 46,000,000
	Strategic support for the recruitment of competitive public service personnel	Civil service systems and HRM	National	EUR 19,618,494
 FR	Territorial centre of economic cooperation	Organisation and management of government	Local	EUR 746,352.54
 HR	Strengthening the capacity of public authorities for the implementation of the Act on the Right of Access to Information	Transparency and Accountability	National	EUR 80,000
 IT	Methods and tools to support the public administration reform	Organisation and management of government	National	EUR 7,807,550.00
	Resilience and development of the national health care system	Policy Making, coordination and implementation	National	EUR 6,375,163
 LV	Senior leadership training programme in public administration	Civil service systems and HRM	National	EUR 926,094.00
	Justice for growth	Justice	National	EUR 11,028,343
 LT	Improving the business regulatory system	Policy making, coordination and implementation	National	EUR 930,648.06
	The development of the mediation system	Justice	National	EUR 922,347.71
 MT	Mystery Shopper - enhanced performance in the public administration leading to service of excellence	Service delivery and e-services	National	EUR 2,150,000
 PL	Improving management systems and standards as well as a customer service in tax administration	Organisation and management of government	National	EUR 2,500,000

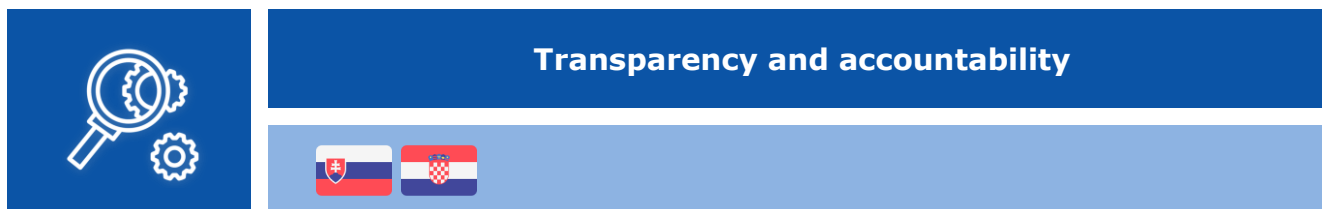
Progress Assessment of ESF Support to Public Administration (PAPA)

MS	Project name	Focus	Level	Budget size
	Standards of service of the investor in self-government	Service delivery and e-services	Local	EUR 774,514.99
 PT	LabX – the public administration experimentation laboratory	Organisation and management of government	National	EUR 1,000,000.00
	Integrating the Portuguese Registry of Transplantation with hospital computer systems	Organisation and Management of Government	National	EUR 600,723.70
 RO	Implementation of a system for public policy development in the area of social inclusion	Policy making, coordination and implementation	National	EUR 3,076,856.29
	Building an innovative tool for developing evidence-based policy making	Policy making, coordination and implementation	National	EUR 3,486,813.46
 SI	Civil Service Competency Model – the establishment of a uniform competency model	Civil service systems and HRM	National	EUR 534,031.00
	STOP the bureaucracy	Policy making, coordination and implementation	National	EUR 1,114,000.00
 SK	Efficiency of public expenditures	Transparency and accountability	National	EUR 6,432,604.15
	Measuring the efficiency of public services: one-stop shops	Service delivery and e-services	National	EUR 8,140,036.21

Source: the PAPA dataset.

4. Policy context and major aims of the projects

4.1. Cases in the area of transparency and accountability



Across the EU, the public sector is more open than ever. Many administrations have embraced this reality by adopting legislation to enable freedom of information. ICT is both a driver and an enabler of this openness. Digitalisation now allows the public to monitor the extent to which public administrations meet their obligations on transparency and information access. In this way, public institutions can be held accountable for public spending and integrity. Freedom of information encourages civic involvement in performance monitoring, prompts media interest, as well as enabling protection against corruption and misuse of public funds.

It is up to individual governments to decide how ambitious they wish to be when extending the boundaries of that openness. The Public Sector Information Directive on the re-use of public data applies to all Member States, but many administrations also provide access to information on processes, performance, tendering procedures, the use of public funds, the various steps involved in policy or decision making, etc.

External scrutiny also requires the existence of strong institutions outside the executive and judiciary that are able to investigate behaviour and hold the administration to account. These include Supreme Audit Institutions, Information Commissioners, Ombudsmen, an independent media and effective non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

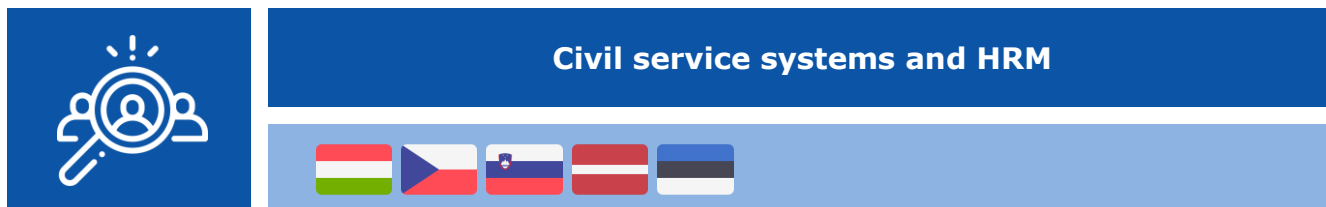
The main aim of the **Slovak project** 'Efficiency of Public Expenditures – Public Expenditure Reviews' is to evaluate whether taxpayers' money is used in the best possible way to achieve the goal of high-quality public services. Its specific goal is to improve analytical capacities at the Ministry of Finance. Good governance also requires high-quality *ex-ante* and *ex-post* analysis of public expenditures, with the aim of ascertaining, as far as possible, their efficiency. Such analysis allows measures to be selected for priority financing that provide the most positive impact on public welfare, in order to achieve sustainable development. The core activity of the project is the development of public expenditure reviews to evaluate the efficiency of selected expenditures (including their impacts on the private sector) and to compare alternative uses for these finances. The results of these reviews are expected to serve as core inputs into the drafting of public budgets. The areas of focus for the project are the current expenditures of Slovak ministries, public investments, public policies and regulatory policies.



The activities of the **Croatian** ESF-funded project aimed to build the capacity of the Information Commissioner's Office, as well as the capacities of stakeholders and beneficiaries of the right of access to public sector information. This includes

contributing to the strengthening of capacities among key stakeholders to access information (such as public authorities and their users, associations, the media and citizens). The project also aimed to increase the capacity of public administrations to apply the Law on Access to Information as effectively as possible, and thereby to contribute to the transparent, open and responsive work of government and public administration in the Republic of Croatia’.

4.2. Cases in the area of civil service systems and HRM



Like any service organisation, the most precious asset and productive resource any public administration has is its human capital: public servants, their collective know-how, their individual ingenuity, and the diversity of their backgrounds, education and experience. It serves everyone’s interest for staff to be competent, motivated, ethical, responsive and flexible. During recent decades, the public services of the EU Member States have gone through considerable reforms in the field of human resources management (HRM).

Many HRM reforms in EU Member States have aimed to reduce costs – a trend that has been especially prevalent in countries more severely affected by the financial crisis over the past ten years. More recently, however, reforms have begun to move slowly in the direction of increasing professionalism and meritocracy. Another recent trend in HRM is the introduction of greater flexibility into the rules governing recruitment and employment conditions, as well as making it possible for civil servants to better adapt to new opportunities and challenges, such as a digital society in which citizens and enterprises increasingly expect online public services at their convenience.¹⁸

EU Member States need to adjust to the ‘new normal’ of HRM. Accordingly, the focus of five projects in the PAPA study was on the development of HRM instruments that enable the civil service system to attract, prepare and retain personnel in public service (in Hungary and Czechia); the development of a competency model (in Slovenia); and targeted actions towards senior civil servants (in Latvia and Estonia).

Hungary introduced a number of policy measures during the 2007-2013 programming period aimed at improving the attractiveness of public administration – and, in particular, central government – as an employer. Despite this, the proportion of young employees remained low. Another negative trend was the increasing level of staff turnover among civil servants. This led to a continual loss of organisational knowledge and expertise, and hindered the proper transfer of job-related skills and competences to new employees. The general aim of the Hungarian project ‘Strategic support for the recruitment of competitive public service personnel’ is to construct HRM instruments that enable the civil

¹⁸ PPMI, EY, *Public administration reform trends and reform dynamics in EU27*. Unpublished EUPACK2 report, 2019.

service system to attract, prepare and retain personnel within the public service. To this end, the project aims to develop systems and methodological instruments, as well as developing ICT resources, to support these functions. The project includes elements that target specific organisational competences (such as HRM instruments, events and training materials), as well as elements that cover overarching, horizontal aspects of good governance (such as an HRM database and a management information system with a broad scope).

Improvement of the civil service in **Czechia** was one of the key goals of pre-accession assistance, but this was not supplemented by more relevant, systemic changes in legislation for quite some time. Czechia was an example of a country without general civil service legislation, and until 2015 the country had rather fragmented legislation governing public administration employees. The new Act on the State Civil Service was approved rather rapidly, without sufficient preparation and deliberation. This push came about due to the commitment of the Czech government to undertake such a reform, which was enshrined in the ESIF Partnership Agreement for 2014-2020. The main aim of the project 'Support to professionalisation and quality of state civil service and state administration' is to support the implementation of the 2014 Act through various instruments, tools and processes.



Within **Slovenia's** normative framework and legislation, there was a lack of understanding of civil servants' personal involvement in achieving organisational and strategic goals, and of their role in implementing changes and improvements, and a culture of innovation in the country's state administration. In addition, the potential of civil servants in relation to their job requirements was not taken into account when evaluating performance. All of these reasons triggered the idea of establishing a uniform model for civil service competency, put forward by the leadership of the Human Resource Management Sector in the Public Sector Directorate at the Republic of Slovenia's Ministry of Public Administration. The aim of the Slovenian project was to establish a tool for effective HRM within the state administration by developing a competency model for civil servants, and thereby expanding awareness of the idea that in addition to formal education, an individual's skills, attitudes, beliefs, motives and values are also important to their successful job performance.



In **Latvia**, rapid social and economic changes, combined with the increasing adoption of ICT and an unfavourable demographic situation, have placed the issue of the competences of every single administrator on the agenda for the country's authorities. Against the background of a complex and volatile environment, strong leadership helps to ensure the continuity of management – and is therefore essential to improving the efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of the public sector. While technical skills had been regarded as extremely important within Latvia's public administration, 'soft' skills and leadership had been somewhat neglected since the economic crisis of 2008. From this perspective, 'Senior leadership development programme' was the right project in the right place at the right time – and, crucially, with the right team. By focusing on comprehensive training and including key areas (e.g. financial management, ICT, the rule of law, innovation, communication, leadership and strategic workforce planning) into the training curriculum, the State Chancellery, as the centre of government, aims to bring a systematic and 'whole-of-government' approach to the training of senior leaders.



In **Estonia**, the creation of a new Civil Service Law in 2013 provided a solid legal basis for the country's top civil service and formalised the process of merit-based recruitment and selection, eliminating several grey areas that provided opportunities for direct political influence. Open competition was introduced as a general rule for almost all top civil service positions, with the civil service itself continuing to be a position-based system. All top civil service positions became subject to a (renewable) five-year term of office. Participation in appraisals and development activities became compulsory. These rules apply to the 100 top civil servants. The ESF-funded 'Top Civil Service Development Programme' reflects a systematic approach to sustaining and strengthening the management of the top civil service.



4.3. Cases in the area of service delivery and e-government



Better services for citizens, specific users or businesses have become a major issue on the agenda for public administration reform in several, if not all, EU Member States over the past decade. Public services encompass not just the high visibility services such as health, education and welfare, but include every instance in which some form of exchange of information or finance takes place: registering, licensing, applying, paying, borrowing, making an enquiry, and so on. At the same time as administrations seek more cost-effective ways of working, the digital society, 24/7 media and social networks have all raised awareness of what is achievable. Citizens and businesses increasingly demand public services that are better, faster and cheaper – and they often prefer to access them online, rather than waiting in line.

The EUPACK2 report (2018) found that service delivery and digitalisation had become the main trends in reforms over the last decade. These reforms were aimed in two directions: (1) the development of online public services, along with the provision of necessary infrastructure (such as electronic identity and portals); and (2) more traditional approaches, such as providing one-stop shops (OSSs) aimed at providing a single point of contact with public administration, as well as initiatives aimed at improving quality of services and at policy innovation in general.¹⁹

The projects studied by PAPA under this topic explore how administrations can better understand the needs and expectations of service users, how they can improve processes and simplify administration, as well as enabling ease of access to services via OSSs or multi-channel delivery. These projects also seek to exploit the advantages of e-government, interoperability

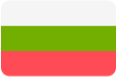
¹⁹ Ibid.


and 'once-only' data registration, moving services towards 'digital by default' and 'open by default'.

4.3.1. E-government and digital solutions

The classical challenges in relation to e-governance in the public administration are clearly illustrated by the **Bulgarian** project and the **Hungarian** Tax Ministry project. In both cases, there was:

- A low level of digitalisation of base registries.
- A concentration of high-performance computing and IT resources in the central administrations, regardless of the fact that the municipal administrations are the main administrative service providers.
- A low level of technological readiness among the administrations, and limited opportunities to attract IT professionals into public administration in general.
- Great difficulty in exerting quality control over the external contractors that maintain technological aspects of service delivery.
- Resistance to the introduction of e-Government, as this entailed a change in the way the administration had worked for many years.

 Individual administrations in **Bulgaria** have been implementing uncoordinated policies to digitalise services over the previous 15 years. This had resulted in a situation in which they built their own individual capacity and infrastructure, predominantly serving their internal needs. The need was recognised to centralise the efforts and to integrate e-government into a single structure, in order to eliminate the duplication of infrastructure and the overlapping of systems within the administration, and to secure clear rules for the admissibility of e-government projects, as well as to optimise existing processes within the administration.

In the **Hungarian** case, advanced administrative e-administration solutions were  introduced (for citizens, public administration and businesses). For instance, a system was created to track taxpayers over the course of their lives, thereby lessening the burden of coordination between the different segments of tax administration. This system connects various events during a taxpayer's life, enabling tax authorities to quickly and easily access data relevant on individual administrative cases and thereby improve the speed and regularity of administrative decision making. The system improves the quality of operations too, since clients are delivered coherent services rather than disjointed and possibly incoherent ones.

4.3.2. Simplification of service delivery and one-stop shops

Increasingly, public administrations are using digital means to deliver services to citizens and businesses. These have evolved quickly from passive systems (one-way access to basic public information) to interactive ones (two-way engagement, allowing sophisticated transactions to take place). The more mature the system, the greater the gains in terms of simplification and the reduction of administrative burden. However, the big leap forward comes from integration: the bundling of services across several administrations, so that the interface between them is seamless and the connections between the various 'back offices' becomes effectively invisible to

the user. To establish this level of connectivity, and for the systems of various organisations to be interoperable (i.e. they are able to interact with one another, sharing information and knowledge), basic registries need to be in place and digitised. Only after this basic requirement is met, can public administration begin to consider OSS applications that operate according to the 'once-only' principle (i.e. users providing information to the public administration only once).

However, digitisation should not be the first step in (re)-designing administrative services. To avoid 'digitising the bureaucracy', any redesign of services and service delivery should start from a 'user-focused' approach: What are the needs and expectations of the users? How do we translate those needs and expectations into our processes and services? Both the public and the business community should be consulted on the question, and should become active partners in the process. 'Digital by default' is a concept heavily promoted by the European Commission (e.g. in the EU eGovernment Action Plan and the 2017 Tallinn Declaration on eGovernment). This means that public administrations should deliver services digitally as the preferred option (while still keeping other channels open for those who are not connected to the internet by choice or necessity). The 'digital by default' strategy is to be encouraged, but from a realistic perspective, governments need to ensure that all groups within society enjoy equal access to public services. Multi-channel service delivery can help to allay concerns over the digital divide and to ensure that no users are left behind. Such a strategy allows governments to design targeted services using appropriate channels and means, with the ambition of becoming as digital as possible.

