EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 12.5.2025
SWD(2025) 117 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EVALUATION

accompanying the document

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE
COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

Mid-term evaluation of the Technical Support Instument (2021-2027)

{COM(2025) 198 final}

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Glossary

Term or acronym	Meaning or definition
BA	Beneficiary authority
CA	Coordinating authority
CBA	Cost-Benefit Analysis
ComPAct	Communication 'Enhancing the European Administrative Space'
CSP	Cooperation and Support Plan
CSRs	Country-Specific Recommendations under the European Semester
DG REFORM	Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESF+	European Social Fund Plus
JTF	Just Transition Fund
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation
OPC	Open Public Consultation
PACE	Public Administration Cooperation Exchange
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
RRP	Recovery and Resilience Plan
SRSP	Structural Reform Support Programme
SG REFORM	The Reform and Investment Task Force
SWD	Staff Working Document
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument
TSI	Technical Support Instrument
UN SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goal

1. INTRODUCTION

The Technical Support Instrument (TSI) was set up by [Regulation (EU) 2021/240](#) (the 'TSI Regulation')[1] and entered into force on the 19 February 2021. The TSI is a programme under the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027, and successor of the structural reform support programme (SRSP, 2017-2020). With a budget of EUR 864 million for the period 2021-2027, the TSI was managed by the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support ([DG REFORM](#))[2].

Structural reforms can be understood as measures with long-lasting effects on the structure of the economy, the institutional and regulatory framework in which businesses and people operate, public governance, or on progress towards relevant policy objectives.

Since its creation in 2021, the TSI has provided tailor-made technical expertise to any Member State facing challenges in designing and implementing its reform agenda in a wide range of policy areas. This includes reforms that aim to address challenges identified in the European Semester process of economic policy coordination, the EU's policy priorities or reforms undertaken at a Member State's own initiative. The support is demand-driven and does not require co-financing from Member States. **Technical support** (TS) is defined as '*measures that help national authorities to implement institutional, administrative and structural reforms that are sustainable and resilience-enhancing, strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion and support the public administration in the preparation of sustainable and resilience-enhancing investments*'. It is distinguished from **technical assistance** (TA), existing for example in cohesion policy, and defined as 'support and capacity-building activities necessary for the implementation of a programme or an action, in particular preparatory, management, monitoring, evaluation, audit and control activities'. The TSI is an important pillar of the EU's initiative to help Member States mitigate the economic and social consequences of the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on recovery and resilience.

1.1. Purpose and scope of the evaluation

As required by the TSI Regulation (Article 16), the TSI is subject to an independent mid-term evaluation to provide evidence on its early implementation, to be submitted to the European Parliament and Council. This mid-term evaluation is being undertaken at mid-point of the implementation of the TSI (2021-2027).

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[1] Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 February 2021 establishing a Technical Support Instrument, OJ L 57, 18/02/2021, pp. 1-16.

[2] Since 1 February 2025, the Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM [Reform and Investment Task Force - European Commission](#)) has taken over its responsibilities. References to DG REFORM are kept considering the Directorate-General was in charge for managing the TSI programme during the period covered by the mid-term evaluation.

This mid-term evaluation covers all projects funded under the **2021, 2022 and 2023 TSI cycles, in all 27 Member States**. This constitutes a total of 611 technical support projects, corresponding to 886 national components of projects, for a total budget of EUR 359 million. The mid-term evaluation analyses the **operational cycle of the TSI annual work** programmes, from the reception and assessment of Member States' technical support requests to the evaluation of closed technical support projects after implementation.

The results of this evaluation will serve two aims. First, they can help identify potential ways to improve the implementation of the TSI until end-2027. Second, it will also be a pertinent reference point to inform discussions and decision-making for the provision of technical support in the future.

1.2. Methodology applied

The TSI mid-term evaluation covers the **five criteria** set out in the European Commission's better regulation Guidelines assessing the extent to which the TSI is **effective** in fulfilling expectations and meeting its objectives; is **efficient** in terms of cost-effectiveness and proportionality of actual costs to benefits; is **relevant** to current and emerging needs; is **coherent** (internally and externally with other EU interventions or international agreements); and has **EU added value** (i.e. produces results beyond what would have been achieved by Member States acting alone). To assess these criteria, the evaluation grid, presented in Annex III, includes evaluation questions, judgement criteria, quantitative and qualitative indicators and data sources, in line with the Better Regulation Guidelines. When possible, findings of this evaluation are compared to the data found in the *ex ante*, mid-term and *ex post* evaluations of the SRSP as points of comparison.

This Staff Working Document (SWD) presents the Commission staff's views on the mid-term evaluation of the TSI. This evaluation is informed by: (i) a supporting study[3] carried out by an independent contractor over a period of 11 months starting on 21-December-2023; (ii) a series of four internal workshops organised by DG REFORM; and (iii) monitoring data, including information collected after the closure of TSI projects through the feedback mechanism[4]. The evaluation methods include a **desk review** (of DG REFORM monitoring data, TSI projects documents, and other publicly available documents) and **stakeholder consultations**. Consultation activities included: (i) an **open public consultation;**(ii) three **surveys** targeting TSI stakeholders (technical support providers, and coordinating and beneficiary authorities),receiving 289 responses; (iii) three **focus group** discussions, gathering a total of 37 participants; and (iv) 114 **interviews**[5]. The evaluation also relies on several analyses, including : (i) a **cost-benefit analysis;** (ii) seven **case studies,** covering 98 projects in various policy areas ; and (iii)

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[3] PPMI and CSES (2025), Supporting study for the mid-term evaluation of the Technical Support Instrument (2021-2027): final report. Publications Office:
https://op.europa.eu/publication/catalogue_number/HT-01-25-000-EN-N.
[4] The feedback mechanism is explained in detail under Section 3.2.
[5] See all information and detailed analysis of stakeholders' consultation in Annex V.

an analysis of TSI projects' **contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**.

The evaluation process has encountered some **limitations**, particularly, with respect to the assessment of effectiveness. The **first** main limitation relates to the nature and design of the TSI: the TSI Regulation does not include the actual adoption and implementation of reforms in Member States in the general and specific objectives of the instrument, but it but it rather focuses on 'assisting national authorities in improving their capacity'. In addition, the TSI Regulation does not impose specific reporting obligations on Member States concerning the use of the support measures and the status of the reforms supported. A second limitation relates to the current monitoring and evaluation system of TSI projects which does not capture in a systematic and objectively verifiable manner the achievements of TSI projects, especially at outcome and impact level. Data collection tools used (such as surveys and questionnaires) rely on self-reporting, which can introduce bias into the measurements. Third, the TSI started in 2021, and around half of projects from the 2021-2023 cycles had been closed by the time of this evaluation. The outcomes and the longer-term impacts of the support may only be observable in the Member States after some years, and only if specific reforms have actually been implemented, so it is possible that several results of projects have not materialised yet.

The mid-term evaluation includes **mitigation measures** to address, to the extent possible, these limitations and ensure the reliability of findings. In particular, multiple data sources were combined and cross-referenced, for example, by complementing the perceptions of stakeholders with more objective data. In addition, a case study on the follow-up to SRSP projects has been carried out to better analyse the use of technical support measures by Member States and their sustainability in the medium-term.

It is important to acknowledge the aforementioned limitations. Firstly, because acknowledging them better prepares the ground for the *ex post* evaluation, which will enable a more accurate assessment of outcomes and impacts once the programme ends. Secondly, recognising these limitations provides valuable insights that can guide future planning and decision-making. SG REFORM is currently working on several workstreams to improve monitoring and evaluation of the TSI, moving towards a more results-oriented monitoring and evaluation system that might improve the measurement of the medium- and long-term impacts of the TSI.

This SWD is structured as follows: Section 2 summarises the objectives and expected outcomes of the TSI, while Section 3 describes how the situation has evolved since the TSI adoption in 2021. Section 4 presents the main findings of the evaluation by criteria and Section 5 provides conclusions and lessons learned. The annexes provide additional information about the procedure and the methodology followed for this evaluation, the evaluation matrix, the cost-benefit analysis and results of the stakeholder consultation.

2. WHAT WAS THE EXPECTED OUTCOME OF THE INTERVENTION?

2.1. Description of the TSI and its objectives

Building on the lessons learned and in continuation of the SRSP, the TSI was designed as a response to the need to provide Member States authorities with technical support to design and implement reforms, as identified in the *ex ante* evaluation for the proposal of establishing the SRSP Programme (2015) and the impact assessment of the Reform Support Programme (2018)[6]. The main problems identified were the inadequate application and implementation of Union legislation and the slow implementation of reforms across Member States, and mainly explained by the limited and uneven administrative and institutional capacity of public administration.

The general objective of the TSI is to promote the Union's economic, social and territorial cohesion by supporting Member States' efforts to implement reforms. To achieve the general objective, the TSI has the specific objectives (Article 4 of the TSI Regulation) of assisting national authorities in improving their capacity to: (a) design, develop and implement reforms; (b) prepare, amend, implement and revise recovery and resilience plans pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2021/241.

These objectives respond to the needs and challenges faced by Member States in their reform efforts, notably, the limited institutional and administrative capacity to implement reforms; the inadequate application and implementation of EU legislation towards achieving Union's fundamental goals; the slow and uneven implementation of structural reforms; and the need for more coordinated response and preparedness to cope with economic and social consequences of external shocks and crises such as the COVID-19 and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The intervention logic, presented in Figure 1, includes **the following specific elements**[7] that are linked to the **evaluation criteria**:

- **Needs and challenges** addressed by the programme (as identified in the 2015 *ex ante* evaluation, the 2018 Impact Assessment and the TSI Regulation recitals). The extent to which the TSI is addressing the needs is assessed under **relevance**;

- General and specific **objectives** of the programme as stated in the TSI Regulation (Articles 3 and 4). The extent of the TSI contribution to these objectives is assessed under the **effectiveness** criterion;
- **Inputs**, which include the financial as well as the human resources and administrative processes needed to manage and implement the TSI are assessed under the **efficiency** analysis;

- Eligible **activities** and **policy areas** of the TSI as defined in its Regulation;

- **Outputs**, the tangible and measurable products, services or change of different types directly resulting from implementing the activities of TSI projects are assessed under the **effectiveness** criterion;

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[6] Commission Staff Working Document. Impact assessment accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the Reform Support Programme. SWD (2018) 310.

[7] which are further elaborated on and detailly described in Annex 1 of the supporting study.

- **Outcomes,** the medium-term changes the TSI projects will contribute to, as a follow-up of the project by its beneficiaries are assessed under **effectiveness**. They can be institutional, individual (in terms of behaviour or practice) or policy change. Outcomes are beyond the direct control of the TSI intervention;

- **Impacts**, the long-term or broader change at country, regional or sector level that the programme's implementation is expected to contribute to are analysed under **effectiveness.** Given that this mid-term evaluation is performed early in the implementation of the TSI, impacts cannot be expected to have significantly materialised yet. Impacts are beyond the direct control of the TSI intervention;

- **Other EU programmes** with similar objectives, and their relationship with the TSI is assessed under the **coherence** criterion;

- **External conditions** affecting the implementation of the TSI are analysed under **effectiveness**.

Figure 1- Intervention logic of the TSI

Needs	Objectives	Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Limited administrative and institutional capacity *ex-ante eval 2015* Inadequate application and implementation of EU legislation towards achieving the Union's fundamental goals *ex-ante eval 2015* Slow and uneven implementation of structural reforms *IA 2018* Need for more coordinated response and preparedness to cope with economic and social consequences of external shocks and crises (financial crises, COVID-19, Russia's war of aggression …) *based on TSI reg. recital 3*	**General objective** To promote the Union's economic, social and territorial cohesion by supporting Member States' efforts to implement reforms To encourage investment, to increase competitiveness, To achieve sustainable economic and social convergence, resilience and recovery, To strengthen Member states' institutional and administrative capacity- incl. at regional /local level, To facilitate socially inclusive, green and digital transitions, To address the challenges identified in the country-specific recommendations To implement Union law *TSI reg. Art. 3* **Specific objectives** To assist national authorities in improving their capacity : to design, develop and implement reforms To prepare, amend, implement and revise recovery and resilience plans *TSI reg. Art. 4*	Financial resources Human resources of the European Commission and national authorities, and related administrative costs	Policy advice, formulation of strategies/reforms Data collection & methodology development Operational activities (e.g. translation, administrative assistance, facilities..) Capacity building (workshops, exchange of best practices, trainings) Development / publication of studies and reports Communication activities, awareness-raising, info, media campaigns Dissemination of information & results of TSI *TSI reg. Art. 8*	Documents to support legislative proposals & law amendments Report with recommendations Technical notes Documents to support policy implementation & institutional reforms Report with recommendations, Draft strategy, Action plan, Roadmap, Pilot action Guidelines, handbook, Methodology, Change management. Capacity building outputs Good practice reports Study visit report Staff trained, training material, curriculum developed Coordination mechanisms Analytical report Stakeholders mapping Gap analysis Communication outputs Communication strategies & materials Conferences Project description & policy brief Others *Internal typology*	Policy-level results Adoption of a new strategy, a new law/act or modification of an existing one Institutional and individual level results Adoption of (new) procedures and actions to enhance the implementation of reforms Improved internal working procedures, methodologies and processes, organisation Organisational change, change management, improved HR management. *Internal typology*	Strengthened institutions, governance and resilience of public administration Increased contribution to EU priorities – incl. socially inclusive, green & digital transitions Enhanced cohesion, investment and competitiveness Improved implementation of Union law

Policy Areas

Revenue administration and public financial management	Governance and public administration	Sustainable growth and business environment	Labour market, education, health and social services	Financial sector and access to finance	Migration and RRP implementation

EU programmes and instruments

The European Semester and the RRF

Other EU funds (e.g. ERDF, CF, ESF+, JTF)

Sector-specific technical assistance programmes (e.g.Fiscalis)

Capacity-building tools (e.g. REGIO Peer2Peer+, TAIEX)

External conditions

Global external shocks and crises (e.g. evolution of COVID-19, Russia's war of aggression, energy crisis …)

National factors affecting the uptake of technical support in each Member States (e.g. initial conditions and absorption capacity, electoral cycle and political support…)

2.2. Points of comparison

This mid-term evaluation aims to capture the institutional and policy changes that the TSI has brought over time. To accurately assess the progress made in implementing the TSI and its performance, a comparative analysis is necessary, considering three key points of comparison:

- The situation before the intervention, as described in the SRSP's *ex ante* evaluation published in November 2015[8].
- The situation during the mid-term evaluation of the SRSP, published in February 2020, which used monitoring data from 2019[9].
- The situation during the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP, published in October 2023 using the monitoring data of 2022[10].

When available, points of comparison are detailed in the evaluation matrix (see Annex III) for each indicators used to answer the evaluation questions. The table below presents some relevant indicators, with quantified data measured at different points in time, to serve as comparison.

Table 1- **The main points of comparison**

Point of comparison	Value in the *ex ante* evaluation of the SRSP	Value in the mid-term evaluation of the SRSP	Value in the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP
Number of infringement cases active at the end of the year[9] (*impact-level indicator*)	**2014**: 1 347 cases	**2017**: 1 561 cases **2018**: 1 571 cases	**2019**: 1 564 cases **2020**: 1 787 cases
Share of SRSP/TSI projects addressing the country-specific recommendations (CSRs)	n/a	45% of the projects	58% of the projects
Progress in the implementation of country-specific recommendations (CSRs)[10] (*impact-level indicator*)	2015: **No/limited progress**: 52% of CSRs **Some progress**: 44% of CSRs **Full/substantial progress**: 4% of CSRs	**No/limited progress:** 2017: 50% of CSRs 2018: 61% of CSRs **Some progress:** 2017: 49% of CSRs 2018: 37% of CSRs **Full/substantial progress:** 2017: 1% of CSRs 2018: 3% of CSRs	2019: **No/limited progress**: 60% of CSRs **Some progress**: 39% of CSRs **Full/substantial progress**: 1% of CSRs
Execution of commitment and payment appropriations	n/a	**Commitment:** 2017: EUR 22.5 million (100%)	**Commitment:** 2019: EUR 78.68 million (100%)

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[8] European Commission, 2015. *Ex-ante Evaluation Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the Structural Reform Support Programme for the period 2017 to 2020 and amending Regulations (EU) No 1303/2013 and (EU) No 1305/2013*

[9] European Commission, 2020. *Mid-term evaluation of the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) 2017-2020 – Final evaluation report*

[10] European Commission, 2022. *Supporting study for the ex-post evaluation of the Structural Reform Support Programme (2017-2020)*

		2018: EUR 29.35 million (100%) **Payment:** 2017: EUR 2.63 million (67%) 2018: EUR 15.23 million (97%)	2020: EUR 83.97 million (100%) **Payment:** 2019: EUR 34.62 million (99%) 2020: EUR 54.65 million (100%)
Selection rate (ratio between submitted and selected requests)	n/a	2017: 59% 2018: 33%	2019: 45% 2020: 37%
Number/share of technical support projects completed	n/a	**SRSP 2017**: 44 / 37% **SRSP 2018**: 10 / 8%	**SRSP 2017**: 141 / 99% **SRSP 2018**: 122 / 49% **SRSP 2019**: 221 / 87% **SRSP 2020**: 122 / 49%
Share of beneficiary authorities in need for the further technical support (*survey data*)	n/a	65%	83%
Share of beneficiary authorities satisfied with the results of technical support (*survey data*)	n/a	n/a	94%

Sources: compiled by PPMI, based on European Commission, 2020. Mid-term evaluation of the Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) 2017-2020 – Final evaluation report. https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2887/656262; European Commission, 2022. Supporting study for the ex post evaluation of the Structural Reform Support Programme (2017-2020), Final report. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b5da9cce-5115-11ee-9220-01aa75ed71a1/language-en (with the exception of two sources indicated in the footnotes of the table).