Four projects address these challenges, providing examples of workable solutions in this area. The **Bulgarian** project on administrative services aims to develop electronic forms (user interface) for requesting and receiving certificates through official channels from the country's administrative registers.



Slovakia's ESO reforms (Efficient, Reliable and Open State Administration) address three main areas: integrating specialised local state administration into a single state office; establishing client centres ('one-stop shops') to provide citizens with access to integrated local government; and optimising administrative processes and structures, with a focus on the development of e-government.



Under the **health care project in Greece**, Public Health Care Centres (TOMYs) were conceived to offer prevention, treatment, rehabilitation, palliative care and the social re-integration of patients in local health care units.



The fundamental goal of the local government project in **Poland** was to develop and test a uniform approach to investor services that could ultimately be applied across all municipalities in the country. The intention of the project was to develop a comprehensive, rather than fragmented, approach to the issue of standardising investor services – not as an obligatory requirement, but as a model of good practice.



4.4. Cases in the area of the organisation and management of government

	Organisation and management of government	
	Organisational and policy coordination	
	Inter-municipal and multi-level cooperation	
	Reorganisation and changing culture	

Over the years, governments have sought new ways to improve the performance of the public sector and to enhance service delivery through organisational change. A regular feature of the political landscape has been the re-allocation of roles between ministries, resulting in the reorganisation of the machinery of central government, with the intention of improving policy making and implementation. This direction of reform is sometimes combined with investments in horizontal coordination and the strengthening of capacity in the Centre of Government.²⁰

Given the inter-dependence of many policy fields, the effect of such reorganisation can be a zero net sum. Unless the restructuring is linked to better coordination and communication across the whole of government (or the specific changes are designed solely to produce productivity gains within a narrow policy domain), it amounts to simply re-arranging the 'silos'. The challenge for public administrations is not to passively accept the negative fall-out of structural change, but to design and execute responsive policy interventions. This demands well-coordinated inter-institutional and multi-level government action.

Within this topic, several of the PAPA case studies can be clustered into different sub-topics. First, the projects from **Cyprus** (reform of the social welfare system), **Estonia** (task forces) and **Portugal** (the health sector) illustrate issues, challenges and opportunities presented by organisational and policy coordination within a particular policy area or across areas.

A second category includes the cases of **Czechia** (Centres of Intercommunal Services), **France** (the Territorial Centre for Economic Cooperation) and **Italy** (*RiformAttiva*), which include an element of multi-level governance.

Finally, projects from **Poland** (National Revenue) and **Portugal** (innovation LabX) illustrate the effects of changing a culture by reorganising organisational structures and approaches.

²⁰ Ibid.

4.4.1. Organisational and policy coordination



In 2014, **Cyprus** established a Guaranteed Minimum Income scheme by adopting the Guaranteed Minimum Income and Social Benefits Law of 2014. This replaced the Public Assistance and Services Law of 2006–2013, replacing and centralising previously fragmented benefits. Previously, dozens of benefits had been provided independently of each other, without coordination between various departments, agencies and ministries. Reform of the social welfare system had become a necessity – hence the YDEP project was conceived. Such reform had been one of the commitments made by the President of the Republic of Cyprus prior to his election in 2013. It was also a prerequisite for the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2013 between Cyprus and its international lenders.

In 2011, the OECD published its Public Governance Review of **Estonia**. The report concluded that the country operated a fragmented and decentralised public administration, and urged that “Estonian public administration needs to learn to work as a single government to design, implement and sustain the government’s policy priorities and to help meet new challenges on the horizon.” As a result, eight temporary Task Forces were set up to address “complex or urgent developments in policy or service delivery that cut across many parts of government”. By bringing together the relevant ministries and government agencies, local authorities, experts, non-governmental and private sector organisations, these Task Forces encourage cooperation and create an environment in which open discussion can take place. The aim of establishing a Task Force has been to increase the effectiveness of cross-sectoral cooperation in solving horizontal policy problems, “without getting tangled in established, rigid areas of responsibility and funding arrangements”.



In 2010, a European Union Directive on the quality and safety of organs for transplantation was published, whose guidelines required the existence of a register of donors and a register of candidates for transplantation. The ESF-funded project to create an integrated **Portuguese** Registry of Transplantation’ (RPT) took as its starting point the country’s fragmented information system for organ donation and transplantation. All the inputs required for a single, harmonised national RPT were recorded and stored in the individual systems of various hospitals/laboratories, but there was no communication with the RPT itself. In this context, the integration of the RPT and hospital computer systems to create a ‘technological ecosystem’ emerged as an opportunity to facilitate and ease the work of health professionals by avoiding the duplication of organ donation and transplantation records.

4.4.2. Inter-municipal and multi-level cooperation

The **Czech** Smart Administration Strategy for the period 2007-2015 highlighted low levels of professionalism in the execution of self-government and state administration tasks by small municipalities. On the basis of this, the Centres of Intercommunal Services project was launched. This project relates to the establishment of voluntary associations of municipalities, but is not focused specifically on their activities as specified by the legislation with regards to their scope. Rather, voluntary associations of municipalities were used as platforms on which individual Centres of Intercommunal Services could be established.



In **France**, ESF money under TO11 is exclusively granted to four overseas regions and

departments: Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, and Mayotte. Among the TO11-funded projects in French Guiana was the Territorial Centre for Economic Cooperation, a recently introduced (at the time) administrative status granted to private associations, allowing them to play a coordinating role between the public sector and individual or collective socio-economic initiatives. The status of the Territorial Centre was created by the 2014 Social and Solidarity Economy Act. The centres are networks set up on a voluntary basis to cover appropriate economic areas, irrespective of the boundaries of administrative districts. Their aim is “a common and permanent strategy of cooperation, in the service of economic and social projects, sociologically and/or technologically innovative, and initiating local sustainable development”.



The **Italian** *RiformAttiva* project was conceived to address the implementation gap, and in particular, to enhance the effectiveness of the public administration reforms approved by the Minister of Public Administration during 2016 and 2017. The intention of the project was to accompany top-down reforms and to operationalise them through support interventions. The aim of *RiformAttiva* is to support regional and local governments in the implementation of the reforms and, more generally, in their efforts to modernise their organisational structures and procedures through their active engagement.



4.4.3. Reorganisation and changing culture

The aim of the ‘Customer relationship management’ project at **Poland’s** National Revenue Agency (NRA) is to improve the NRA’s operations – specifically those of its ‘back offices’ (individual tax offices) – and to enhance the quality of the services it provides to its customers. The NRA was established as a new entity on 1 March 2017, combining previously dispersed organisations that dealt with tax collection and customs duties. The decision to establish the NRA stemmed from a belief that without consolidating the country’s tax administration structures, it would be impossible to improve the collection of tax revenues or to enhance the performance of tax administration.



Innovation within public administration is a challenge. There is a perception that it is difficult to innovate within the public administration due to lack of HR skills, lack of funding, the existence of an overregulated, hierarchical and silo culture. It is in this context that the **Portuguese** LabX emerged. This project aimed to:



- Create a network of innovators.
- Provide a physical space (the laboratory) in which new ideas and/or solutions can be tested and prototyped.
- Design new public services, redesign existing services, identify where bottlenecks occur, and promote the use of currently complex and difficult-to-use electronic services, based on the real needs of users (citizens and companies) and the technological and economic viability of projects.
- Boost the development of transversal solutions that focus on citizens and businesses rather than the organisation of public administration, thus helping to eliminate ‘organisational silos’.

4.5. Cases in the area of policy making, coordination and implementation



Policy making, coordination and implementation



Policy making is usually described as a cyclical process, from problem identification to programme evaluation, which in turn informs the next round of policy design. However, the lack of consensus as to a definition reflects the reality that policy making is a flexible concept, which in practice does not follow rigid rules. Decision making should be underpinned by certain principles, however, that can be applied whatever the context. While unexpected events mean that policy making is sometimes sporadic and reactive, governments also face demographic, economic and environmental challenges that extend beyond the short term and often demand pan-European or global solutions. In this light, many public administrations are finding the time and space for forward policy planning over the medium to long term, covering more than one electoral cycle. They are also increasingly looking for citizens and businesses to become actively involved in policy making, rather than being the passive recipients of policy decisions. The ESF-funded projects covered under this topic address different aspects of the policy cycle, ranging from reducing administrative burdens and improving legislation (**Slovenia's** 'STOP the bureaucracy' project), through to improving evidence-based policy making (**Italy's** National Health Reform project and the two case studies from **Romania**), and strengthening policy implementation and control (the project to reform business supervisory agencies in **Lithuania**).

Slovenia's 'STOP the bureaucracy' project comprises two main fields of activity. The first is to promote better legislation, based on the country's Resolution on Legislative Regulation, which emphasises stakeholder involvement and the training of government officials in such matters. In this regard, most of the project work was carried out in cooperation with various NGOs and watchdogs, in particular the Centre for Information, Cooperation and Development of NGOs. The second aspect of the 'STOP the bureaucracy' project is the removal of administrative burdens. Here, the Development Office plays the main role, horizontally coordinating activities within government ministries.



In 2019, expenditure on public healthcare in Italy was approximately EUR 118 billion, an increase of 2.3% compared to 2018. The **Italian** Health Care Reform project aims to provide a mechanism for planning expenditure that goes beyond historical expenditure levels (the incremental approach) or basic indicators such as age and gender, and instead uses Big Data to estimate future costs, demand drivers (social, epidemiological, etc.) and the volumes of assistance required. It will allow the simulation of short, medium and longer-term effects of various economic alternatives, as well as transferring finances and policy decisions to the regions in order to promote efficiency, effectiveness and equity.



The overall purpose of the **Romania's** ESF-supported project 'State of the Nation: Building an Innovative Tool for the Development of Evidence-based Policy Making' was to create a set of sustainable development indicators, and to collect statistical



data to support policy makers at central and local government levels in developing evidence-based policy. The second case study from **Romania** case also focuses on improving evidence-based policy-making capacities. The purpose of this project was to create a set of strategic planning instruments: maps depicting existing infrastructure and social service provision, as well as the need for such services and infrastructure, together with methodologies to support decision making that takes into account the needs and interests of citizens.

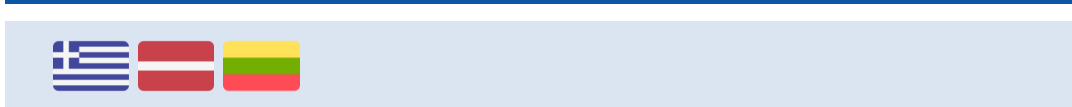
The reform of business supervisory agencies in **Lithuania** began as far back as 2009. Performance culture within such agencies was frequently perceived as being based on punishing businesses for infractions, rather than providing advice and assistance. The large network of supervisory institutions and their overlapping tasks were identified as one of the main weaknesses of the country's system of business supervision. By 2009, the former Lithuanian Ministry of the Economy, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, had already introduced a reform seeking to optimise the functions of the country's supervisory agencies and increase their efficiency. The current project aims to further increase the efficiency of Lithuania's business supervisory system by: 1) ensuring the development and application of innovative business supervision instruments by supervisory agencies; and 2) improving the skills of staff employed within these agencies.



4.6. Cases in the area of improving the functioning of judicial systems




Improving the functioning of the judicial systems




It is a fundamental right of citizens to expect an effective justice system. Such a system also underpins business confidence, job creation and economic growth. Enabling entrepreneurs to protect their rights, settle their contracts, and recover their debts is vital for enterprise, investment, innovation and fair competition. Across the EU, mutual understanding and trust in judicial administrations – their quality, independence and efficiency – is essential to the functioning of the internal market. The PAPA case studies from Greece, Latvia and Lithuania under this topic examine how judiciaries assess their performance, both quantitatively and qualitatively, in order to inform ongoing improvements and innovations. These projects also look at ways in which access to justice can be enhanced at the point of entry, during the judicial process, and at its conclusion. They explore the modernisation of judicial administrations, including the role of e-Justice systems (in **Greece**); better communication and consultation, as well as user-centric processes including alternative dispute resolution and mediation (in **Lithuania**); and judicial training and continuing professional development (in **Latvia**).

Alongside tax reforms and many other issues of an economic nature, the reform agenda in Latvia included the motivation and increased professionalisation of the judiciary, together with territorial reform of the judiciary and reform of other law enforcement institutions. The professionalism of the judiciary and law enforcement institutions is one of the cornerstones of the rule of law. The aim of the **Latvian project** is to increase the competence of the staff in the courts and law enforcement institutions to promote

the improvement of the business environment. Although the Court Administration assumes overall responsibility for the training of judges, the project team decided to adopt an interdisciplinary approach that reaches beyond the institutional borders of the Administration to include under its 'training umbrella' all institutions within the justice sector (the Ministry of the Interior, Prosecution Office, Supreme Court and State Forensic Science Bureau). Being a project based around the development of 'soft' skills, the main activities of 'Justice for Growth' are structured around training 11,433 individuals, conferences, evaluations, systemic assessments and the sharing of best practices with necessary inputs into databases and electronic management systems.

The deficiencies in the administration of justice in Greece are widely recognised by both domestic and international actors to the extent that all political forces, in government or opposition, consider judicial reform to be a primary priority.  International observers, including the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ), have underlined the need to increase the efficiency and improve the quality of the justice system in Greece.²¹ The **Greek case study** presents a package of four ESF-supported projects that share a common objective – to improve the quality and efficiency of legal proceedings by introducing e-justice into the Greek courts, within the context of the overall reform of the justice system. By implementing information technology (IT) systems, the reform aims to contribute to the automation of case processing, the development of reliable statistics and to a reduction in the backlog of cases. This project was conceived and implemented in conjunction with other relevant projects that also promote e-justice in Greece. During the 2014-2020 programming period, these reforms included among other things, the completion of the Integrated Judicial Case Management System for Civil and Criminal Procedure, video-conferencing services to courts and prisons, and the digitalisation of court archives and data.

 Recognising the benefits of Alternative Dispute Resolution methods, on 13 March 2017 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania approved an action plan on the implementation of a government programme that included a measure to enhance the application of alternative dispute resolution methods in civil process, and to legalise them within the administrative process. The **Lithuanian project** aims to increase the effectiveness of Lithuania's judicial system by developing a system of mediation. The project has three key objectives: 1) to encourage mediation in civil disputes by preparing qualified mediators, training and examining them according to the programme developed; 2) to guarantee appropriate technical conditions and the environment required for the mediation processes; and 3) to inform society about the possibility of mediation in civil judicial disputes. In order to achieve these objectives, the team preparing the project developed a number of activities that encompass training, technology, communication and the refurbishment of facilities.

²¹ European Commission (2018), *The 2018 EU Justice Scoreboard*. Luxembourg: European Union. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/justice_scoreboard_2018_en.pdf (accessed: 17 June 2019).

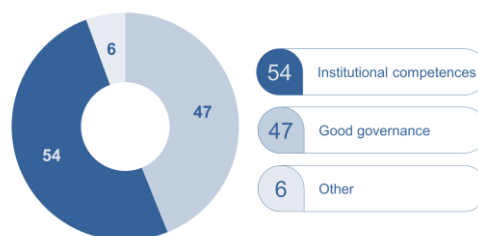
5. Results and achievements of the projects

5.1. Intervention logic

Every priority axis in each project's OP contains at least one **specific objective**. This defines how the particular needs of the Member State or region will be targeted. Specific objectives have **expected targets and indicators of results**, enabling the progress of implementation to be measured. The analysis of the ESF OPs shows that a total of 107 specific objectives were selected by the TO11 beneficiary countries.²² These specific objectives can be clustered into two main types:

- Targeting specific institutional competences.
- Targeting horizontal aspects of good governance.