3. HOW HAS THE SITUATION EVOLVED OVER THE EVALUATION PERIOD?

3.1. Evolution of the situation

According to the TSI Regulation (Article 9.1), Member States wishing to receive technical support under the instrument are required to submit a request for technical support to the Commission by 31 October. In addition to this **annual cycle** of general calls, the TSI Regulation foresees **dedicated calls** to address specific emerging needs of Member States (Article 9.4), as well as requests for **special measures** in the case of unforeseen and duly justified urgencies or circumstances requiring an immediate response (Article 12.7).

Member States have submitted more than 1 700 requests for technical support since 2021 (TSI 2021-2023 cycles). The number of requests submitted decreased over the evaluation period (763 in under TSI 2021, 544 under TSI 2022, 530 under TSI 2023). Under the **general call**, Member States have submitted 706 requests for the TSI 2021, 512 for TSI 2022, 530 for TSI 2023. In addition, **dedicated calls** for requests were organised in 2021 and 2022: in 2021 a dedicated call for support for EU Member States in preparing their resilience and recovery plan for which 38 requests were submitted; in 2022 a dedicated call to support EU Member States in dealing with the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (e.g. in welcoming refugees from Ukraine and phasing out reliance on fossil fuels from Russia), for which 32 requests were submitted[11].

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[11] Data based on TSI annual reports:

European Commission, 2023. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, *Technical Support Instrument Annual Report 2021 and Annual Report 2022.*

Additionally, in 2022, Croatia submitted four requests under Article 7 of the TSI Regulation, which allows Member States to request additional TSI support at their own expense. Furthermore, four Member States submitted requests under Article 7.2 of the RRF Regulation, which is a special mechanism used by some Member States to include in their RRP (as estimated costs) payments for additional technical support from the TSI. In total, voluntary contributions reached 3.6 million made in 2022 under the RRF Regulation (Article 7.2). Along the TSI early implementation, DG REFORM has developed new features to address evolving needs and challenges in convergence with EU priorities, fostering collaboration and exchange of experiences between Member States. Since 2022, **flagships projects** were introduced to support reforms largely needed across Member States and linked to top EU priorities. Flagships proposed for the TSI 2022 were focused on the digital and green transitions, and other priorities such as social Europe, a more efficient public administration and regional coordination, equality, combating child poverty and social exclusion, migrant integration and support to the tourism ecosystem. In 2023, flagships covered six thematic pillars: green transition; support to children and youth; health, economic, social and institutional resilience; digital transformation; social and territorial cohesion; smart sustainable and inclusive growth.

Multi-country projects have also been instituted as an essential component of TSI, bringing a cross-border dimension to the provision of technical support. Starting with two multi-country projects under TSI 2021, the number of multi-country projects has increased constantly, with 21 projects under TSI 2022 and 35 multi-country projects under TSI 2023. Member States also demonstrated their interest in strengthening cooperation at regional level through 21 projects in 2023[12].

Another important milestone is the Communication on Enhancing the European Administrative Space (**ComPAct**). Adopted in 2023, the ComPAct proposes concrete actions to help public administrations meet the needs of people and businesses across Europe. The actions are implemented through the TSI, and other EU tools such as the Digital Europe Programme. As part of the ComPAct, the Public Administration Cooperation Exchange (PACE) was also launched in 2023 as a TSI flagship project.

To address the **regional and local dimensions** of some challenges, authorities at sub-national level are also eligible for TSI support. TSI has encouraged, multi-regional and multi-city projects for example through flagship projects. Under TSI 2022, DG REFORM proposed a flagship project specifically addressed to the regions on 'Enhancing cooperation and quality of public administration', as well as on supporting the 'Just Transition' (to support Member States address gaps in the implementation of the just transition in their regions). Under TSI 2023, DG REFORM proposed a flagship on 'digital transformation of regional and local authorities', to promote digital transformation efforts spearheaded by authorities operating at regional and local level.

European Commission, 2024. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, *Technical Support Instrument - Annual Report 2023*.

[12] European Commission, 2024. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, *Technical Support Instrument - Annual Report 2023*.

3.2.   Current state of play

The delivery model

Member States specify in their requests the **type of project** they consider best suited for their needs:

- **Stand-alone projects** in which each technical support project corresponds to a single reform in a single country, and
- **Multi-country/ multi-regional projects** in which each technical support project is composed of several country- or regional- specific reforms[13]. This type of project can be formed in different ways:
    - through a single coordinated submission with other Member States, in which one authority leads and initiates the request and requested support measures are identical for all participating authorities[14];
    - through in parallel submissions of individual requests by each Member State in which support measures are more adapted to their specific needs[15];
    - based on a merge of stand-alone projects with similar objectives, proposed by DG REFORM and subject to the agreement of Member States.

Member States have designated within their governance structures a **national coordinating authority** to facilitate the coordination and submission of technical support requests, as well as to act as the main interlocutor regarding the overall implementation of the TSI. The actual recipients of technical support are the **public entities, the beneficiary authorities**, such as ministries, regulatory authorities, public agencies, regional/local authorities and other public bodies that have requested support.

The Commission analyses the eligibility and compliance of requests for support submitted by the Member States based on the principles and assessment criteria defined in the TSI Regulation, including the context of the European Semester[16] The assessment and selection process is clearly defined and standardised, and it includes specific guidance to main stakeholders involved to ensure consistency in the application of the criteria, facilitate decision-making and ensure conditions for the successful implementation of projects are met. During the analysis of requests, DG REFORM consults regularly other Commission departments and DGs to ensure that the technical support provided under the TSI is aligned with EU policies, does not duplicate other EU actions and funding and creates synergies with other EU programmes.

Based on TSI annual reports, the number of requests selected decreased over the evaluation period (277 in under TSI 2021, 239 under TSI 2022, 231 under TSI 2023), representing less than half of the requests submitted.

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[13] Each country- or regional- specific component of the project is referred to as a reform.

[14] Referred to as 'on behalf' modality.

[15] Referred to as 'in parallel' submission of a multi-country requests.

[16] In line with Article 9.5, requests are analysed taking into account the **principles** of transparency, equal treatment, sound financial management; based on the **criteria** of urgency, breadth and depth of the challenges identified, support needs in respect of the policy areas concerned, analysis of socio-economic indicators, institutional and general administrative capacity of concerned Member States.

The TSI is implemented through Financing Decisions and annual work programmes, approved by the College, which set out the support measures to be implemented for the year concerned, the dedicated annual budget and the expected results. After the annual financing decision is made, cooperation and support plans (CSPs)[17] are signed between the Commission and the Member States concerned[18]. CSPs include priority areas of support as well as the estimated financial contribution of the technical support. According to the TSI Regulation (Article 9.6), the CSPs also identify, separately from other technical support, the measures linked to the recovery and resilience plans (RRPs) for Member States[19].

To implement the selected technical support projects, the Commission leverages the best available expertise, based on needs and objectives expressed by the Member States. Technical expertise can be provided either directly by the Commission through in-house expertise or by external providers, using direct or indirect management modes. Technical support providers include European or international organisations, experts from EU Member States' national administrations or private sector contractors. DG REFORM carries out, among other tasks, the financial management of the contracts, including payments to technical support providers.

DG REFORM is constantly involved from the design of a project to its implementation and evaluation. Once the requests are selected and the implementation mode is defined, policy officers in DG REFORM engage actively with national authorities in designing the project together, for instance with regard to shaping and refining the project scope, objectives and expected results, activities and outputs or deliverables. Policy officers are actively involved in the management and implementation of technical support projects and in ensuring their quality, including via meticulous reviews of deliverables and outputs. They also ensure smooth and clear communication between technical support providers and beneficiary authorities, promoting mutual understanding. Each project steering committee also includes a member of DG REFORM staff, together with officials from the national authorities. This ensures the project remains aligned with the national and EU priorities and adapts to the evolving context if needed.

DG REFORM coordinates its work with other Commission departments through a permanent network of representatives of other Directorates-Generals. This cooperation ensures that the technical support provided under the TSI is aligned with EU policies, does not duplicate other EU action, and contributes to synergies with other EU programmes. It also facilitates access to technical expertise available in the Commission or easily mobilised by other EU programmes.

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[17] Article 9.5 established the Cooperation and Support Plans mechanism between the Commission and the Member States.

[18] Article 10 establishes that 'the Commission shall transmit, with the consent of the Member State concerned, the cooperation and support plan simultaneously to the European Parliament and to the Council without undue delay.' The Member State concerned may refuse to give such consent in the case of sensitive or confidential information the disclosure of which would jeopardise public interests of the Member State.

[19] as defined in Article 18 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility.