The vast majority of these 107 specific objectives are divided almost equally between those that target institutional competences (54 cases out of 107) and those that target good governance (47 cases out of 107) (with 6 other specific objectives). Most of the **actions** supported are related to entities and institutions (tools and instruments, improvements in competences, change management), mainly targeting civil servants, as well as national and local public organisations.²³ Around 39% of the funds were allocated to the theme of digitalisation.



Actions targeting individuals are aimed at improving the skills and competences of civil servants and of other relevant stakeholders at all hierarchical levels, covering different sectors and fields of intervention. Actions targeted at entities aim to streamline public administration processes (by, for example, introducing innovative management and quality assurance methods to improve the delivery and quality of services); improving/making more effective organisation/structures; and developing/introducing new resources.

²² European Commission, *The analysis of the outcome of the negotiations concerning the Partnership Agreements and ESF Operational Programmes, for the programming period 2014-2020 Final report: EU28 Analysis*, 2016. Available at: <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b2c01d15-ffef-11e6-8a35-01aa75ed71a1/language-en> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

²³ Ibid.

Table 8. Dimensions of capacity building and typologies of interventions

Focus of interventions	Typologies of interventions
(a) individuals	
Skills and competences ('who')	Developing the skills of staff within public authorities (e.g. training, traineeship programmes/on the-job-training, learning networks).
(b) entities	
Processes in terms of rules, procedures, tools, working methods ('how')	Streamlining internal processes (e.g. introducing new working methods/organisation, developing quality management systems, adopting new IT systems)
	Human resources management programmes and policies (covering, for example, staff requirements and career development)
	Improving interactions between institutions and stakeholders/the public (e.g. dialogue mechanisms, exchange of best practices, introducing tools and methods for evidence-based policy making, mechanisms for public participation, actions for better legal implementation and enforcement, tools for increased transparency and accountability, etc.)
	Improving the delivery and quality of services, including via reforms to reduce administrative burden, integrating services (focus on back office); delivery of one-stop shops (focus on front office); e-government/e-justice, etc.
Organisation/structure in terms of structure and organisation of departments, functions etc. ('how')	Developing appropriate administrative structures, including via the reallocation of functions, decentralisation, improving management structures, etc.
Resources ('what')	Informational and technical resources.

Source: European Commission, *Monitoring and Evaluation of European Cohesion Policy, European Social Fund, Guidance document*, 2014. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/sfc/en/system/files/ged/ESF%20monitoring%20and%20evaluation%20guidance.pdf> (accessed: 17 January 2020).

ESF-supported **actions** in EU Member States are based on specific objectives and results indicators. The key objectives of TO11-related investments in Member States include:

- Improving the quality of policy making through better monitoring and analytical capacity, streamlined impact assessment, systems to simplify and reduce red tape, and the modernisation of budgeting.
- Improving administrative service delivery through diversified access, optimised back-office processes, and interoperable e-government solutions.
- Increasing the effectiveness of the justice systems in Member States through, for example, the training of court staff, introduction of case management systems, and optimisation of the workflow.
- Increasing the transparency of public administration and strengthening stakeholder involvement.
- Improving the quality, integrity and professionalism of the civil service by adjusting recruitment, career and performance systems, as well as providing targeted training.²⁴

²⁴ Draft thematic guidance fiche for desk officers, Institutional capacity building (thematic objective 11), version 2 – 22 January 2014. Available at:

It is difficult to make any generalised assessment of the outcomes of public administration reforms, as they are context-specific and depend on many factors.²⁵ However, the importance of EU support to public administration reforms in EU Member States was confirmed during the EUPACK project. This revealed that EU support was a 'kick-start' and a 'trigger' for numerous reform initiatives in Member States, particularly with respect to expensive projects (e.g. digitalisation). Although a change of government was found to be the main reform driver in the EU27 during the period 2016-2018 (emphasised by 15 countries), the influence of the EU ranked second, with this factor being regarded as important in nine countries (most of which are the beneficiaries of financial support under TO11).²⁶

The 2017 European Commission report on the implementation of ESIF funding states that by the end of 2016, with ESF support, some 70,000 employees had been supported under TO11 (training, exchange of good practices, study visits, reorganising offices, ICT diffusion, outsourcing and integrating salaries). In addition, by the end of 2017, 29% of the total planned investments in public administration reforms had been allocated.²⁷ Other results reported relate to reductions in the amount of administrative time required to carry out certain operations; the implementation of certain IT systems; revised and/or simplified procedures; increased regulatory scrutiny, and more. Programme-specific indicators show that a total of 2,473 public and private organisations recorded positive results. Of these, 559 were national public authorities; 218 were related to the judiciary; 137 were local/regional public authorities; and 50 were civil society organisations. Other types of institutions and organisations made up the remaining 1,509.²⁸

As many of these public administration reforms and capacity building initiatives are still in progress, information on the achievement of expected outputs is still limited. The ESF-supported projects of the PAPA study indicate that the main outputs to be developed will include studies, increasing the evidence base and assisting future policy preparation; digital solutions; simplification and improved service delivery; the development of training and skills; as well as the development of various systems, guidelines and tools (see the section below). Based on the actions supported in the beneficiary countries, their specific objectives and the outputs expected, it can be expected that the ESF will contribute to the enhanced functioning of state institutions, improved competences among public sector employees, better service delivery and policy making, as well as a higher level of transparency. However, it is important to highlight that these outcomes will occur only if some obstacles that hinder implementation are successfully overcome, and if certain external assumptions materialise (see section 6 below of this summary report for more on this).

https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/informat/2014/guidance_fiche_thematic_objective_11_en.pdf (accessed: 17 January 2020).

²⁵ European Commission, *Role and effect of external support to public administration*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=738&langId=en&pubId=8141&furtherPubs=yes> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

²⁶ PPMI, EY, *Public administration reform trends and reform dynamics in EU27*. Unpublished EUPACK2 report, 2019.

²⁷ Commission staff working document, *Strategic report 2017 on implementation of the European Structural and Investment Funds*, Brussels, 13 December 2017, SWD(2017) 452 final.

²⁸ European Commission, *Synthesis Report of ESF 2017 Annual Implementation Reports, Final report*, 2018. Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/content/synthesis-report-esf-2017-annual-implementation-reports> (accessed: 30 January 2020).

Table 9 below details the overall intervention logic of public administration reforms and capacity-building interventions at both EU and national level during the programming period 2014-2020, summarising the information provided in this section of the report. The intervention logic consists of six main components: the overall objective and investment priorities; priority axes and specific objectives; conditionalities and their fulfilment criteria; inputs; main actions; outputs and expected outcomes. The component of expected outcomes can be further divided according to time horizons into immediate (short-term) results and intermediate (long-term) results. This intervention logic guided the preparation of the case studies produced for the PAPA project.

Table 9. Intervention logic of institutional capacity-building interventions at EU and Member State level during the programming period 2014-2020














<p>EU LEVEL</p>	<p>Overall objective: Enhancing the institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and increasing the efficiency of public administration</p> <p>Two ESF investment priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment in institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administrations and public services • Capacity building for all stakeholders delivering education, lifelong learning, training and employment, and social policies <p>Conditionalities and fulfilment criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existence of a strategic policy framework for the reinforcement of Member States' administrative efficiency including public administration reform • The analysis and strategic planning of legal, organisational and/or procedural reforms; the development of systems for quality management; integrated activities for the simplification and rationalisation of administrative procedures; the development and implementation of human resources strategies and policies covering the main gaps identified in this field; the development of skills at all levels of the professional hierarchy within public authorities; and the development of procedures and tools for monitoring and evaluation 				
<p>NATIONAL LEVEL</p>	<p>PRIORITY AXES AND COUNTRY SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES</p> <p>Types of priority axes (in terms of thematic fields):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transparency and accountability 2. Civil service systems and HRM 3. Service delivery and e-services 4. Organisation and management of government 5. Policy making, coordination and implementation 6. Functioning of the judicial system <p>Cross-cutting theme – Digitalisation</p> <p>Types of country specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting specific institutional competences • Targeting horizontal aspects of good governance 	<p>INPUTS</p> <p>EUR 3.7 billion programmed from the ESF for the implementation of TO11 interventions in 17 EU Member States</p>	<p>MAIN ACTIONS</p> <p>Financing activities based on the specific objectives of Member States, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving quality of policy making through better monitoring and analytical capacity, streamlined impact assessment and systems for simplification and the reduction of red tape, modernisation of budgeting • Improving administrative service delivery through diversified access, optimised back-office processes, and interoperable e-government solutions • Increasing the effectiveness of Member States' justice systems through training, introduction of case management systems, optimisation of the workflow • Increasing the transparency of public administration and strengthening stakeholder involvement • Improving the quality, integrity and professionalism of the civil service by adjusting recruitment, career and performance systems 	<p>OUTPUTS</p> <p>During the period 2014-Q1 2017, a total of 1,358 ESF projects were supported under TO11</p> <p>Some 70,000 employees had been supported by ESF projects by the end of 2016</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies, increasing the evidence base and enhancing policy preparation • Digital solutions • Simplification and improved service delivery • Training and skills development • Systems, guidelines and tools 	<p>EXPECTED (IMMEDIATE AND INTERMEDIATE) OUTCOMES</p> <p>Immediate outcomes Depends on the specificity of a project</p> <p>Intermediate outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved functioning of state institutions and public sector organisations • Improved skills and competences of individuals • Improved policy making • Improved service delivery • Increased transparency and better fight against corruption

Source: PPMI, based on desk research.

The sample of 30 ESF projects selected for the PAPA project shows that the TO11 beneficiary countries programmed ESF support to a wide variety of specific objectives, targeting both specific institutional competences and horizontal issues of good governance. In a few beneficiary countries, the formulation of these specific objectives tended to be somewhat general (e.g. “investments in institutional capacity and the efficiency of public administration and public services” in the case of Czechia, or “improvement of the performance of public administration” in the case of Italy).

The analysis of the ESF-supported projects included in the PAPA study most frequently pursued specific objectives in the fields of HRM and professional development, the reduction of administrative and regulatory burden, and in policy planning, coordination and development (see Table 10 below). These are the key principles and requirements for good governance included in various international public administration frameworks. Digitalisation often features as a cross-cutting theme within the sample of PAPA projects, but objectives specific to e-government were also set out in the OPs (e.g. high-level and advanced e-administration solutions for citizens, public administration and businesses in the case of one Hungarian project). The distinctiveness of the French case, in which ESF support under TO11 was granted to four overseas regions and departments, is also reflected in its specific objective of strengthening the skills of socioeconomic stakeholders and associations, and enhancing social dialogue and networking outlined in the case of the project in French Guiana.

Table 10. Most common types of specific objective in the PAPA sample of 30 ESF projects

Type of specific objective	TO11 beneficiary countries			
Human resource management and professional development of civil servants	 EE	 CZ	 HU	
	 HR	 LV	 SI	
Reduction of administrative and regulatory burden on citizens and businesses	 BG	 HU	 LT	
	 SI			
Policy planning, coordination and development	 EE	 RO (2)	 SK (2)	

Source: the PAPA dataset.

5.2. Project achievements and key outputs

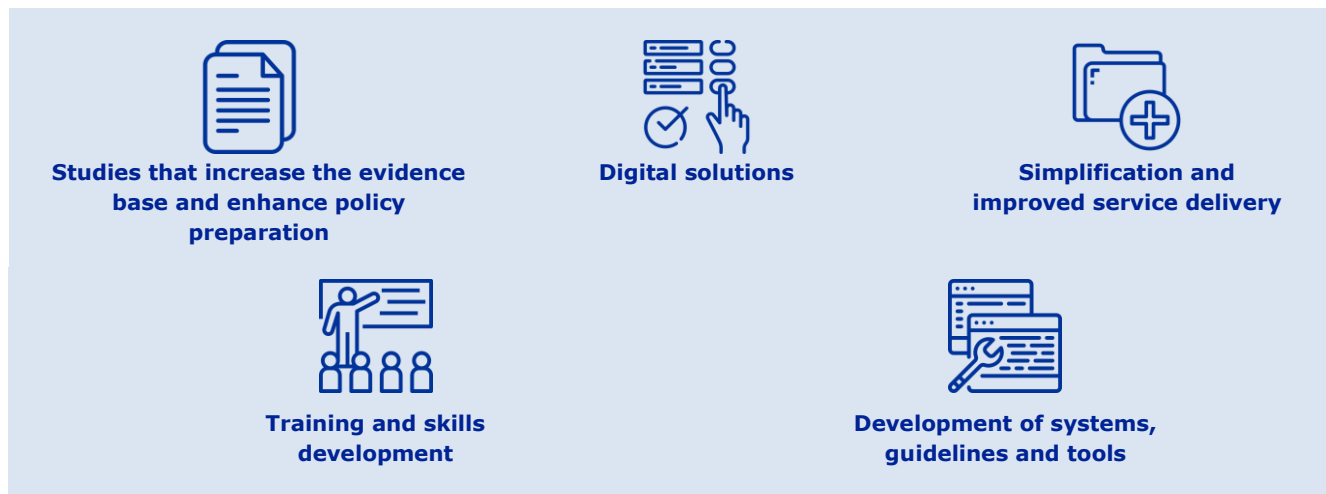
Assessing the progress and outputs of the 30 selected projects is not an easy exercise for several reasons. First, most of the PAPA projects are still in the process of being implemented, with some of them not even in the final stages. Overall, it is hard to obtain data on the factual accomplishments of the projects, and therefore difficult to evaluate the project and its outcomes as a whole. One can access some of the projects’ outputs on their web pages, official, published evaluations of project activities are somewhat scarce, and focus only on certain activities (generally those related to the implementation of quality management).

Second, all of the projects have formulated quantifiable indicators, but often their intangible achievements or the changes in mindset/culture produced may be just as interesting (if not more interesting), although harder to quantify.

Third, it is impossible in this summary to capture all of the nuances of the projects. This section

provides a short description of each individual project and its achievements, while the factsheets (in Annex 1 to this summary report) contain further details about the individual PAPA projects.

For the purposes of this summary, we have clustered the achievements of the 30 projects into five main clusters.



5.2.1. Studies that increase the evidence base and enhance policy preparation

By 2019, the eight government Task Forces created in **Estonia** had concluded their work, and presented their results to the government for approval. This means that joint definitions had been agreed in eight crucial policy areas, and shared agendas were formulated by stakeholders. Altogether, more than 300 people from public, private and non-profit sectors were engaged in the activities of the Task Forces, in one way or the other. The work of the Task Forces has resulted in a number of legislative changes and additional budgetary allocations, as well as clarifying accountability in a number of areas. For example, in the field of e-Health, considerable structural changes followed the adoption of the e-Health strategy prepared by the relevant Task Force. Based on the proposals of the Task Force on public sector and social innovation, a joint innovation unit of ministries was established in 2019.

The results achieved by the **Italian** Health Care project have so far included the establishment of a control room and Advisory Board, following up on the national simulation and decision-making model for expenditure planning and allocation among the regions on health expenditure.

The **Latvian** team has organised two out of three planned evaluations of its judicial system. The most notable of these was an assessment carried out by the Council of Europe's European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ). The OECD has also carried out research into the regulation of commercial law, while the IMF has implemented an assessment of Latvia's insolvency system.

The main results achieved by the **Romanian** project on social indicators are:

- the development of methodology to map existing and required social services, poverty and in-work poverty in a manner that is standardised and comparable.