The role of national coordinating authorities is not specified in the Regulation and, as a result, roles and responsibilities differ across Member States (see box below). Consultation activities revealed that the absolute majority of coordinating authorities reported not being involved in the monitoring of the projects and no coordinating authorities reported being involved in the follow-up after the end of the TSI projects.

Box 1 - The role of national coordinating authorities in the TSI

Background information on the role of coordinating authorities: there is no legal basis defining the concept and role of the coordinating authorities (i.e. no references in the SRSP or TSI regulations). However, the importance of having a central contact point in Member States became evident very early on. In 2016, the SRSS asked each Member State to nominate a coordinating authority, with the main goal to act as an interlocutor of the SRSS. The mandate of the coordinating authorities was further detailed in the SRSP 2017 instructions ('the requests should be submitted by the coordinating authorities') and the subsequent cooperation and support plans ('the coordinating authority is responsible for monitoring the effective implementation of the measures envisaged and achievement of the objectives set out under this Cooperation and Support Plan, and for initiating corrective actions as needed'). In 2023, noting that the scope and size of technical support provided to the Member States largely increased, and together with it, the importance and complexity of the role of the coordinating authorities, DG REFORM proposed to the Network of Coordinating Authorities to review the mandate of these actors. The proposal for an advanced mandate was included as an annex of subsequent CSPs and emphasised their crucial role in the TSI processes (including coordination, monitoring and evaluation). The proposal made did not require a modification of the TSI Regulation.

Key findings from the mid-term evaluation: most interviewed coordinating authorities identified three key roles related to the implementation of the TSI in their Member State: **communication**, **support for beneficiary authorities in preparation of requests** and, in some cases, **prioritisation of requests**. In a few Member States, coordinating authorities are also performing **monitoring activities.**

- **Communication**: a few Member States developed a network of the TSI focal points across the public institutions to facilitate communication and support both programme and individual projects implementation. Other authorities indicated using such measures as newsletters and mailing lists. Finally, coordinating authorities support DG REFORM in the implementation of strategic, thematic, and technical roll-out events.

- **Coordination to avoid double funding**: In their approach to the prioritisation of requests, the majority of coordinating authorities reported paying specific attention to avoid the risk of overlapping projects and their funding.

- **Prioritisation of requests**: the coordinating authorities in Member States that are prioritising the requests emphasised that this process ensures the projects' alignment with the national priorities and the ownership of potential beneficiaries. For instance, the Estonian coordinating authority developed a few-steps request preparation process, including a one-page presentation and a pitch of the request idea. The Maltese coordinating authority aims to have more holistic projects, therefore puts additional effort in bringing different institutions together for the preparation of requests. However, some coordinating authorities noted that requests are not prioritised in their Member State, which is typically due to reluctance to put some institutions in front of the others, a generally low number of requests in the country or a limited overview of the national priorities from the position of the coordinating authority.

- **Monitoring**: the absolute majority of coordinating authorities reported not being involved in the monitoring of the projects. In Malta, a quarterly monitoring system is put in place, with two reports prepared by the focal points in ministries and two events organised over a year. No coordinating authorities reported being involved in the follow-up after the end of the TSI projects. While this was mostly explained by the limited resources dedicated to the function of coordinating authority, the need for more guidance from DG REFORM was expressed in a survey to coordinating authorities performed by DG REFORM.

The interview evidence mildly suggests that the role of coordinating authorities may depend on **their position in the institutional network** (e.g. institutions responsible for the management of the EU funds

Source: based on Commission analysis and PPMI interviews, desk research and analysis.

DG REFORM assesses the support it provides to Member States both at programme and at project level, in order to provide evidence of its achievements in the Member States. **At programme level**, DG REFORM evaluates, at mid-term and *ex post*, whether the programme delivers as expected, remains relevant and fit for purpose, following Better Regulation and TSI Regulation requirements.

At project level, DG REFORM has put in place in 2019 a two-step 'feedback mechanism' to monitor and assess individual TSI projects after their implementation. First, after closure of each technical support project, 'satisfaction questionnaires' are respectively sent to main stakeholders (Commission policy officers, beneficiary authorities, and technical support providers) to gather feedback on the project's design and implementation, the interaction between the stakeholders, as well as on the scope for improvement and lessons learned. Second, 6, 12 or 18 months later, another 'outcome questionnaire' is sent to the beneficiary authorities only, to assess the extent to which the expected project outcomes were achieved, with a score ranging between 1-10. Feedback extracted from this mechanism is used to feed into the programme evaluation, as well as in communication on the TSI and in the Annual Activity Report.

In addition, DG REFORM monitors and regularly reports on the programme's implementation through the TSI annual reports, that is submitted to the European Parliament and to the Council as foreseen in the TSI Regulation (Article 15).

Progress in the implementation of the TSI projects

Over the evaluation period, 611 technical support projects in total have been implemented under three rounds of the TSI (in 2021, 2022, and 2023)[20]. In total, these technical support projects led to 886 national project components – 281 in 2021, 280 in 2022, and 325 in 2023. The number of projects gradually decreased over the period, namely from 258 under the 2021 round to 186 under the 2022 round, and to 167 under the 2023 round. However, this overall decrease is explained by a shift in the type of projects funded: while the total number of stand-alone projects decreased, the number of multi-country projects increased from 2 (covering 25 national project components) in the 2021 round to 21 (i.e. 115 national project components) in the 2022 round, and further to 35 (i.e. 193 national project components) in the 2023 round, as shown in Figure 2. As suggested by the supporting external study, the growing number of multi-country projects over the evaluation period indicates the TSI's capacity to contribute to an overall increase in the total number of national project components supported. This reflects DG

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[20] The total number of projects vary from the external study supporting the mid-term evaluation considering data extractions were done at different moments of time (external study: 19/07/2024; **SWD: 20/11/2024**). Variations are explained mostly by re-programming. **The most updated information is presented in this SWD.**

REFORM's strategic approach, focusing on projects with larger budgets to enable the provision of support to multiple Member States simultaneously. On average, considering TSI cycles 2021 - 2023, a multi-country project has five participating countries with a median number of three countries per project for the aforementioned cycles. Projects with the highest participation of countries include the EU Supervisory Digital Finance Academy (26 countries), the Green Budgeting Framework Training Programme (23 countries) and the support to REPowerEU (17).

Figure 2- Distribution of TSI projects and number of national project components (2021-2023)
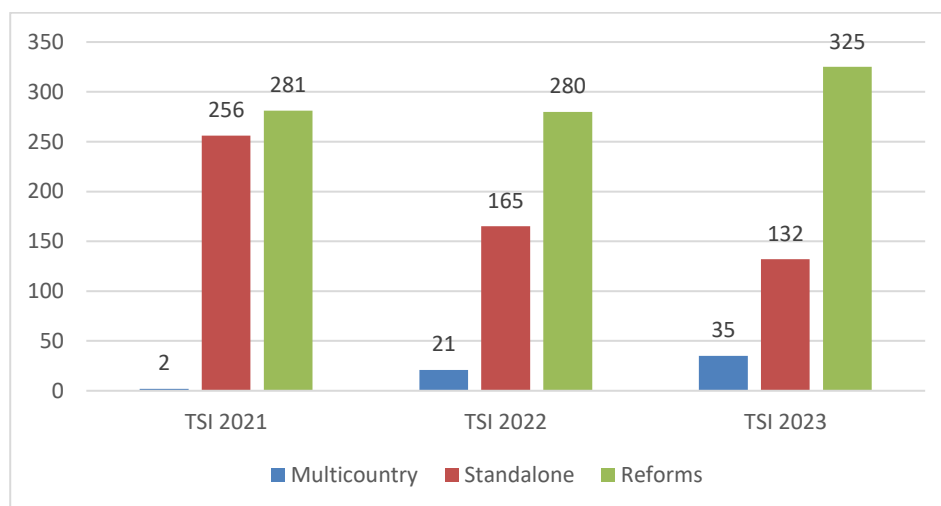
The increase of multi-country projects has also contributed to the increase in the average budget of projects. The average project's budget has increased from EUR 0.46 million in TSI 2021, to EUR 0.65 million in TSI 2022 and to EUR 0.71 million in TSI 2023. The average budget of stand-alone projects (considering 2021 to 2023 TSI cycles) is EUR 0.49 million while multi-country projects' budget is EUR 1.48 million for the three TSI cycles covered.

**Figure 3- Average budget per project in EUR million (2021-2023)**

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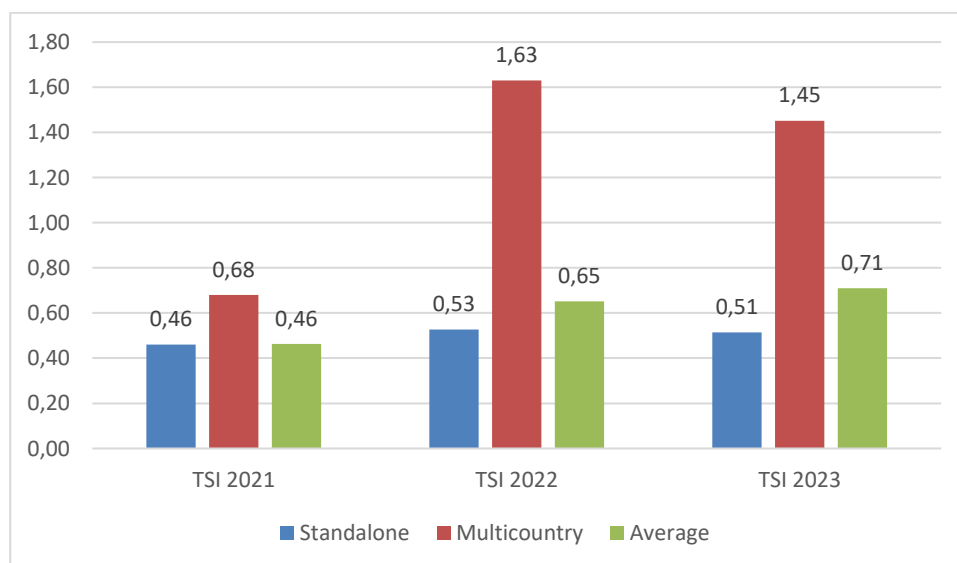
During 2021-2023, stand-alone projects account for about 91% (553 projects) of all TSI projects, while multi-country projects account for about 9% (58 projects). In terms of types of requests for technical support, general requests were the most common, constituting around 79% of all TSI projects (481), while the flagship requests for support accounted for about 21% of all projects (130). Overall, around 20% of stand-alone projects (111) and 33% of multi-country projects (19) were flagships. The detailed distribution by types of request is presented in Figure 4.

Figure 4- Distribution of TSI projects by type of request (2021-2023)
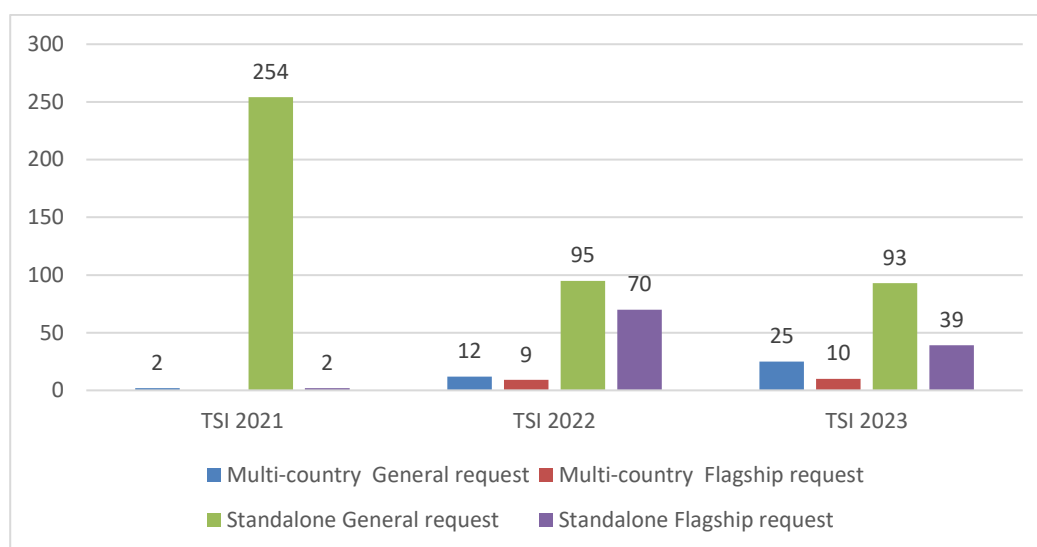
Out of the 611 projects within the 2021-2023 rounds of the TSI, 336 were completed (55%), while one project of TSI 2023 had not yet started (0.2%), and 274 projects of the programme were still ongoing (44.8%) at the time of this mid-term evaluation. The level of completion varied across different rounds of the programme with 95.7% of projects (247 out of 258) from the 2021 round and 45.7% of projects (85 out of 186) from the 2022 round and 2.4% of projects (4 out of 167) completed for TSI 2023, as shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5- TSI projects by implementation status (2021-2023)

18
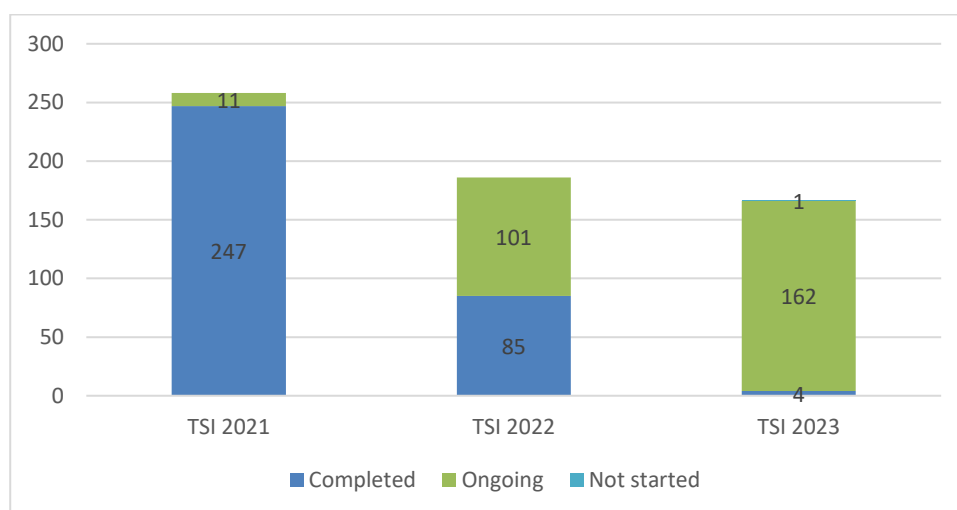
The largest number of projects, 25% for all rounds, was implemented in the fields of sustainable growth and business environment (153 projects), governance and public administration (120 projects), and labour market, education, health and social services (113 projects) (see Figure 6).

**Figure 6- Distribution of TSI projects by thematic area (2021-2023)**
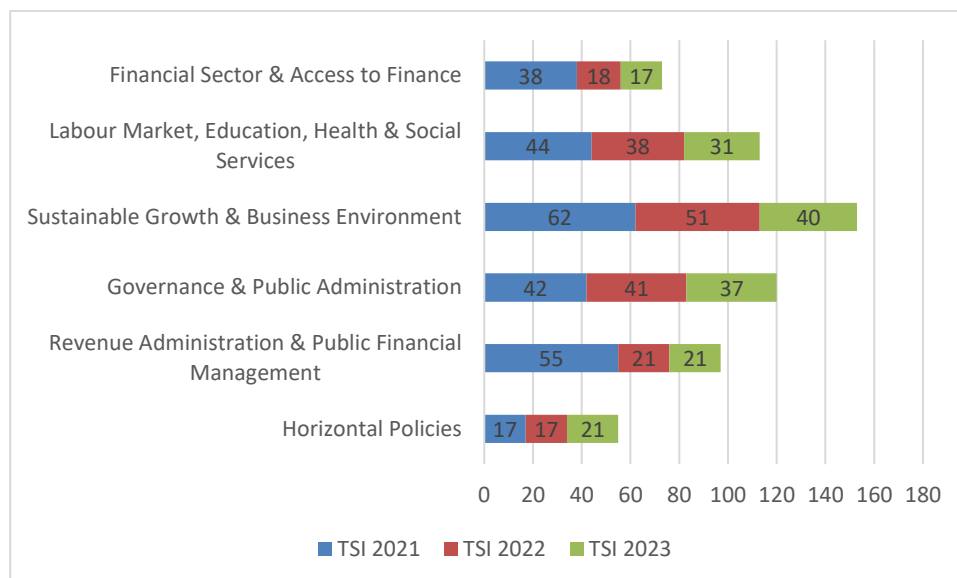
Over the period of analysis, the highest share of multi-country projects was in the field of revenue administration and public financial management (24%) and governance and public administration (22%).

As indicated in the external study supporting the mid-term evaluation, Member States' demand for technical support has increased significantly over the years. All 27 Member States benefited from technical support regardless of their size, geography or their administrative capacity. DG REFORM has encouraged the continuous exchange of good practices and expertise with and between Member States, which in turn supported the Member States in preparing, designing, and implementing cutting-edge reforms.

During the TSI rounds 2021 - 2023, Greece (7.2% of all projects), Portugal (5.8%), Spain (5.4%) and Italy (5.4%) had the overall highest share of the TSI projects (see Figure 7). Fewer technical support projects were implemented in Luxembourg (0.7% of all projects), Sweden (1.5%) and Denmark (1.6%). As indicated in the external supporting study, these trends resemble the ones identified in the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP. As for multi-country projects, countries with the highest participation rate include Belgium (6.3%), Germany (5.4%), Spain (5.4%) and Greece (5.1%).