- A national database containing information that covers the existence of social services and related infrastructure.
- A geo-spatial information system that facilitates data analysis and provides electronic support to the attractive presentation of the mappings, making them available online to policy makers, service providers and users, as well as to the general public.
- Four interactive and accessible maps depicting existing and required social services and infrastructure, poverty and in-work poverty for every county and administrative-territorial unit in Romania.

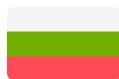


The other **Romanian project 'State of the Nation'** has produced four key outputs:

- A system of socio-economic indicators and methodology that are relevant to Romania's sustainable development, and which can improve decision making at central and local government levels.
- A statistical data aggregator, entitled the 'State of the Nation', which synthetically captures the country's multi-faceted development.
- The collection of data concerning public perceptions on relevant topics relating to the country's sustainable development, gathered via 30 surveys (barometers) implemented over the project's lifespan.
- The development of public policy initiatives that make use of the aggregator for evidence-based policy making.

5.2.2. Digital solutions

In **Bulgaria**, a single portal for access to electronic services is operational, and the use of the individual services is growing rapidly. Various administrations and municipalities are joining RegiX (the central catalogue of e-service) as they become ready. At the beginning of 2017, overall monthly transactions for all types of e-service were around 90,000; by June 2019, this figure had reached 2 million. In addition, e-Forms have been developed for over 150 electronic services, including the development of an e-Authentication system.



So far, the main achievement of the project in **Cyprus** has been the development (for the first time) of a **Computerised Social Benefit Register** that maintains data and information on all persons receiving state benefit. Furthermore, with the establishment of the register, social welfare officers can now carry out their real work of providing psychosocial support for families and citizens in need.



Greece has achieved the partial optimisation of court proceedings. This success has not been evenly distributed, as the transition from a manual to a new electronic case management system has been much more successful in administrative court proceedings than in civil and criminal court proceedings. In some, but not all, criminal and civil courts in the four cities in which the project was rolled out (Athens, Thessaloniki, Piraeus and Chalkida), lawyers are now able to file lawsuits electronically, although some continue to submit lawsuits in person at the court. The use of the new system has not yet become standard practice. Depending on the court in question, lawyers are able to monitor the progress of a lawsuit using the system. Administrative staff, judges and prosecutors can use the case



management system to find information, but some continue work using the previous manual system. Meanwhile, court hearings and the preparation of court decisions by judges are still not as well supported by computerised systems as they could be (e.g. the recording of court hearings or the retrieval of documents related to a specific case).

The main achievement of the health care project in **Portugal** has so far been the interconnection of laboratory analyses and the ability to directly download these analyses. The numbers demonstrate the success of the project so far: 513 registered users (health professionals) at the Portuguese Registry of Transplantation; 53 hospitals involved in the first and second phases; 1,850 donors referenced in the application so far; and 35,301 patients registered in the transplanted waiting list.



5.2.3. Simplification and improved service delivery

Before the project in **Slovakia** began, 43 OSSs were already in operation. By May 2019 this number had increased to 56. The project is also progressing well according to some other of its performance indicators. Almost 6,000 employees from current district offices, traffic inspectorates, police and other state administration bodies are expected to finish their specific training, with the aim of learning how to deliver administrative services under one roof and in direct contact with the customer. By April 2019, more than 70% of planned trainees had already finished their training. The project has also helped to improve co-ordination between the administrative services provided by local self-governments, and the services delivered by OSSs. In addition, client satisfaction surveys have already been carried out and will be repeated at regular six-month intervals.



A total of 1,085 administrative regimes in **Bulgaria** have been reviewed for the purposes of simplification. A series of 50 pilot administrations have introduced a system to deliver complex administrative services, and 17 municipal services have been standardised. Already, the 50 pilot administrations are using the modules developed for the connection and exchange of official information in the inter-register exchange environment, RegiX, as of June 2019.

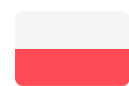


By the end of 2019, over 1,100 inter-municipal cooperation projects have been realised in **Czechia**, thanks to activities of the project that aims to improve the quality of life in small municipalities that do not have the resources to deal with projects on their own. The Ministry also estimates that, in 2017, the project saved over CZK 170 million in funding to municipalities. As of June 2019, 83 CSSs were providing services to almost 1,700 municipalities.



The main achievement of the health care reform in **Greece** has been to put in place a totally new and much-needed Public Health Centre (TOMY) structure across the entire country. The first TOMY was opened in December 2017 in Thessaloniki. Over the first six months of 2018, 94 TOMYs were established. By mid-2019, the total number of TOMYs had reached 127. It seems highly unlikely that future reformers would wish to overturn such a step towards improving health care in Greece, given that past and current decision-makers, irrespective of political persuasion, have agreed on the need for a comprehensive and structured Primary Health Care system.





In-depth research has been completed into the satisfaction, expectations and behaviours of customers using the National Revenue Agency (NRA) in **Poland**. A feasibility study for an IT tool supporting research and the management of relationships with NRA customers has also been concluded. Decisions relating to the IT tool will be made by the end of July 2021. These activities will culminate in specialist training sessions and work in the field of managing relationships with the NRA's customers.

After two years of implementation, the LabX in **Portugal** has shown results in relation to all its objectives. It has demonstrated the feasibility and potential of these objectives in Portuguese public administration through outcomes such as the creation of an Innovators' Network, the use of prototyping and other experimental solutions, the dissemination of information to and improved capacity of public managers and servants, and the promotion of citizen-centric approaches in its projects and initiatives. Of the 12 projects defined as goals in the project's application, LabX has already completed 11, and is now working on another 3 projects.



Malta carried out 'mystery shopper' visits at 650 service sites, resulting in a number of recommendations. The recommendations already implemented include: simplifying processes for the convenience of the general public; improving service delivery by reducing waiting times; strengthening front office services; upgrading the appointment system and queue management; enhancing customer experience at the reception and service delivery desks; and creating a calm atmosphere in the waiting area by enhancing queue management.

5.2.4. Training and skills development

In **Croatia**, a total of 21 workshops and webinars were carried out; nine educational and promotional videos were created; five publications were issued; a new website for the Information Commissioner's Office was launched; and an international conference was held. These activities have strengthened the capacities of the Information Commissioner's Office and other stakeholders in relation to the implementation of the Right of Access to Information Act.



Estonia's Top Civil Service Excellence Centre has periodically commissioned studies to assess the commitment of top civil servants to their work. Such surveys were carried out by a private contractor in 2011, 2014 and 2017 to take stock of progress made. Along with various other components, these surveys evaluate a central measure – the commitment of top civil servants to their work. Another key performance indicator has been the number of candidates per recruitment contest for top civil service positions. This has increased from a low level of 4.3 in 2013, to a very high level of 11 in 2018. This can be attributed to the success of activities led by the Centre, aimed at improving the image of the State as an employer. However, this increased figure does not reflect the quality of candidates, which on occasions remains below the desired level.



The ambitious scope of the justice project in **Latvia** can be summed up in a single number – the target of engaging 11,433 participants in training events by the end of the project. By July 2019, the project had reached its mid-point and was running ahead of the planned target indicators, with 7,375 participants having been involved in training events.



At the outset of the other **Latvian** project on senior leadership training in public administration, the targeted groups comprised 64 institutions and 159 participants. However, by the middle of 2018, these had expanded to 71 institutions, encompassing 183 participants – heads and deputy heads of institutions at central government level. Over the project's lifespan, the number of events has increased significantly. By mid-2019, the total number of events in various formats (from 1-hour long events up to 2-day events or longer programmes) had reached 57. By the same time, the number of participations since the beginning of the project had reached 1,321. Some of these represent one-off participants, while some participants have attended multiple events. Implementation of the project is in line with the planned indicators, and the approach of the project, which is based on flexibility and communication, is bearing fruit. Leaders within the public administration are applying new ideas and knowledge in practice, as well as undertaking experiments and looking for possible improvements. Thus, the project has reached maturity, achieving popularity and a 'networking effect'.



The project in **Slovenia** has resulted in the establishment of a uniform model for civil service competency. The model developed provides the core principles for effective performance and applies to all civil servants within the state administration. These competencies provide the basis for the selection, assessment and development of civil servants within the state administration. The goal of the project, defining competencies for 80% of functions within state administration, was achieved in this way. Leadership competencies apply to leaders within the state administration. The project team organised 12 training sessions for leaders, in which 169 leaders participated. At the second and third levels of leadership, 1,082 leaders took part in 42 training sessions. In addition, 32 HR experts participated in 12 'Train the trainer' sessions. Eleven members attended a training session organised for members of the Council of Officials. These results resulted in the project being recognised as the best HR project in the country.

The main achievement of the **Lithuanian** mediation project has so far been the development of an examination programme for mediators that has fed directly into the training curriculum. In addition, the project team at the National Courts Administration has completed three study visits to institutions abroad. These visits proved to be a valuable experience that could inform the implementation of other project activities and may become relevant in the institution's future work in mediation. More tangible outputs will become evident once other project activities, such as creating the List of Mediators or refurbishing facilities, are finalised.



In **Poland**, the completed project on local investment activities includes the following outputs:


- The delivery of training and consultancy activities on the implementation of the investor service standard.
- The development of a simulation game and the organisation of a study visit, both for the benefit of management staff at the territorial self-government units supported by the project.
- The delivery of training sessions for the staff of investor service centres.
- Organisation of two local government meetings – a two-day event in the form of workshops and expert debates aimed at familiarising project participants with modern techniques and tools applied in the field of territorial marketing and business promotion.





5.2.5. Development of systems, guidelines and tools




A promotion system and a special training/mentoring system for public servants with high potential has been created in **Hungary**. Post-secondary vocational training programmes, including training materials, have been created and certified.

So far, the **Italian** *RiformAttiva* project has produced results only for the 17 pilot administrations. In each area of reform, the project has developed implementation methods and tools. For instance, with regard to competency-based HR planning, a needs plan and a framework including six or seven steps were provided to the administrations that decided to apply. In relation to administrative simplification, operational guidelines have been defined. In addition to these project-level outputs, each of the 17 administrations has developed tailored tools that have been presented and passed on to others. Results for the pilot administrations are highly diverse. Examples of best practice include the identification of professional profiles and management of the single environmental authorisation (province of Potenza) and civic access (provinces of Pesaro Urbino and Modena).  These have become reference points for municipalities in the same territories.

So far, the main achievement of the supervisory project in **Lithuania** has been the development of recommendations and assessment criteria to improve the performance of 55 business supervisory institutions. These outputs have also contributed to the development of a scoreboard of performance indicators on the activities of these institutions, an innovative tool that will enable the Ministry of Economy and Innovation to consolidate its 'soft powers' in the business supervision system. In addition, training sessions for the staff of supervisory agencies  have generated interest among the institutions. Implementation of other project activities has also begun, including surveys of business entities and the 'secret client' evaluation service. As yet, it is too early to evaluate the results of these activities.

The project in **Slovakia** has already achieved its main goals. By May 2019, the Ministry of Finance had already delivered 39 evaluations of investment projects and 19 sectoral expenditure reviews. A set of draft guidelines for spending reviews and investment appraisals had been prepared. Also, on the basis of the project results, new paragraphs on expenditure reviews have been incorporated into the Law on Financial Control and Audit, valid from January 2020. 


 The results of the **Slovenian** 'STOP the bureaucracy' project are encouraging. When the results of previous years were evaluated in 2015, the project had achieved a reduction in the annual cost of administrative burdens of EUR 362 million, and aimed to increase this saving by an additional EUR 18 million each year during the programming period 2014-2020 (project duration 2016-2022). Many measures have been implemented to reduce administrative burdens, and many more are planned. It is difficult to gauge concrete results at this stage, in particular due to the continuous nature of the reforms, but some are evident from the statistics on measures realised that are provided in the 'Single document'.²⁹ However, as previously mentioned, the process is ongoing and the number of measures implemented for the removal of administrative burdens will increase further in the future.

²⁹ <https://www.enotnazbirkaukrepoz.gov.si>

6. Project implementation

The PAPA study differs from a standard evaluation or schematic assessment as it employs a narrative approach. By combining elements of schematic assessment with this 'storytelling' approach, we have been able to track the journey from project inception to the delivery of key results. This approach has also enabled us to recognise the factors that influence each project's ability to achieve (or failure to achieve) results. The narrative approach involved the country experts addressing some specific questions in each of the PAPA case studies. Since projects are implemented by teams, it was important for the PAPA study to delve into the specifics of a particular project by looking at it from the team's perspective and understanding its implementation through this lens. Table 11 below illustrates our personalised approach to tracking team efforts and understanding project implementation.

Table 11. The personalised approach to understanding project implementation

<p>PERSONALISATION</p>  <p>Tracking team efforts and understanding project implementation</p>	<p>The team</p>
	<p>Who is/are the main actor(s)?</p> <p>What triggered the main hero(es) to act?</p> <p>What were the aims of their action?</p> <p>Has the team/organisation implemented other ESF-supported projects in public administration during the 2007-2013 and 2014-2020 programming periods?</p>
	<p>Project implementation</p>
	<p>What key activities did the main actors undertake?</p> <p>What were the main challenges?</p> <p>What obstacles did the actors encounter in implementing their projects?</p> <p>How did they overcome these obstacles?</p> <p>How did the different actors (stakeholders) interact with each other?</p>
	<p>Results, outcome, impacts</p>
	<p>What has been achieved?</p> <p>How have the lives of the beneficiaries changed as a result of the project? (i.e. how have the project results been integrated into the working processes of the administration?)</p> <p>What lessons have the actors learnt?</p> <p>What were the critical factors/drivers for success (or failure)?</p> <p>What next steps are important for the future?</p>

The following sub-sections analyse the characteristics of the project teams responsible for the

implementation of the PAPA projects and the common challenges and obstacles faced. They also identify the key methods employed to overcome these obstacles, and the future risks to project sustainability.

6.1. The project teams

The project team is at the forefront of any project implementation. The teams implementing the sample PAPA projects differ significantly in size. Some projects have been implemented by small teams, consisting of only a few staff members, although ESF support made it possible to hire additional staff to carry out projects (e.g. the ESF project in Croatia). Other teams are large, and some projects may even involve several teams that are located in separate partner institutions but work together on the same ESF project.

In most cases, the size of project teams correlates directly with the project budget and, most importantly, the scope of the project. Some projects encompass overarching reform initiatives, such as transforming a country's healthcare system (the Italian case study on the national health care system and the case study on the creation of TOMYs in Greece). These naturally require a large team and liaison between different state institutions. In such contexts, coordination becomes a key factor in ensuring smooth cooperation between different partner institutions.

To this end, some teams have established cooperation mechanisms such as monitoring groups to ensure smooth project implementation. The project team at the Lithuanian Ministry of Justice working on the project 'Development of the mediation system' decided to organise regular meetings with project partners to discuss the progress of project activities (see Box 1).

Box 1. Example of coordinating a large project team

Since the project encompasses a large number of activities that are divided among four partners, these activities have not been implemented one by one, but simultaneously at each of the participating institutions. Thus, implementation of the project has required close cooperation between the coordinating Ministry and project partners. They had to ensure that the work schedule of each institution is in line with overall project deadlines and that most activities will be completed in time, before 1 January 2020.

To ensure this, the project team at the Ministry of Justice has decided to organise regular meetings with project partners, where the progress of project activities is discussed. The Ministry of Justice has established a Project Implementation Monitoring Group chaired by the deputy-minister. Monika Kuodė explains that this group has been set up with a purpose to maintain cooperation, as it allows each of the parties involved to know the status of other partners' activities. Vytautė Ročienė also notes that all project partners cooperate willingly and share their expertise and knowledge. For instance, the project team at the Ministry of Justice had some concerns with a few aspects of public procurement documents and sought help from the National Courts Administration that was able to advise them.

Excerpt from the Lithuanian case study, 'Development of the mediation system'

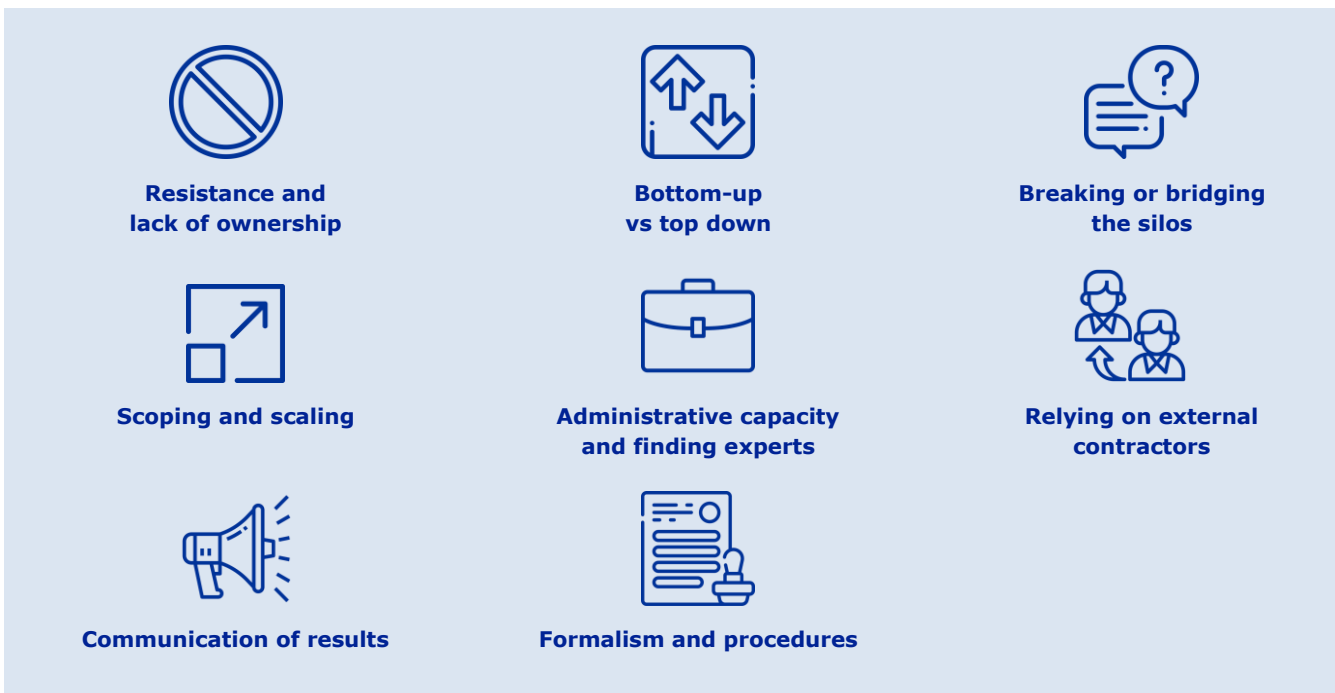
Although it is difficult to assess the competencies of each team working on the ESF projects sampled in the PAPA study, most of the project teams had significant prior knowledge and experience of implementing ESF-funded projects and working on the specific policy issues

addressed by their project. For instance, the team working on the project 'Top civil service development in Estonia' had previously carried out ESF-funded initiatives and programmes in relation to the central training of Estonia's civil service as a whole, with top civil servants being one of the target groups. This formed a solid basis for future ESF projects by building the team's thematic expertise and administrative competencies in project management and the use of ESF funds. A few projects were led by persons who were the initiators of the public administration reforms addressed by the current ESF projects. This ensured that the team members had a good understanding of the policy context of a given project, and could envisage its future impacts.

The case studies of the PAPA project reveal that ensuring the stability and continuity of the project team is an important factor determining a project's success. The turnover of staff can hinder smooth project implementation, as persons who have worked on a project since the development of its funding application may have a broad and comprehensive understanding of the project. Compensating for the loss of team members' knowledge is possible, but it may be costly and time-consuming. Overall, most PAPA project teams were stable in terms of their composition, with the same team members working on both the project application and implementation.

Another very important but subjective dimension of the teams working on the PAPA sample of ESF projects is that of the leadership skills and personal qualities of the project team. Strong leadership by project coordinators is of paramount importance in mobilising the team to achieve the expected results and ensuring the project's success. The challenges to implementation identified in the PAPA case studies reveal the most common obstacles faced by the project teams.

6.2. Main obstacles to the implementation of ESF-supported initiatives



Obstacles and challenges are an inevitable part of project implementation. This part of the summary report seeks to identify and understand the obstacles and challenges, caused by both internal and external actors and processes that were faced by the various project teams working on the PAPA sample of ESF-supported projects. In addition, we seek to distinguish the ways in which these issues were resolved. A summary of the key challenges is presented above.

6.2.1. Resistance and lack of ownership

The **resistance** of certain administrations to change was indicated in most of the PAPA cases as one of the key obstacles encountered during the management of TO11 interventions. A mismatch could be observed between the interests or work modes of some administrations and the goals of government priorities. Since most ESF projects are aligned with government policies and reforms to public administration, the institutions affected by ESF projects should cooperate with them. Nonetheless, resistance to cooperation can occur in the situations where systems or work processes are changing, where fears exist over job losses (e.g. due to the consolidation of institutions), or there is a lack of understanding of the project's benefits.

In the two ESF projects implemented in Bulgaria, any procedures that involved joint work or the exchange of internal information and documentation between administrations proved to be a great challenge to the existing administrative culture, particularly among municipalities. This required a change in mindset. A similar situation could be seen in the Greek courts, where administrative personnel were not adequately prepared for the implementation of reforms, while judges and prosecutors (particularly among older age groups) were unfamiliar with ICT. Likewise, in Portugal, health professionals showed (initial) resistance to participating in the project, as well as from IT departments to share information was reported.

In the Lithuanian case, the attitudes of some agencies towards the scoreboard and other initiatives of the project 'Improvement of the business supervisory system' have at times been challenging. Some supervisory institutions have been reluctant to collaborate if they do not see an evident benefit. Cooperation with certain agencies has also posed a challenge in cases where the agency perceives central ministry initiatives as a threat (e.g. in terms of consolidation).

Some Czech mayors were 'silent' sceptics in relation to the benefits of the project to improve the administrative capacities of the country's municipalities. They were hesitant to get involved at the beginning of the project. Building **ownership of the initiative among mayors and demonstrating its added value** turned out to be the crucial elements in dealing with this scepticism. These responses also played a central role in overcoming the next challenge.

6.2.2. Bottom-up vs top-down

In all change projects, it is a challenge to find the right balance between **central steering**, which can ensure the correct trajectory for larger projects, and achieving a sufficient sense of ownership and **buy-in 'on the ground'**. In the cases described here, some stakeholder groups perceived the coordination or streamlining of tasks and processes by a central project team as a weakening of their power. This was visible in projects that involve developing and **imposing new standards** or introducing the use of uniform tools and instruments.

For instance, the issue of '**ownership**' emerged as one of the central challenges to the project

to implement eight government Task Forces in Estonia. There were several aspects to this issue. These related to political ownership, the division of responsibility between the Government Office and the leading ministry or ministries, and the sense of ownership on the part of the Task Force leader and stakeholders. The role of the Government Office in relation to the line ministries and their political leaders has emerged as the most substantial issue. Although the Government Office is the institution responsible for implementing the ESF-supported activities of the Task Forces, and its proximity to the Centre of Government lends them weight and prestige, the Office itself has no leverage over specific public policies in Estonia.

In order for the results of the Task Forces to be implemented in practice, line ministries must take ownership of them. However, achieving a healthy balance between coordination by the Centre of Government and ownership by individual line ministries has been a process involving several trade-offs. The prestige, neutrality and the management of financial resources by the Government Office have facilitated the establishment and functioning of the Task Forces. The central role played by the Government Office may, however, threaten the sustainability of a Task Force's results if its operations become too distant from the relevant ministry and its leaders (both top officials and ministers).

6.2.3. Breaking or bridging the silos

In many cases, working together within or across public administration organisations is one of the aims of a project, or a prerequisite for its success. Coordination and collaboration are common issues faced during project implementation. In the ESF projects analysed as part of the PAPA study, the collaboration with project partners and stakeholders encountered difficulties in the following key areas:

- Understanding common goals and working towards them.
- Reaching a consensus as to the project's common goals.
- Accommodating the needs of different stakeholder groups.
- Finding ways to combine and integrate different working modes, systems and data.

For instance, the aim of innovation projects at Portugal's LabX was to have several public administration entities **collaborate towards a common goal** by working as a team. State entities are very distant, and creating common meeting points can be a challenge. Such entities may have different internal organisational systems and different strategic understanding and visions. Each have its own difficult and complicated processes to implement. A similar challenge was encountered in the Slovak case on spending reviews, in which the main (and ongoing) challenge is the need to cooperate with branch ministries over the implementation of expenditure reviews. According to project staff, the level of such cooperation varies, depending on the objectives of the leadership at the branch ministries.

Coordination that is not only horizontal (at the same level of government) but also **vertical** (between different levels of government) creates an even greater challenge to collaboration. The case of health care reforms in Greece illustrates that communication and collaboration between employees from the different public services involved in the project (e.g. between the central and regional services of the Ministry of Health, the central services of the Ministry of Development, and other public services) was a constant challenge to the implementation of this

project.

Collaboration in some projects was hindered by difficulties in the **exchange of information and data**. For example, the team working on one Italian project launched an institutional dialogue with the Italian Data Protection Authority to conduct an in-depth analysis of compliance with regulations on personal data protection. The team needed to solve the obstacle of making the various data flows of the new health information system inter-operable with external data flows (e.g. data on mortality, income, exemptions, etc.). Overcoming this obstacle has required the modification of Italy's privacy legislation, which had not foreseen the need for interoperability between public information systems.

A similar difficulty was encountered by the project team that collaborated with the Romanian National Statistical Institute – the primary source of statistical information in the country. The main aim of the project was to integrate data that had already been collected by national and international bodies, however, the team encountered difficulties in processing data from the Romanian National Statistical Institute due to the difficulty in automating the collection of data using the project's software. In total, 65% of the data included in the database originated from Eurostat; the rest came from other sources. As new data becomes available, it is automatically integrated into the 'State of the Nation' aggregator in order to ensure it remains up to date.

6.2.4. Scoping and scaling

Another issue reported by project teams was keeping the scope and scale of the project in balance. The scope and scale of the project should be carefully discussed during project's design and application stages, to ensure that the tasks and activities are realistic to complete within the timeframe set. In several cases, project timelines had to be adjusted and some delays were encountered. Other issues behind such delays relate to the changing scope and ambition of the original project.

For example, the Bulgarian administrative services project was planned in its initial format for just 12 months. This period was too short for such a sophisticated and extensive initiative. The nature of the activities envisaged was also not properly assessed in the planning stage. It soon became apparent that the project was complex, broad in its scope and extensive in its reach. The project's timeframe therefore needed to be extended. A similar situation occurred in Estonia. Due to the short lifespan of the Task Forces and their very high workload, the leaders of the Task Forces and the staff of the Strategy Unit sometimes fell behind their original project timeline. Five of the eight Task Forces needed to extend the deadline for their final reports.

The major challenge in the Hungarian Tax Administration (NAV) project was changing the NAV's task portfolio. In 2016, the NAV was given additional tasks and competences, due to its expanding the scope as a result of technological and IT environmental changes. Another important change to the NAV's role came with a new law on tax administration in 2016, which stipulated the NAV's obligation to provide e-tax accounts. The tight deadline for the implementation of this regulation required the NAV to implement this measure using national rather than ESF funds.

6.2.5. Administrative capacity and expertise

Finding suitable expertise and capacity within public administration proved to be a challenge in nearly all projects. The issue of administrative capacity felt most keenly in relation to IT/digital reforms, or those reforms with a large digital component (e.g. in Bulgaria, Czechia, Greece, Italy). IT specialists are still in high demand within the private sector, and are offered high salaries. Very few specialists are therefore willing to work within public administrations, where compensation lags behind the private sector.

The issue of attracting qualified staff has also proved to be a major difficulty in specialised policy sectors. In the Cyprus case, the government failed to recruit the number of employees budgeted to operate the YDEP project smoothly. In the case of the Greek health care reform, civil servants across the country were largely unaccustomed to managing such a new, decentralised system. Between 2017 and 2019, employees in central, regional and local government, as well as the local population, remained unfamiliar with the new system. Moreover, personnel within the central services of the Ministry of Health may not have possessed the necessary administrative capacity to carry out the reform. Civil servants felt overwhelmed by the demands of the new reform, and thus delays have followed.

These PAPA cases specifically illustrate how lack of capacity in terms of HR and competences can hinder the process of administrative reforms and capacity building. This evidence supports the conclusions of the EUPACK2 project that a shortage of (qualified) staff can be one of the key barriers to the implementation of reform (in such countries as BG, HR, EE, IT, LV, LT or SK).³⁰

6.2.6. Relying on external contractors

Where internal expertise and capacity was not available, external expertise was brought in. Some project teams indicated that the management of external experts/contractors was challenging. Some teams experienced delays or poor quality in the services delivered. Some issues with the choice of external expertise available may be caused by public procurement processes. The Lithuanian case on business supervision made reference to this issue. Calls for services that were published by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation attracted little interest, leaving the team with a limited choice of potential service providers.

6.2.7. Communication of results

Another challenge has been the communication of project results, both at a political level and within society as a whole. Modern trends in public administration are difficult to explain to the wider public, as their acceptance depends on the level of maturity and openness in society. For instance, debates on burnout among senior managers in Latvia have provoked negative attitudes among the public. The dilemma is visible: everyone wants to receive high-quality public services and friendly communication, but not everyone wants to know that administrators and senior leaders might be tired, stressed, and feeling undervalued. The Latvian senior leadership development programme highlighted the maturity of society as an issue, in terms of the extent to which every individual, and society as a whole, is ready to be responsible for their

³⁰ PPMI, EY, *Public administration reform trends and reform dynamics in EU27*. Unpublished EUPACK2 report, 2019.

own life-long education. The project has helped to open a wider debate on the philosophical issues surrounding public administration: to what extent can public administration be inexpensive, and is such inexpensive public administration capable of delivering high-quality services?

Slovenia's 'STOP the bureaucracy' project team was and is challenged by the issue of communication. Despite extensive promotion (round tables, seminars, videos posted on internet, winning awards and prizes), many citizens and businesses remain unaware of the project. Convincing the general public of the added value delivered by investing in the modernisation of public administration is essential to improve the image of the public sector, the motivation of civil servants, and overall trust in the public administration.

6.2.8. Formalism and procedures

Among other obstacles, some project teams mentioned formalism and bureaucratic requirements. Although these are a natural part of the work of public administration, and staff are used to such processes or requirements, in a few cases they became an unforeseen challenge. Such obstacles arose not only during project implementation, but also during the **preparation and application stage**, where the processes involved in writing proposals and applying for funding were found to be rather rigid.