Figure 7- TSI projects per Member States by project type (2021-2023)
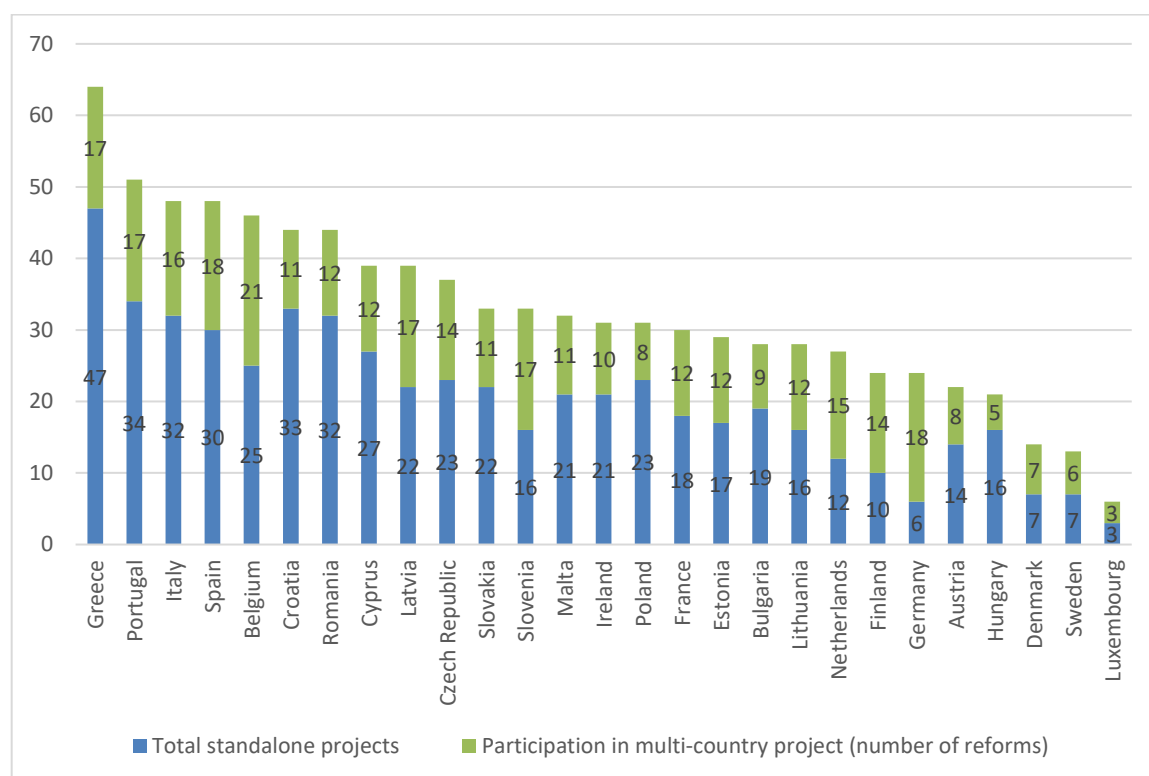
In terms of **delivery methods**[21] for the 2021-2023 annual cycles, projects were implemented through 810 agreements/contracts or components of contribution agreements. Procurement (314 cases; mostly implemented by private companies) and components of contribution agreements (262; mostly awarded to international organisations) were most often used to provide technical support to Member States, as shown by Figure 8. It is worth noting that contribution agreements might cover several components or projects. A single project can use a mix of methods of implementation to tailor the support to the needs of the Member State.

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[21] While the Financial Regulation refers to '**method of implementation**' to distinguish direct/indirect/shared management, the term '**delivery methods**' (as used in the manual of procedures of DG NEAR/INTPA and by DG BUDG) is also used in this evaluation to refer to more specific methods. Delivery methods used by the TSI include: Public procurement (technical support provided by service providers under a framework procedure or a negotiated procedure); Grants (technical support provided by Member States' authorities, international organisations and other private or public bodies); delegation and contribution agreements (technical support provided by international organisations and other private or public bodies); TAIEX-TSI Peer-2-Peer (the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission); EC internal expertise and private experts; Other administrative arrangements.

Figure 8- Delivery methods used to implement the TSI (2021-2023)
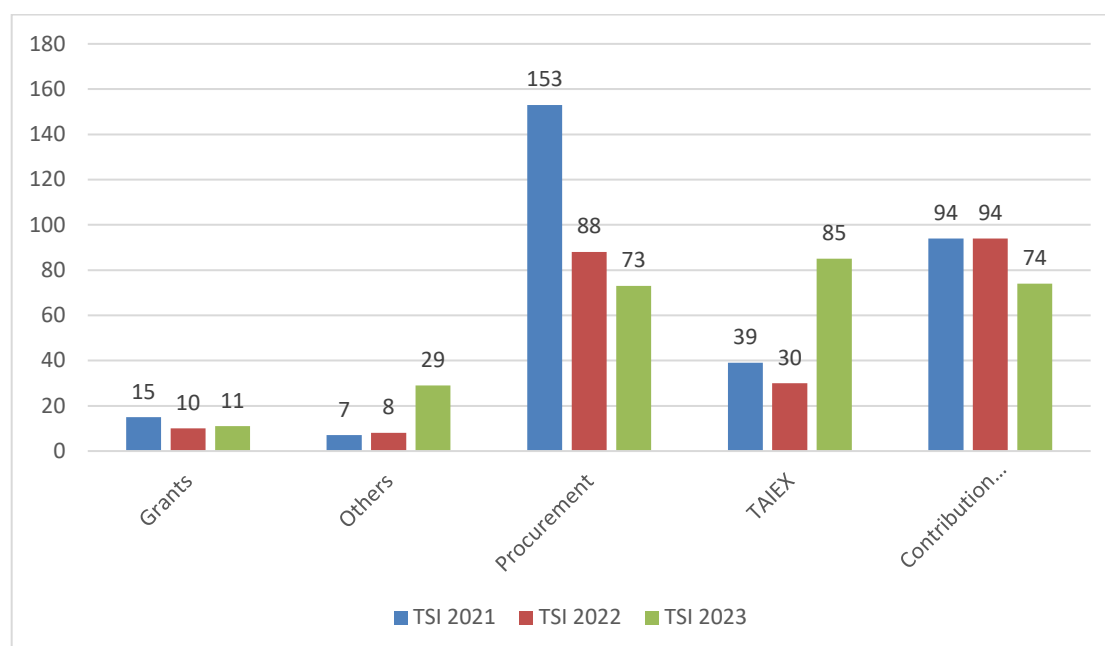
According to the TSI Regulation[22], the **types of actions** eligible for financing under the TSI include expertise related to policy advice/change, formulation of strategies and reform roadmaps and legislative, institutional, structural and administrative reforms; short-term or long-term provision of experts, to perform tasks in specific domains or to carry out operational activities; capacity-building and related supporting actions at all governance levels, also contributing to the empowerment of civil society; carrying out studies, including feasibility studies, research, analyses and surveys, evaluations and impact assessments.

A recent analysis[23] of the **deliverables and outputs** expected by the TSI shows that the total number of outputs / deliverables to be provided to Member States surpasses 4 100 over the evaluation period. Based on the typology of outputs presented in the intervention logic of the TSI (see Figure 1), outputs include analytical reports, documents to support legislative proposals and law amendments, documents to support policy implementation and institutional reforms, capacity-building deliverables, communication deliverables, TAIEX deliverables[24], and administrative documents[25]. As shown by Figure 9, the most frequent type of deliverable produced by TSI projects are documents to support policy implementation and institutional reforms representing 46% of all outputs/deliverables expected from TSI projects.

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[22] Article 8.

[23] A specific methodology has been used to count the number of outputs and deliverables. The exercise was carried out by DG REFORM considering outputs and deliverables indicated in signed contracts/agreements.

[24] TAIEX allows experts from national administrations to exchange expertise through expert missions, study visits and workshops.

[25] Types of deliverables that cannot be classified in a specific category such as kick off/inception/progress/final reports.