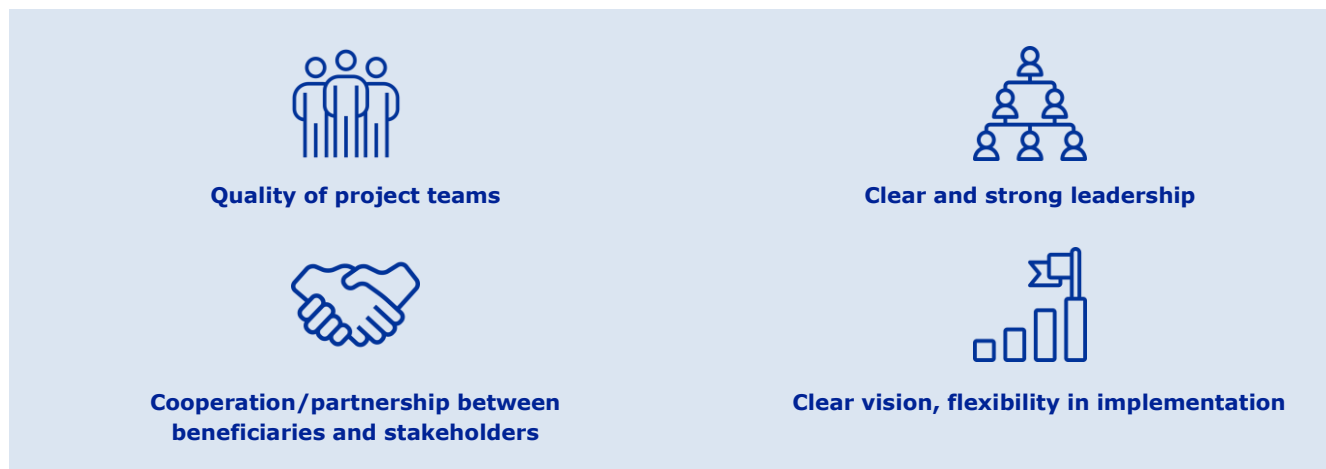
Formalism and rigid procedures were felt most keenly during the **procurement** stage(s) of various projects. One ever-present challenge for the project relates to the difficulty of designing public tenders that allow sufficient room for vendors to be creative, while still complying with public procurement rules. For example, the team in the Estonian Top Civil Servants Centre felt that it is sometimes necessary to describe the final product (such as a training and development programme) in advance, in order to formulate the evaluation criteria for a tender. However, this may allow less opportunity to procure innovative services, or to allow a tenderer to suggest ways to design the most interesting or appropriate programme. In addition, public procurement rules frequently posed difficult requirements for the private sector. In the case of one Hungarian project, the procurement rules stipulated that a public procurement contract must be concluded within a deadline of 30 days. The project team noted that in reality, the time necessary to do this can be up to 320 days.

Also, the combination of general EU regulation with national regulation practices or even specific institutional processes can cause difficulties. Despite simplifications in regulation, **administrative burden** still remains a valid concern. The Croatian case mentions considerable administrative burdens on the Information Commissioner's Office, relating to the collection of data on training participants for the project records. On top of this, the legal aspects of procurement during a project may be controlled by several different bodies (such as the Implementation Unit, Public Procurement Office, and Supreme Audit Office), as described in the Slovak case.

6.3. Critical success factors

Although each ESF project analysed in the PAPA case studies possesses a combination of unique factors that have determined its outputs to date, we distinguished a number of common factors that have played a role in most of the PAPA projects. These factors can be critical to both

project success and failure, depending on their design and strength. A summary of these factors is presented below.



6.3.1. Quality of project teams

A competent and knowledgeable team is a key factor in all successful projects. In addition to their contribution to technical quality, the inclusion of experts increases acceptance of and trust in a project among the target groups. Highly competent teams are able to design better and more relevant projects, are more resilient to challenges, and can foresee and manage risks.

The personal qualities of the project team also matter. Strong leadership, perseverance, the engagement of the project's own personnel and reasonable prudence, and the division of tasks (e.g. the employees responsible for key project areas) contribute to the success of the project.

6.3.2. Ownership and political support/leadership

Regardless of the size and scope of a project, ownership is a vital element in its success (see Box 2 below). All of the projects clearly demonstrate that strong leadership and committed ownership are essential to making any new initiative work. In all organisations, but most definitely in small ones, HR management and the organisation is the work of individuals. When a lack of capacity and competence is noted at this level, it has an immediate impact on the performance of the organisation and, in the case of a coordinating organisation, on the network of stakeholders and partners as a whole.

In the case of successful projects, the project teams have enjoyed high-level political and institutional support. Political support was decisive in the success of certain projects. Some projects have been a political priority for the government, making it possible to prioritise certain activities (as in the case of the Polish project 'Improving management systems and standards as well as a customer service in tax administration'). Political support, combined with informal communication with target groups and stakeholders, generates trust in the senior leadership of a project and its new ideas for modernisation.

Box 2. Example of political support for a project

*The idea to implement real measurements of value for money in Slovakia originated at a Paris airport in February 2013, where Martin Filko, Štefan Kišš and Ľudovít Ódor were trapped by a snow storm, and had plenty of time to discuss and evaluate new ideas and challenges.³¹ Filko, Kišš and Ódor are three important Slovak public finance experts, who agreed that some means of measuring value for money should be established in Slovakia. As luck would have it, the year before this chance meeting, Martin Filko had been appointed director of the Institute of Financial Policy (from 1 May 2012) – a position that gave him the capacity to actually implement this idea. The fact that a pro-active person with many new and useful ideas was in an effective executive position (and already knew the core executive professional to do the job, Štefan Kišš) was the essential factor in the successful start of the project. Slovakia's leading journal for economic professionals, *Hospodářské Noviny*, characterised Dr. Filko as the 'the man who represented visions, the man with the capacity to popularise and implement visions. Anything but a standard bureaucrat. Representative of a new generation in Slovak public administration'. The competencies of the three economists have contributed to the fact that the idea received a green light and support from the Minister of Finance – and became a reality two years after this 'meeting' at the Paris airport.*

Excerpt from the Slovak case study, 'Efficiency of Public Expenditure – Public Expenditure Reviews'

6.3.3. Cooperation/partnership between beneficiaries and stakeholders

The PAPA study highlights the importance of involving individual stakeholders and enabling inter-organisational cooperation to ensure the successful implementation of various phases of a project. The 30 projects varied in terms of their stakeholder arrangements. Most targeted several **actors across public administration** (horizontally at the same level or vertically between levels). Creating a single unit that is responsible for the overall management and oversight of the project has been shown to improve coordination and the flow of information, thereby decreasing the risk of administrative delays or the lack of proper coordination.

In Italy, a call was issued for regional, provincial and municipal administrations to participate in pilot testing. The National Association of Italian Municipalities played the role of sponsoring this call. The objective of the call was to select administrations that were interested in developing the issues of administrative simplification, general civic access, the assessment of competencies and the planning of HR based on competencies, through the application of the tools and methodologies developed with the pilot administrations during the first phase. As a result of the call, 108 administrations were selected (almost double the number estimated) to receive assistance in using the methodologies developed, including support from an external consultancy.

The transformation of the administrative service model in Bulgaria is a huge reform, the impact of which goes beyond the administration itself. The provisions of the Law for Administrative Service of Physical Persons and Legal Entities are intended to apply to administrative services provided by all public service providers, as well as central and local government administrations.

³¹ Filko, M., Kišš, Š. and Ódor, L., *Najlepší z možných svetov: Hodnota za peniaze v slovenskej verejnej politike*. [Best of possible worlds: Value for money in the Slovak public policy]. Bratislava: Ministry of Finance, 2016, p. 6.

Other projects, such as the Top Civil Service programmes in Estonia and Latvia, looked at **specific policy sectors and target groups**. These development programmes were originally designed for the leaders of institutions that directly or indirectly affect the business environment. Business leaders, regardless of the size of their businesses, are therefore invited to chair sessions and deliver lectures at project events. The programme also involves knowledge transfer between the public and private sectors, with study visits to enterprises being part of the learning process. Study visits and close cooperation with small and medium enterprises make it possible for senior civil servants to understand the perspective of entrepreneurs.

In the Romanian project 'Implementation of a system for public policy development in the area of social inclusion' that mapped the provision and need for public services, not only did data need to be comprehensive, it also needed to be accurate and collected in a standard form across the country. To address the complexities of this process, the project leaders developed a multi-layered structure. This structure included six national data collection coordinators; eight regional experts (one for each of Romania's eight development regions); and 44 local field experts (one for each county, plus three for the municipality of Bucharest). Some projects target the social and health care sector and its professionals in Cyprus, Greece, Portugal and Italy, and another projects (in Greece, Latvia and Lithuania) support the justice sector.

Even when the projects had an **internal/organisational focus**, the involvement of users or other stakeholders was both ensured and valued. In the projects to improve the tax/revenue organisations in Poland and Hungary, several events were organised specifically to present and discuss the various elements of the project to industry stakeholders (mostly accountancy associations). It was ensured that such societal inputs played an instrumental role in how each project developed.

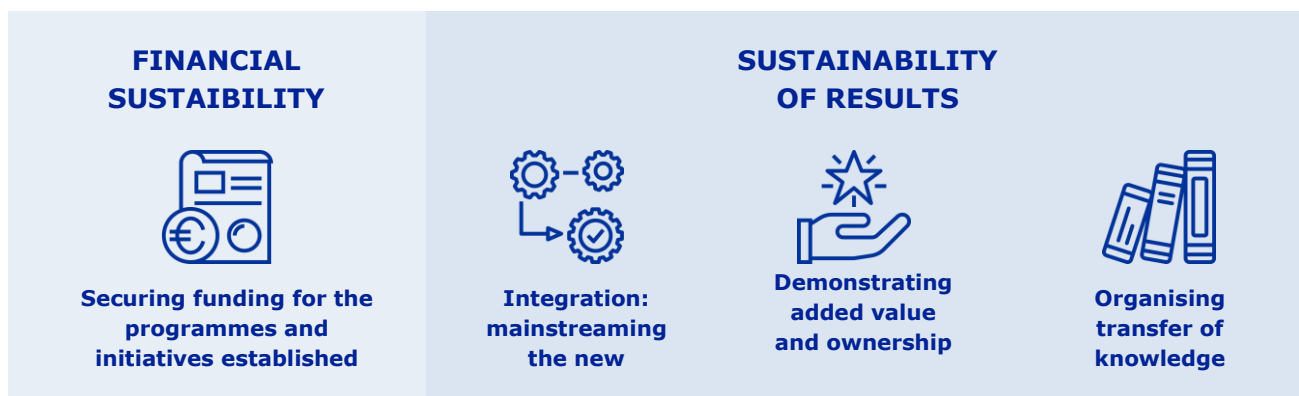
6.3.4. Clear vision, implementation flexibility

One of the main drivers for success identified was a clear vision of the project, and flexibility in implementing it. Flexibility with regard to implementing the project vision was essential, since public administrations involve multiple departments/entities with their own customers and needs. Flexible projects can be effective across the whole public administration without losing sight of their original vision. A clear vision of the projects' goals, a broad and complex approach to managerial needs, and the careful synchronisation of diverse actions, allowed several project teams to keep the project on track, providing added value to the target group(s).

6.4. Future risks to the projects and the sustainability of results

The sustainability of project results and impacts is an important factor in evaluating the success of any project. This touches upon both **financial sustainability** (maintaining the funding of the programmes and initiatives established) and the **integration of project outputs** (ensuring the continuing use of tools and products developed). While the financial sustainability of project activities relies on external factors such as governments or funding priorities, the sustainability of results is closely connected to the work of the project team. Indeed, certain steps should be taken during the project implementation, or even during project's design phase, to ensure the appropriateness of the results achieved. Although at the time of writing, the majority of PAPA projects are still in progress, sustainability is still a salient concern for project beneficiaries. An

analysis of the key sustainability concerns expressed in relation to the PAPA sample of ESF-supported projects is presented in the sub-sections below.



6.4.1. Securing funding for the programmes and initiatives established

Depending on the nature of the project, securing future funding can be an important factor for the project's sustainability. Some of the projects in the PAPA sample aim to develop programmes and initiatives that require future funding in order to function (e.g. the development of OSSs in Slovakia, or the establishment of inter-municipal centres in Czechia). In the case of the Greek project to develop TOMYs, the project funds can cover the costs of healthcare units established for a period of 36-48 months. If no additional funding is secured, the sustainability of TOMYs may be at risk. In the future, the labour cost of TOMYs should be shouldered by the state budget.

6.4.2. Integration: mainstreaming the newly developed approaches

Another challenge to project sustainability relates to the integration and mainstreaming of project results and new work processes within public administration, and in its interactions with the users of public services. This is the case with **IT solutions and e-government developments**. In one Bulgarian project, all systems require integration (connections) with the administrative information systems as elements of a unified model. This is likely to be a complicated process rather than a single step. A similar risk is reported at the Polish Revenue Agency. In order for the IT tool to support the management of the customer relationship system, it must be equipped with appropriate functionalities. Consequently, the model should take into account the existing IT tool, while offering certain solutions and functionalities that may realistically be implemented within the (re-)designed IT system.

The same integration and mainstreaming apply to the projects related to **human resources**. In order to be truly successful, the competences, skills and attitudes developed must be implemented appropriately in everyday practice. For instance, the Slovenian project 'Establishment of a uniform model for civil service competency' developed a catalogue of core, leadership and job-specific competences that is applied within the framework of the existing civil service legislation. This legislation does not apply to local authorities, which are free to use the catalogue of competences on a voluntary basis.

Finally, **evidence-based policy instruments and tools** that are developed and piloted during

ESF-funded projects can remain as purely theoretical exercises, if they are not applied in practice within public administration systems. This factor has been fully acknowledged in the Romanian projects. To ensure sustainability, the project leaders recognise the need to continue spearheading the mappings and associated methodologies in the future, and to keep the database up to date. In addition, they acknowledge the need to continue training, promote the projects' results to gain further buy-in from key policy makers who can do the same, thus improving the projects' saliency.

6.4.3. Demonstrating added value and transferring ownership

Demonstrating added value and transferring ownership is crucial to the integration of project outputs in the daily practice of public servants. For example, at the end of the Estonian Task Force on reducing the burden of care, the Ministry of Social Affairs was initially hesitant to take full ownership of the issue. This was due, on the one hand, to tensions within the Ministry, and on the other, to the limited funding available to implement its results. Similar tensions have emerged in relation to other issues tackled by the Task Forces.

This issue of ownership has been important in relation to the positioning of LabX in Portugal. The laboratory empowers teams and, in collaboration with public entities, builds solutions and tools that best respond to the needs and expectations of its users – but it does not implement them. Responsibility for the implementation of these solutions lies with the public entities. The projects are completed and delivered to the entities, which can then decide whether or not to extend their implementation. The innovation must be assimilated by the 'owner' of the service itself; otherwise, there is the risk of it being rejected or neglected. As an example of the demonstrative effect and impact of the 'Education for Citizenship' project, during the testing phase alone, more than 250 Portuguese schools and associations applied to use this methodology (alternative methods of teaching citizenship and civic participation to children and young people), which will have a resounding replicating effect.

The capacity of the laboratory itself is limited, so the future of the project must be to "transform the lab limits into the centre of its action, creating more partnerships to scale its capacity and opening channels between the public administration and the surrounding environment", in order to define priorities and promote greater collaboration. A wider 'innovation ecosystem' needs to be established. This would be a way to ensure the sustainability of the changes produced by the project, and its constant alignment with the needs of citizens and companies.

One difficulty in demonstrating added value is the frequently 'soft' nature of the project objectives and their intangible results. For example, the project 'Senior leadership development programme in public administration' in Latvia is a typical 'soft' project, as an investment in HR is more difficult to justify politically in comparison to an investment in infrastructure or tangible objects. Investments in HR are also harder to justify to the wider public – in this case, particularly due to regular pre-election promises for a smaller, cheaper and smarter public administration.

The shortfalls described above in relation to public and political understanding of the need for human resource development represent the greatest looming threat to programme's achievements post-2020, when TO11 will no longer be included under ESF+. Interest among politicians for budget money to be spent on high-profile training projects differs according to

whether the funds come from national budget or from EU funding. This issue was particularly visible in Estonia during the period of the fiscal crisis of 2008-2009, when the overall central government budget was reduced by 6 in one year, and in the next by 1%, while the Top Civil Service Excellence programme – already at that time supported via ESF funds – was left financially intact.

6.4.4. Organising transfer of knowledge

Disseminating a project's results and transferring the knowledge gained represents a challenge, but also a major opportunity to upscale those results. The Latvian project 'Justice for growth' is a good example of a project whose long-term sustainability was already being reflected upon even while the project itself was being implemented. Although the guidelines, manuals and compendiums of existing practice prepared within the project were good materials with lasting value, the team invested additional efforts in changing the understanding of the professionals currently employed within the system. Thus, the project's training programme for young professionals is designed to recruit candidate judges and to train recently approved judges. In doing so, it is hoped that the new generation of judges will develop more service-driven values, and will push the entire judicial system towards a more service-driven path. These training activities are supported by the implementation of a customer service standard for courts, and IT tools that enable the tracking of case distribution and caseload.

7. The role and contribution of ESF support

7.1. The role of ESF support

7.1.1. Financial contribution: a necessary push for public administration reforms

The financial support provided by the EU has been of **an instrumental nature**, and **a driver for change** in many countries where administrative reform largely depends on external (EU) funding. Undoubtedly, the EU has had an increasing influence over various topics in public administration and its reform, particularly since the accession of Eastern European countries began in 2004. During the programming period 2007-2013, the ESF was already perceived as the main instrument for investments in public administration reform in many countries. This has continued to be the case during the programming period 2014-2020. All of the PAPA cases indicate that without financial support from the ESF, the reforms would probably not have been scheduled, or would have taken place on a reduced scale or at a slower pace. It is important to note that this support was also linked to the main goals and priorities of the Member States' strategic and planning documents in the fields of administration and governance.

In Estonia, in addition to promoting longer-term continuity (see below), ESF funding has been one of the main drivers of overall public administration reforms over the last decade. Over the three programming periods, the focus of ESF support has moved from the capacity of organisations to the capacity of the system. During the period 2014-2020, the emphasis of interventions consciously shifted towards breaking the silos within the administrative system and investing in horizontal instruments that contribute to harmonisation and collaboration within the system. The PAPA project on Government Task Forces provides precisely this type of instrument, and reflects the evolution of ESF support in Estonia from smaller, organisation-centric interventions towards larger interventions with strategic leverage and systemic impact. Overall, the evolution of the Government Task Forces reflects the great significance of the ESF in the development of the Estonian administrative system as a whole. The ESF has been the main donor for capacity building within Estonian public administration. Without ESF/ESIF support, many of the reforms or other developmental activities of Estonian public administration would not have been started or their implementation would have been slower and much more modest. Transversal activities focusing on the administrative system in its entirety have been at the heart of enhancing administrative capacity in Estonia, and have consumed more than one-third of all support planned and disbursed. The role played by the ESF in administrative development and reform has been so central that the OPs, with their requirement for seven-year strategic planning, have in practice largely constituted the Estonian public administration reform programme.

7.1.2. Agenda setting and mobilising power

There is evidence that a combination of country-specific recommendations and EU financial assistance contributed to the launch of some reform initiatives in the TO11 beneficiary countries. Putting the topic of public administration reforms on **the political agenda** has pushed some national governments to take necessary actions. For instance, the Council's recommendations addressed to Latvia in 2014 and 2015 on the completion of judicial reforms and the strengthening of the Judicial Council led to the creation of the ESF project 'Justice for

growth' in the country.

In the case of Estonia, the ESF played a crucial role in funding the national government's formal reform plan to implement the recommendations of the 2011 OECD Governance Report, which concluded that the country operated a fragmented and decentralised public administration. It enabled the entrepreneurial leaders of the Government Office to experiment with the first two Task Forces on skills development and on injuries and premature death. These two projects indicate how EU funding can be effectively exploited to implement the recommendations and advice of the European Commission and other international organisations working in the field of public administration and governance.

Without ESF support, it would not be possible to set in motion many of the activities initiated and developed by the projects in the PAPA sample. Besides its purely financial element, ESF support therefore also has a **mobilising effect**. This is nicely illustrated by the case of health care reform in Greece. The progress made by Greek authorities in this area was, of course, dependent on political will to proceed with the aforementioned reform – but without financial support from the ESF and technical assistance from abroad, all of these endeavours would have remained on paper. ESF support has been of cardinal importance in completely re-structuring Greece's primary health care. It has taken time to successfully link the activities of ESF-financed projects to the ongoing reform of health care, but the outcome is far from negligible.

Finally, the **'selling and platform' function** of ESF support should not be underestimated. The ESF has often provided a vital incentive for specific reforms to be implemented, as illustrated by the Latvian project on judicial reform. This is the first project aimed at the judiciary that can boast such a comprehensive scope, bringing together different stakeholders and tackling systemic issues, as well as generating a vision for the future. In general, public administration reforms in Latvia have been communicated politically in terms of savings on public expenditure. Naturally, it would have been somewhat challenging politically to explain and justify the cost of this project to Latvian society if it had been fully financed from the national budget. In practice, ESF support has encouraged Latvia to apply transformational methods, thus speeding up reforms and pushing forward the search for more strategic approaches. Without support from the ESF, the project and its central ideas would have been slower, following an incremental approach. In addition to this, public administration reform might have lost out to other policy sectors in the constant battle for public funding.

Despite the fact that the LabX project was proposed directly by Portugal's Office of the Ministry of the Presidency and Administrative Modernisation, and that political support for its implementation already existed, the support of the ESF was essential to the project's success. Indeed, ESF support was very important at an early stage in building a team exclusively team dedicated to the project, and with the resources needed to develop the project as proposed. As mentioned previously, the idea of an Innovation Lab initially generated mistrust, based on the perception that there should be no play[ing] with public money. Nevertheless, ESF funding helped to overcome this, providing an incentive to "demonstrate that it is possible to experiment within the public administration, and that this has advantages".

7.1.3. Continuity and predictability: focus on longer-term and strategic issues

Reform takes time, and continuity is required to achieve the desired results. Due to shifting

priorities and changing political agendas, stability is often lacking. Reforms may be stopped half-way, or even reversed. The continuity and predictability of ESF funding have contributed to the success of many changes that have taken place over recent years in EU Member States. In the case of the Estonian Top Civil Servant Centre, it has been obvious ever since the ESF began to finance the programme for top civil service development that without this support the programme would probably not exist. ESF support has allowed the project team to take a longer-term view when asking strategic questions, such as what it takes to bring about a change in the mentality among top civil servants with regard to their personal development or willingness to cooperate. In Hungary, public policy making in general (and civil service policy in particular) have traditionally been characterised by large, sudden and unexpected shifts in policy that render obsolete the previous systems and their organisational or physical infrastructure. In the case of the Hungarian civil service project, the fact that the project was based on ESF funding provided a strong external constraint against the continuation of this trend in the future.

Against this background, the new voluntary capacity-building roadmaps for the forthcoming programming period 2021-2027, and their ongoing testing within the framework of the pilot action on the front-loading of administrative capacity³², could provide an effective tool to ensure the continuity and predictability of administrative reform and capacity building efforts in the future.

7.1.4. Focus and nature of projects

As already indicated, the ESF plays a key role in supporting the **'soft' aspects of capacity building** (particularly within the projects considered in the PAPA study). Since state budget resources are often limited, ESF funding for 'soft changes' represents an important enabling factor. Without properly trained and prepared staff, buildings and IT systems are of little help to citizens and businesses in the provision of public and administrative services. This particular issue is illustrated in several projects involving digitalisation or improvements in service delivery. One of these is the Czech project helping to train staff and develop performance monitoring for OSSs, as well as improving cooperation between state institutions and municipalities in the delivery of state administrative services. The comprehensive training of decentralised state administrative staff, transferred from back-office positions in traditional offices to the role of supervisors or front-office positions in OSSs, is financed via the synergistic project 'Support of the transformation process of district offices to deliver pro-client oriented services of OSSs'.

During the programming period 2021-2027, TO11 – "enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration" – will no longer be available under ESF+ (except for capacity building in the fields of employment, education and training systems, social inclusion and protection, as well as health systems and services). This raises some questions as to how the 'soft' aspects of public administration will be financed, and how different types of investment in the modernisation of public administration will be combined in the future. By making it possible to address a complex mix of policy actions and legislation,

³² European week of regions and cities, Preparing for 2021-2027 through Roadmaps for Administrative Capacity Building. Available at: [https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/programme/sessions/381_en_\(accessed: 17 January 2020\)](https://europa.eu/regions-and-cities/programme/sessions/381_en_(accessed: 17 January 2020)).

future investments and improvements in the governance of institutions and systems could facilitate the formulation and implementation of structural reforms. For instance, other EU instruments, such as the Reform Support Programme for example³³, could be used to complement support for general public administration reform in the areas, which will no longer be funded by the ESF+ and the ERDF/Cohesion Fund post-2020.

7.1.5. Intervention logic and project management

Aside from financial resources, equally important was the opportunity for project teams to benefit from the achievements of projects pursued under **the performance management framework of EU funds**, including objective setting, monitoring, and reporting procedures. With support from the ESF, the project teams set specific objectives and expected results, along with the targets, deadlines and milestones required to achieve their goals – often within a very short time. Reporting requirements prompted the project teams to plan activities carefully, to create a policy community, and to actively engage international, national and local stakeholders. However, there is evidence that some projects suffered from rather broad objectives and insufficiently developed monitoring practices that could have limited the advantages of performance management. In addition, external factors (such as legislative and policy changes) were sometimes not adequately addressed during a project's implementation. Efforts are necessary to address these issues when developing and applying a new performance management framework for the programming period 2021-2027.

7.1.6. Access to networks and country knowledge

Finally, the PAPA case studies provide some evidence that national authorities gained benefits from European networks, such as the European Public Administration Network (EUPAN) and ESF networks coordinated by the Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. This indicates that a combination of ESF support under TO11 and other EU policy instruments in the field of public administration and governance created **synergy effects** during public administration reform or administrative capacity building at domestic level.

The project teams also recognise the benefits of having access to international experts for training and systemic assessment. In Latvia, international experts helped to align the country's judicial reform project with the most recent trends in Europe, and have helped to strengthen Latvia's inclusion within European-wide networks of judiciary, forensic experts, and insolvency administration, at a time when cross-border cooperation in this sphere is intensifying. However, the scale of knowledge exchange could be further improved during the new programming period by providing better access to good country practices that could be pooled centrally at the EU level.

7.2. Contribution of previous ESF projects

Continuity and predictability have been indicated as some of the main benefits of ESF funding. This is certainly the case within a given funding period, but is also true over the longer term.

³³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_18_3972

Two-thirds of the 30 projects described here are directly or closely related to a precursor project in earlier ESF funding period(s).

With financial support from the ESF during the 2007-2013 programming period, several large projects to develop e-Services were implemented by the **Bulgarian** Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications. The scope of these projects included the main elements required to develop interoperable e-Government. Another project, 'Transformation of the Administrative Service Model' was developed during the project 'Introduction of complex administrative service for quality service provision to the citizens and the business', which was implemented from 2011 to 2013 by the administration of the Council of Ministers. The project resulted in the reengineering of work processes for 50 administrative services, of which 12 were developed into complex administrative services in three pilot administrations.

In **Cyprus**, the 2007-2013 ESF OP 'Human Capital and Social Inclusion' was aligned with the targets and policies set in the National Reform Programme throughout the programming period.

The **Czech** project arose as a natural follow-up to the previous Intermunicipal Collaboration project of the Union of Towns and Municipalities, which was implemented between May 2013 and the end of November 2015 within the OP 'Human Resources and Employment'. In a broader context, the Czech municipal association, the Association of Local Self-governments, also implemented two ESF projects during the 2007-2013 programming period.

Both the 2011 OECD Public Governance Review and the first two Task Forces in **Estonia** were financed by the ESF during the period 2007-2013. Due to these experiences being encouraging, the 2014-2020 OP for Cohesion Policy Funds already contained a separate activity under the Priority Axis 'Administrative capacity', with the objective of improving the policy-making process.

The example that perhaps best illustrates continued attention and funding is the Top Civil Service Development Programme in **Estonia**. The ESF has played a vital role in this project from the very beginning of efforts in Estonia to support the development of top civil servants. In 2007, the Government Office created the first dedicated Top Civil Service Development Programme for 2008-09. Two ESF-funded programmes (2004-05 and 2006-07) had previously conducted central training within Estonia's civil service as a whole, with top civil servants being just one of the target groups. Initial development programmes were launched during this period, and a competency model for top civil servants was launched, together with a plan for its implementation.

During the 2007-2013 programming period, **Greece's** Ministry of Justice introduced reforms seeking to optimise the administration of justice. Drawing on structural and cohesion funds, the ministry undertook several large-scale ICT projects aimed at the central computerisation and digitalisation of the services of the Greek justice system, with the goal of improving efficiency.

The **Greek Health Care Reform project** also began in the 2007-2013 programming period, during which ESF assistance under the OP 'Administrative Reform' provided valuable support in planning the introduction of the new Primary Health Care system, and contributed to the drafting of therapeutic protocols and guidelines.

The civil service recruitment project in **Hungary** has a number of predecessors that operated during the 2007-2013 OP for State Reform. The Managing Authority explicitly required that the project should connect well with these. The most important forerunner of the project was a measure entitled the 'new public service career system'. This was based on the concept of a systemic framework for a unified civil service (which also extended to the armed services). It included, among other elements, a system of promotion for the police services, and methodological tools for job analysis and assessment. The current project relies on these pre-existing components in several ways, since they constitute generic tools for HRM (such as the creation of a nomenclature of positions/managerial job descriptions).

The current project by Hungary's Tax Ministry (NAV) actively builds on previous measures that were financed by the ESF and managed under the framework of the E-Government OP, and aim to digitalise services provided by the NAV and its predecessors. The projects implemented under this programme are as follows: a central electronic payment solution; the consolidation of back-office infrastructure; the improvement of client services; and the integration of tax administration subsystems.

During the programming period 2007-2013, projects to modernise justice under the OP 'Human resources and employment' in **Latvia** were carried out in the court of first instance in Riga, the prison administration, and the probation service. All of these institutions have invested efforts in introducing their own quality management systems. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Justice has implemented an ESF-supported project aimed at carrying out a self-assessment according to the Common Assessment Framework. While these projects resulted in some improvements to the operation of individual institutions in the judiciary, the current project adopts a systemic approach, bringing isolated institutional achievements together into a single stream. Investments have been made in infrastructure under the OP 'Infrastructure and services', providing essential European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) support to the courts and law enforcement institutions in order to adapt their ICT environments to better deliver services.

During the period 2007-2013, ESF funding was allocated to the development of administrative capacity in **Latvia**, providing support to three measures: 'Better regulation policy'; 'Capacity building of human resources'; and 'Administrative capacity and development planning capacity building of planning regions and local governments'. As set out in the OP, the rationale for public administration reform was that 'increasing the efficiency of public administration is an essential precondition for stable, sustainable and balanced development of society'. However, many of the programme's original activities had to be revised due to the financial crisis that began in 2008, which made it necessary to balance public expenditure. Thus, for example, activities such as the development of analytical skills within public administration, and research related to the future of public administration, were scaled back or cancelled as a result of the economic downturn.

To support the implementation of regulatory reform in **Lithuania**, the Ministry decided to employ ESF funds during the programming period 2007-2013. This project primarily aimed to assess priority areas in which the administrative burden upon businesses was the greatest, and to take appropriate measures to improve regulatory quality and efficiency. Its aim was to contribute to the achievement of the Lithuanian government's goal of reducing the administrative burden on businesses by 30% by the end of 2011.

In addition, the project 'Development of the mediation system' in **Lithuania** is not the first ESF-funded project to be coordinated by the Ministry of Justice. During the programming period 2007-2013, the Ministry coordinated four ESF-funded projects. Two of these tackled the implementation and improvement of IT solutions used in the judicial system, including IT security at the Centre of Registers and the Central Mortgage Office. Meanwhile, other two ESF-funded projects dealt with improving the competencies of staff, and implementing and certifying the ISO 9001 management standard at the Ministry. Although these projects are not directly related to the current project, they have contributed to the building of competencies in the management of ESF-funded projects at the Ministry.