Figure 9- Outputs and deliverables expected from TSI projects (2021-2023)
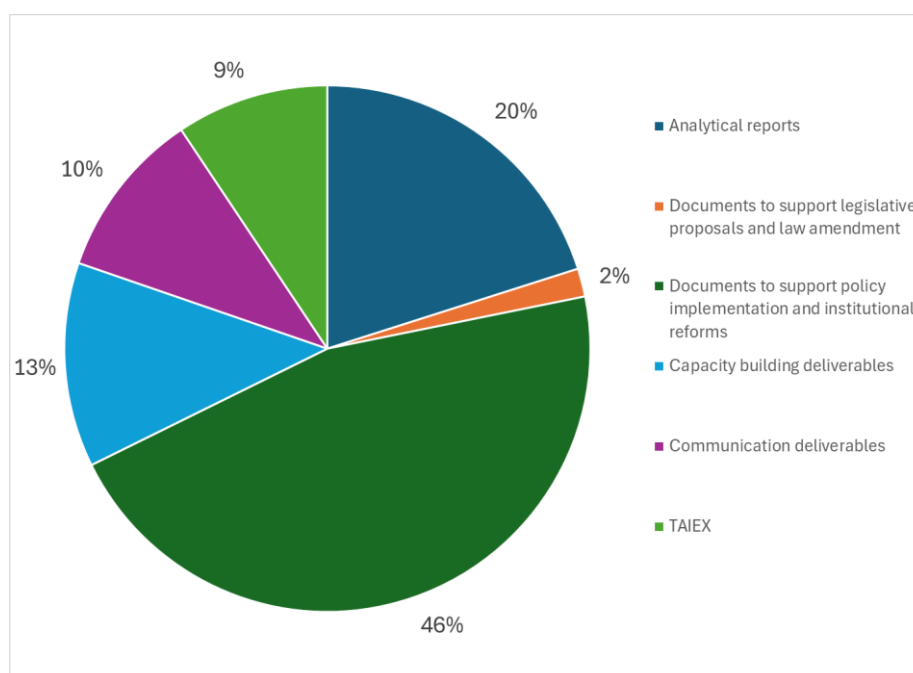
4. EVALUATION FINDINGS (ANALYTICAL PART)

4.1. To what extent was the intervention successful and why?

4.1.1. *Effectiveness- How successful is the TSI in progressing towards its objectives? How sustainable are the effects of the reform support projects and how could the sustainability of effects be increased?*

Progress towards the programme objectives

Evidence from the supporting study shows that during the period of 2021-2023, **the TSI successfully pursued its objectives as set in the TSI Regulation**[26].

Looking at its **general objectives**, survey results show that the TSI most strengthened the administrative and institutional capacities to address the challenges identified in the country-specific recommendations (CSRs) (81%, i.e. 116 out of 143 beneficiary authorities agreeing to a high or moderate extent), to facilitate socially inclusive, green and digital transition (72%), and to design and implement structural reforms (71%). The programme's contribution to strengthening the administrative and institutional capacities was also important regarding encouraging investment, increasing competitiveness and achieving sustainable economic and social convergence, resilience and recovery (55%), implementing EU law (51%), preparing, amending, implementing and revising RRPs (49%), and promoting Union's economic, social and territorial cohesion (47%).

One of the **specific objectives** of the TSI is to **improve capacity of national authorities to design, develop and implement reforms**. All national coordinating authorities responding to the survey agreed that the quality of design and implementation of

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[26] The TSI general objectives (Article 3 of the TSI Regulation) and specific objectives (Article 4) are presented in the TSI Intervention Logic, Figure 1.

structural and administrative reforms in Member States have improved since the start of the TSI. The programme **supported all types of administrative capacities**:

- **Structures** (overall institutional design; coordination and accountability of Member States authorities and other bodies; clear delineation of responsibilities and tasks between different institutions; interrelationships between different institutions);
- **Human resources** (numbers and quality of staff in terms of skills and expertise; human resource management systems that structure incentives; securing the timely availability of experienced, skilled, motivated staff for specific functions and tasks);
- **Systems and tools** (availability of instruments, methods, guidelines, manuals, systems, procedures, forms, etc., including adaptability to procedures)[27].

Another specific objective is to improve capacity of national authorities to prepare, amend, implement and revise RRPs in the RRF framework. Through the TSI annual cycles (2021-2023) and the two dedicated calls for recovery and resilience plans implementation and REPowerEU in 2021 and 2022, Member States received support for the preparation, amendment, revision, and implementation of their RRPs. The TSI has also supported the implementation of national RRPs by supporting more than 500 projects linked to specific RRP milestones[28].

Through the dedicated calls, around 33 projects in 23 Member States specifically supported the preparation and general implementation of the RRPs. The TSI has also supported policy-specific interventions, across various policy areas (e.g. the green transition component of the RRP in Spain, the component on improving the efficiency and transparency of public procurement of the RRP in Portugal and the component tackling early school leaving of the RRP in Romania). Relevant capacity-building support was also provided under the TSI to some EU Member States to apply the DNSH ('do no significant harm') principle in the RRF and other Union funds (building on previous analyses carried out by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre[29]), or to the preparation of the national plans for digital skills.

The RRF Regulation establishes that Member States may propose to include in their recovery and resilience plan, as estimated costs, the payments for additional technical support in accordance with the TSI Regulation (Article 7). In total, voluntary contributions reached 3.6 million EUR made in 2022 under the RRF Regulation (Article 7.2). The mid-term evaluation of the RRF[30] highlighted how the TSI contributed to supporting the implementation of national RRPs by building necessary administrative capacity and producing specific deliverables.

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[27] European Commission, 2020. *Roadmaps for Administrative Capacity Building: Practical Toolkit*. These factors are also reflected in the OECD's analytical framework that was designed to assess administrative capacity in terms of people, organisation (including systems, tools, business processes, etc.), strategic planning and coordination, as well as enabling framework conditions. OECD, 2020. *Strengthening Governance of EU Funds under Cohesion Policy: Administrative Capacity Building Roadmaps*. Paris: OECD Publishing.

[28] DG REFORM, Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support, *Delivering on Reforms*, 2024, p. 15.

[29] Beltran Miralles, M., Gourdon, T., Seigneur, I., Arranz Padilla, M. and Pickard Garcia, N., The implementation of the 'Do No Significant Harm' principle in selected EU instruments, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, doi:10.2760/18850, JRC135691

[30] ECORYS, CEPS, CSIL, NIESR, and Wavestone, 2023. *Study supporting the mid-term Evaluation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Final Report.*

In terms of thematic areas, survey results show that the TSI is perceived to contribute to a high extent to the **efficient and transparent functioning of public institutions**[31] **and the digitalisation of public services**[32]. Since the adoption of the ComPAct in 2023, more attention was given to the modernisation of public administrations (including human resource management and training of civil servants) (see box below). A flagship PACE was also launched – an 'Erasmus for civil servants' to foster knowledge sharing and networking among European civil servants. This integrated approach promotes harmonisation within the European Administrative Space, complementing other EU policy instruments for the modernisation of public administrations.

Box 2**- The contribution of the TSI to administrative modernisation**

In 2023, the Commission adopted ComPAct that aims to enhance the European Administrative Space by reinforcing its support for the administrative modernisation of the Member States, through three pillars (the Public Administration Skills Agenda, capacity for Europe's Digital Decade and capacity to lead the green transition) and a set of 25 associated actions. In response to this communication, DG REFORM organised technical support in the field of governance and public administration around the three pillars of ComPAct. This approach promotes harmonisation within the European Administrative Space while still offering targeted technical support to specific projects based on requests from Member States.

More specifically, a flagship 'Public Administration Cooperation Exchange' (PACE; 'Erasmus for civil servants'), which aims at creating a European community of civil servants that share good practices and create bilateral contacts, was established under the TSI in 2023. 'Project-based' exchanges provide civil servants with tangible knowledge and experience in the specific tasks undertaken by host institutions. PACE already organised 70 exchanges across 17 Member States for more than 300 participants.

This makes it possible to use technical support for the implementation of the EU's policy for support to public administration reform in an effective and coherent way together with other available instruments (such as the work of DG REFORM as a knowledge hub on public administration in the EU Member States or the Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance gathering experts from all national administrations). For instance, some examples of successful technical support projects will be showcased in a newly developed toolbox for practitioners on the quality of public administration.

The case study on TSI projects supporting public administration and human resources management demonstrated that the TSI projects contributed to the development of human resources management capacity that is in line with ComPAct, the Public Administration Skills Agenda and the EU Skills Agenda. It also highlighted the importance of beneficiary authorities having sufficient capacities to adapt the outputs of technical support after the implementation of projects based on their national needs and strategic plans. However, this case study did not assess any technical support projects funded from the 2023 round of the TSI. Given the limited evidence available on the implementation of ComPAct as a recently launched initiative, it is important to ensure its monitoring.

Source: PPMI based on Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, 2023. *Enhancing the European Administrative Space (ComPAct), COM/2023/667 final*; DG REFORM, 2024. *Delivering on Reforms*, p. 20; DG REFORM, 2024. *Technical Support Instrument - Annual Report 2023*; Fasone, C., Dirri, A., & Guerra, Y. (eds.), 2023. *Established EU Rule of Law Instruments: State-of-the-Art Working Paper*. LUISS University.

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[31] 52% of coordinating authorities (15 out of 29) agreeing to a high extent and 31% to a moderate extent.
[32] 48% of coordinating authorities (15 out of 31) agreeing to a high extent and 35% to a moderate extent.