In preparing the National Revenue Agency project, the **Polish** Ministry of Finance was able to draw on experience and skills acquired in implementing a number of ESF-funded projects aimed at modernising fiscal administration, in both the previous and the current programming periods. Moreover, the Ministry of Finance, within the framework of the Human Capital OP 2007-2013, cooperated with the Chancellery of the Prime Minister in the implementation of several projects: 'Support for the reform of the tax administration'; 'Improving management standards in government administration'; and 'Customer as the focus of the administration's attention'.

The commencement of the **Polish** 'Standards of service of the investor in the self-government' project is also directly related to earlier ESF-funded initiatives during the 2007-2013 programming period. For example, the current director of the Analytical and Methodical Unit for Public Administration at the Ministry of Interior was the team leader for the ESF 2007-2013 project 'Building capacities and improved efficiency of public administration'.

The **Slovak** project implemented by the Ministry of Interior in 2014/15 aimed to strengthen the ministry's analytical and methodical capacities to support the preparation of the strategy and concept for public administration reform in Slovakia. The idea to allocate future ESF resources to finance 'soft' elements of the establishment of OSSs in Slovakia was born during this project.

The core element of the **Slovak** ESF 2007-2013 project 'Capacity building of analytical staff' was the training of high-level analysts for the Slovak government. Eight central bodies were involved. At the Ministry of Finance, resources from this project have been used to train some of the future staff of the Value for Money Division. Thanks to this project, high-level analytical capacities were secured at this division, allowing for the fast start of expenditure reviews in 2016.

The **Slovenian** project to reduce administrative barriers began in 2005. Since then, work has systematically focused on the prevention of administrative barriers. The project 'Measuring Administrative Costs and Burdens in the Regulations of the Republic of Slovenia' (also referred to as the 'Minus 25 per cent programme') represents a continuation of previous projects funded by the ESF during the programming period 2007-2013.

8. Overall conclusions and lessons learned

8.1. Importance for public administration reform

All of the PAPA case studies indicate that without financial support from the ESF, the reforms would probably not have been scheduled or would have taken place on a reduced scale and at a slower pace. It is important to note that this support was not only programmed within the framework of the EU2020 strategy, but was also linked to the main goals and priorities of the national strategic and planning documents in the field of public administration and governance. These documents were sometimes developed or updated in response to the thematic ex-ante conditionality of developing “a strategic policy framework for reinforcing a Member State’s public authorities’ administrative efficiency and their skills” for the programming period 2014-2020.³⁴

Aside from its purely financial element, ESF support has also achieved a mobilising effect on some important aspects of public administration reform at domestic level. A combination of various EU policy instruments (e.g. country-specific recommendations and ESF support) in the field of public administration and governance has sometimes created a synergy that has pushed the formulation and implementation of some administrative reforms in TO11 beneficiary countries.

8.2. Leadership (political/administrative)

Any reform requires strong leadership at the outset to get it going. It involves not only the top-down dimension of leadership often exercised by politicians and heads of institutions, but also a more bottom-up approach to implementing change that is often placed in the hands of administrative teams. When trying something new, there will inevitably be some resistance or at least indifference. Changing the law is not necessarily a good starting point from which to launch ‘soft’ policy programmes. Instead, a ‘bag of different tricks’ must be employed to attract interest and achieve active engagement among (top) civil servants on a voluntarily basis.

Another lesson learnt through the PAPA project sample is that making changes does not rely solely on funding. To remove administrative burdens and change regulation, one also needs political power and support. This is why projects that demand wide cooperation across different (public and private) sectors need to be directed from a higher political level or by the Centre of Government in order to achieve the expected results. Therefore, it is not surprising that many of the ESF projects included within the scope of the PAPA study have been steered by the Centre of Government (Chancellery/Government Office or the administration of the Council of Ministers or a central government ministry). However, the central position of the beneficiary does not downplay the importance of strong administrative leadership or the capacity of project

³⁴ The Estonian government did not have a specific public administration strategy at the time of writing this report, but the ex-ante conditionality of TO11 was formally fulfilled by the Action Plan of the OECD Public Governance Review. For the list of public administration strategies see PPMI, EY, *Public administration reform trends and reform dynamics in EU27*. Unpublished EUPACK2 report, 2019.

teams to mobilise support on a more devolved and 'bottom-up' basis. Such support is important for the successful implementation of project activities (see below on teams and their capacity). Administrative teams can mobilise the support necessary for project implementation by working closely with different stakeholders, demonstrating the benefits of change and building mutual trust.

8.3. Involvement of stakeholders in the different phases of the project

The third lesson gained from this study is that engaging stakeholders delivers great benefits. The PAPA study highlights the importance of involving individual stakeholders and enabling inter-organisational cooperation in order to ensure successful implementation at various phases during the course of the projects. Given the fact that these stakeholders often have the deepest (technical) understanding of the issues involved, and many will oversee the actual operation of the systems being developed, their inclusion is crucial.

While 16 of the ESF projects from the PAPA sample were multi-beneficiary projects implemented in conjunction with various partners (ranging from other government bodies to international organisations), the remaining (mono-beneficiary) projects did not involve any implementation partners. Consultation with stakeholders also differed among the PAPA projects, with some projects actively engaging stakeholders (e.g. in the case of the 'State of the Nation' in Romania), while in other cases the potential for public consultation with stakeholders in the reform has not been adequately exploited. The EUPACK2 report also concluded that relevant stakeholders, including society at large, could be better consulted during the reform process by exploiting the potential of public (online or targeted) consultation with stakeholders to gain their input on challenges to the reform.³⁵

8.4. Clear vision and robust planning, but agile implementation

A clear vision of the project and its robust planning should be combined with some degree of flexibility during implementation. This flexibility is important in order to remain open to possible changes in the project environment, and to keep learning during its implementation. The planning effort is seen as forming a robust basis for control over the project's implementation phase, and acts as a fundamental baseline for the formulation of a comprehensive communication strategy that addresses key project stakeholders.

However, within the existing framework of performance management, the activities and instruments of future administrative reform and capacity-building projects could be specified in a somewhat flexible way in order to make them adaptable to important legal, policy and institutional changes, as well as to enable experimentation and learning. Detailed planning should not rule out the possibility of adapting to ongoing changes or new evidence, in order to improve delivery and achieve better results. Also, if some project activities go wrong for various reasons, it is important to take timely corrective management actions in order to ensure the quality of the project's results (e.g. replacing a contractor in the case of the project 'Improving management systems and standards as well as a customer service in tax administration' in Poland).

³⁵ PPMI, EY, *Public administration reform trends and reform dynamics in EU27*. Unpublished EUPACK2 report, 2019.

8.5. Teams and capacity

Experienced teams with clearly allocated responsibilities are necessary for the implementation of projects on the scale detailed in the PAPA case studies. These factors contribute greatly to the way in which a project's implementation is organised in a dynamic and changing external environment, as well as the need for change management, depending on both external and internal factors.

One issue identified has been the importance of the project team members' experience to the effectiveness of the project's execution, owing to their prior participation in projects co-financed by the ESF. Such prior experience has enabled team members to acquire methodological skills in project planning, their operationalisation and effective implementation, as well as contributing to the strengthening of a culture of cooperation, critical thinking, and the capacity for self-reflection. It is also worth mentioning that the previous experience of the team members was beneficial in creating a network of professional relationships with experts and individuals responsible for the execution of projects of this kind in other administration units.

Some PAPA case studies, and their discussion during the final seminar, drew attention to the crucial issue of administrative capacity (systems, processes, tools and people) and capable governance structures that are adapted to individual projects and their needs (as in the case of the Croatian project whose structure was kept flexible during implementation). In the absence of sufficient internal capacity within public administrations, new empirical evidence or external solutions are unlikely to be used in an effective way. It is therefore important to emphasise the fact that ESF support under TO11 allowed some PAPA projects to create dedicated teams and to build internal capacities. This was the case in, for example, the projects 'Programme of special task forces' in Estonia, 'LabX – the public administration experimentation laboratory' in Portugal, and the analysts working on the 'Efficiency of public expenditures' in Slovakia. Internal capacity building is also a prerequisite for the development of good practices and innovations within the public sector.

Since the quality of the project team is a critical factor in the success of a project, it is important to put in place capable teams at the very beginning of a project's execution, and to equip them with the necessary resources and tools. This goal can be part of future human resource development strategies and/or the administrative capacity roadmaps that could be developed for the implementation of EU Cohesion policy during the programming period 2021-2027.

8.6. Elaborating a full mix of necessary interventions

It is increasingly recognised that the structural and governance challenges facing EU Member States today cannot be addressed solely through a mix of 'hard' and 'soft' investments. Often, they require a more elaborate combination of legislative and policy actions, as well as improvements in existing institutions and systems of governance. The ESF-supported projects of the PAPA study also demonstrate that it is important to integrate project outputs into public administration systems (in terms of new IT tools, HRM or evidence-based policy making practices) in order to ensure that their results materialise and remain sustainable in the future.

In planning future administrative reforms, national administrations should take a wide perspective in terms of their intervention logic by incorporating not only administrative capacity-building actions, but also relevant legal, policy and governance changes. These issues could be addressed as part of national public administration reform strategies or capacity-building roadmaps for the new programming period.

8.7. Ensuring the sustainability of project results

To ensure the sustainability of reforms, the challenge is to integrate a project into new ways of working, and to mainstream these newly developed way of working, interacting with users and changes in behaviours into the 'daily routine'. In the case of e-Government, technologies will become outdated with time. It is therefore important to create an environment that can evolve easily without the need for complicated processes and procedures. If it is usually possible to use the knowledge and expertise gained during project implementation in future activities, it is more difficult to sustain regular activities that require additional funds after project completion.

The fact that TO11 – “enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration” – will no longer be available under ESF+ (except for capacity building in the field of employment, education and training systems, social inclusion and protection, as well as health systems and services) during the programming period 2021-2027 raises some doubts over the sustainability of project results that require further financial assistance. Several PAPA beneficiaries clearly indicated that some of their operations will stop if EU funding comes to an end (e.g. in the case of top civil servant training in Estonia). Therefore, it will be increasingly important to leverage funding available at national or EU level to maximise the benefits of these reforms and capacity-building projects in the future. Other EU instruments, such as the Reform Support Programme, could also complement support for general public administration reform in the areas that will no longer be funded by the ESF+ and the ERDF/Cohesion Fund post-2020.

8.8. Demonstrating added value

To assure the buy-in of various stakeholders, projects aimed at reform or capacity building need to be promoted both internally (within public administration) and externally (in respect of users and the general public). The main challenge indicated in all PAPA case studies was bureaucratic resistance to change in many administrations. Creating a sense of ownership and demonstrating the added value of the project turned out to be crucial elements in assuring buy-in. Finding the right balance between central steering and assuring sufficient ownership and buy-in 'on the ground' is a challenge for all change projects, and certainly in the cases described here.

One challenge encountered during the implementation of ESF-supported projects has been the communication of project results, both at a political level and to society as a whole. Modern trends in public administration are difficult to explain to the wider public, as their acceptance depends on the level of maturity and openness in society. Convincing the general public of the added value of investing in the modernisation of public administration is essential for the image of the public sector, the motivation of civil servants and for overall trust in public administration. The fact that some ESF projects in the PAPA study target the general population, specific users of public services, or even some vulnerable groups in society (such as the unemployed or people with disabilities), may have added to public awareness that people

are the main focus of ESF interventions.

For instance, the Croatian project succeeded in turning the attention of the public towards the significance of transparency of the public sector. Since the establishment of the Information Commissioner's Office and the appointment of the first Information Commissioner, Croatia has risen up the rankings of EU Member States in relation to information access, from 23rd in 2014 (a score of 6) to 9th in 2017 (a score of 8), thus benefitting all stakeholders requiring access to information held by public administration.

8.9. Coordination and knowledge sharing

Another lesson provided by the PAPA cases is that comprehensive reforms that change the principles upon which public administration works are difficult to implement, because they involve administrations at different levels, with different degrees of organisational maturity. Also, such a process will always involve conflicting interests and the inevitable influence of external factors. The key lesson learned from the projects is the need to establish effective inter-institutional collaborations at the outset of the project. Legal, technological and privacy issues – over which other institutional actors have authority – arose during the implementation of some projects, producing delays and other obstacles.³⁶ Identifying these issues earlier and addressing them by engaging with competent institutions would have helped project implementation to proceed more smoothly.

In many cases, working together within or across public administration organisations was one of the aims or prerequisites for success of the PAPA projects. Coordination and collaboration are traditionally difficult issues. The fact that collaboration must often occur not only horizontally (at the same level of government) but also vertically (between different levels of government) further increases the challenge. The EUPACK2 report revealed that although several countries rely on broad councils or committees to coordinate their public administration reforms and to experiment with more innovative collaboration instruments (in the form of management boards, project commissions or functional models), in some EU Member States coordination mechanisms appear to be underdeveloped or lacking.³⁷ The coordination of reform initiatives and projects will remain important during the new programming period, when no single EU programme will provide support to the modernisation of public administration in EU Member States.

The ESF-supported projects assessed by the PAPA project somewhat underestimated the potential effect of sharing their experiences. The potential of knowledge sharing should be exploited to a greater extent, especially in situations where certain central authorities are more advanced in terms of quality and HR management, and the project implementation period may be too short for its rather ambitious goals. Better knowledge sharing can also help to achieve greater buy-in from civil servants. Reform and capacity-building projects can also serve as a tool to overcome departmentalism or the 'silo mentality' that still exists within many public

³⁶ More specifically, the exchange of information and data was found as a major difficulty (or at least a challenge). Overcoming this obstacle has required a modification of the current legislation on privacy, which did not include foresight among the motivations justifying the interoperability of public information systems.

³⁷ PPMI, EY, *Public administration reform trends and reform dynamics in EU27*. Unpublished EUPACK2 report, 2019.

administration systems. Access to international experts and better availability of centrally pooled country practices at EU level could facilitate knowledge sharing among reform or capacity-building projects during the upcoming programming period.

8.10. Monitoring and evaluation

Most of the case study reports emphasise a lack of systematic evidence and evaluations with regard to the success of administrative reforms studied in the reports. Most countries also lack a central mechanism to monitor and report on the progress of reforms. This is equally true of national reforms implemented without EU contribution and reforms implemented with the support of EU funds. While certain reform initiatives/projects may be monitored on a regular basis (mainly monitoring of their implementation), coherent monitoring across different sectors or policy initiatives appears not to take place. This lesson is in line with the conclusion of the EUPACK2 report that the potential of performance monitoring and evaluation is not sufficiently exploited during the process of public administration reforms, making it difficult to generate good evidence on 'what works' in terms of the design and execution of reform initiatives.³⁸

The monitoring of EU support is mandatory for common indicators stipulated in the legal framework for the funds. This is largely complied with, but it is difficult to measure progress or assess changes that are achieved in relation to specific objectives that are rather general in nature, and where the monitoring indicators are not well adapted to support public administration reform. Little evidence exists of systematic long-term evaluations of reforms taking place that attempt to assess the impact of reforms, intended and unintended, in order to gather lessons learned. It appears that successive knowledge generation is not prioritised, and when evaluations take place they are driven more by accountability demands.

A new performance framework will offer new opportunities for the management of the ESIF during the programming period 2021-2027 in terms of simplified programming, streamlined specific objectives or fewer monitoring indicators. The effective application of new instruments and tools can improve the implementation of capacity-building interventions and their monitoring/evaluation in the future.

³⁸ Ibid.

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