The **changes most frequently perceived** by beneficiary authorities as resulting from TSI (to a high and moderate extent), were observed in Member States at various levels:

- **Individual changes** such as increased knowledge and skills of staff (94%, 66 out of 70) and improved individual adaptability to change (77%, 43 out of 56);

- **Organisational changes** such as improved capacities for reform/policy formulation, development, implementation (89%, 55 out of 62) and improved organisational processes, procedures, methodologies (88%, 59 out of 67). More moderate changes were seen in terms of improved human resource management (50%, 29 out of 58)[33];

- **Policy changes** include the production of new information/knowledge (94%, 61 out of 65), the production of new or modified **'soft' instruments** (e.g. standards, guidelines and recommendations; 86%, 57 out of 66) or **'harder'** strategic and legislative changes, such as the preparation of improved strategies and reform/policy documents (83%, 50 out of 60). More moderate changes were observed in terms of improved application and implementation of EU law (54%, 30 out of 56) and new legal acts adopted or existing legal acts modified (42%, 25 out of 49). This is explained by the fact that changes to the primary or secondary legislation are more challenging as they require the adoption by governments and/or parliaments.

Among these changes, some are directly linked to the TSI projects (e.g. new information, guidelines and recommendations), while some require more time and follow-up actions by Member States (e.g. new legal acts adopted) and depend on other national factors.

Achievement of TSI projects' direct outputs

Over the evaluation period, TSI projects expect to provide to Member States a total number of more than 4 100 outputs and deliverables. According to the results of the survey to beneficiary authorities and providers, the most frequent types of outputs expected from the TSI projects in which respondents to the survey were involved include the following:
- **Recommendations** (expressed by 72%, 134 out of 186 of beneficiary authorities, 88%, 60 out of 68 of technical support providers);
- **Workshops and training**, including related material (emphasised by 70%, 130 out of 186 of beneficiary authorities, 87%, 59 out of 68 of providers),
- **Analysis and reports** (expressed by 69%, 129 out of 186 of beneficiary authorities, 90%, 61 out of 68 of technical support providers);
- **Action plans and roadmaps** (expressed by 62%, 115 out of 186 of beneficiary authorities, 85%, 58 out of 68 of technical support providers);
- **Guidelines and handbooks** (expressed by 55%, 103 out of 186 of beneficiary authorities, 72%, 49 out of 68 of technical support providers).

The **successful implementation of TSI projects** significantly contributed to the **achievement of quality outputs**[34]. Almost all TSI stakeholders participating in consultation activities were **highly satisfied with the outputs and success of the technical support projects**. Based on survey findings, 91% of beneficiary authorities (163 out of 179), 94% of coordinating authorities (30 out of 32), and 93% of technical support providers (62 out of 67) were overall very satisfied or satisfied with their

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[33] These findings are in line with the monitoring data, and the type of expected outcomes receiving more or less technical support under the TSI.

[34] Outputs and outcomes expected from TSI implementation are presented in the intervention logic (Figure 1).

participation in the TSI and the projects' results. These findings are aligned with results collected from DG REFORM satisfaction questionnaires for TSI 2021 – 2023 closed projects: beneficiary authorities scored the overall success of the projects 8.75/10 in average. Similarly, beneficiary authorities reported an average satisfaction of 8.27/10 related to the quality of the support delivered.

Responses to open questions in the targeted survey revealed the main reasons of dissatisfaction with participation in the TSI and the projects' results. For beneficiaries, they were most often linked to the limited capacity and expertise of technical support providers and the insufficient quality of their deliverables/outputs that could negatively affect the delivery of technical support. On the other hand, technical support providers expressed that the requirement for beneficiary approval of each deliverable can cause delays in the execution of tasks and related payments, and even additional workload for providers, thus posing challenges to financial sustainability.

Furthermore, most beneficiary authorities (strongly) agreed that the **providers of technical support had the required expertise and skills** (91%, 154 out of 168), and 89% (144 out of 163) of them (strongly) agreed that they **delivered according to the expected quality**. It should be noted that according to the survey, the quality of support delivered by public procurement was perceived as somewhat lower than that provided by the holders of grants and contribution agreements. Specifically, 16% of respondents (12 out of 75) expressed dissatisfaction with the quality of technical support for procurement, compared to only 4% for grants and contribution agreements with pillar-assessed entities taken together (2 out of 45).

Findings from the case studies and interviews gave further insights on the use of **different delivery methods**, indicating that public procurement providers might be more suitable for delivering more technical tasks and activities, while the involvement of international organisations can increase the reach of TSI results at EU level.

In relation to the effectiveness of the technical support projects supporting the **implementation of RRPs**, evidence from the case study shows that the TSI projects led to the adoption of new procedures, actions, and standards aimed at enhancing the implementation of the plans. These findings are in line with the mid-term evaluation of the RRF[35] which highlighted how the TSI contributed to supporting the implementation of national RRPs by building necessary administrative capacity and producing specific deliverables. Similarly, feedback collected from beneficiary authorities through satisfaction questionnaires indicates that in overall, projects were successfully implemented (8.8/10) and that the beneficiary authorities have or will use the delivery of the projects (an average score 8.5/10)[36].

Box 3- Outputs from a TSI project supporting communication of RRP impact

In the example of a TSI multi-country project in eight Member States supporting communication of RRP impact, the following outputs were achieved:

- Provided capacity-building workshops to over 700 public officials in all eight Member States on issues of common interest such as RRP storytelling, application of EU visibility

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[35] ECORYS, CEPS, CSIL, NIESR, and Wavestone, 2023. *Study supporting the mid-term Evaluation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Final Report.*

[36] Feedback collected through satisfaction questionnaires of 12 projects closed related to RRP implementation.

- requirements or techniques to run effective RRP communication campaigns on social media.
- Delivered country-specific technical support measures. In particular, developed communication strategies for three Member States (Bulgaria, the Netherlands and Portugal) developed and put in place 26 communication plans for four Member States (Romania, Portugal, the Netherlands, Bulgaria) along with six communication manuals for five Member States (Spain, Portugal, Latvia, Cyprus, Bulgaria) and 77 communication templates for all eight Member States.
- Produced and distributed over 177 communication materials (videos (Belgium), articles (Latvia), posts (Cyprus), infographics (the Netherlands) etc.) on the social media platforms and communication channels of RRP coordinating authorities and implementing bodies in eight Member States.
- Launched three pilot campaigns in Latvia with an outreach of 3.7 million citizens. Every third resident of Latvia was reached by this campaign with the focus on regions.
- Reviewed national websites dedicated to RRP communication in three Member States (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Portugal), supported the organisation of six events (Latvia, Bulgaria, Spain, Portugal) and conducted two opinion polls in Bulgaria.

Despite these positive finding, several challenges emerged during the implementation of the TSI 2021 projects supporting RRPs. Following the adoption of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) in February 2021 and given the need to support Member States timely and ahead of the annual cycle, a dedicated call was organised under the TSI in July 2021 to respond to the specific emerging need for support for EU Member States to prepare, amend and implement their RRPs. Notwithstanding efforts to timely address Member States' technical support needs, in five Member States, misalignments were experienced between the deadlines of the RRP milestones and the delivery schedule of TSI support.

Although the RRF Regulation acknowledged the possibility of technical support and even anticipated the integration of such support into the plans, during the definition of the plans, technical support needs were not consistently included (with very limited exceptions such as Romania, Croatia, Greece and Cyprus). Member States had to therefore resort to the TSI call and annual cycles, trying to align TS project and RRP timelines *ex post*.

In the case of TSI support to preparation of RRPs, recommendations delivered by the TSI were not always taken forward by the beneficiary Member States and included in the final plans adopted. For example in the case of REPowerEU, 16 out of the 17 Member States that received technical support for the preparation of their REPowerEU chapters submitted these chapters to the Commission. However, the final chapters adopted did not always include all measures recommended through the technical support, which may hinder the achievement of outcomes.

Achievement of TSI projects' results

Evidence shows that the TSI has made **good progress in terms of achieving its expected outcomes, which highly depends on the follow-up and use by beneficiary authorities of outputs generated by TSI projects as well as on other national factors**.

In terms of follow-up process, evidence from the case studies shows a **high utilisation rate of TSI project outputs**, stemming from the implementation of action plans, roadmaps, and legislative proposals. This was confirmed in the targeted survey, as a total of 28% (18 out of 65) of beneficiary authorities who reported their projects as closed/completed stated that the country's authorities had already taken a legal and or

policy decision, 43% (28 out of 65) of them were still involved in planning processes, and 20% (13 out of 65) of them claimed that some technical support deliverables had been incorporated into the amendment, implementation or revision of countries' RRPs. Coordinating authorities expressed similar views, with 50% (12 out of 24) of them, indicating that a legal and or policy decision has been already taken as a follow-up of the TSI project. However, interviews and focus group discussions suggest that the most important challenge for the follow-up is the limited availability of financial resources for the implementation of the intended reforms.

According to the targeted survey, beneficiary authorities almost unanimously (94%, 58 out of 62) **used the good practices and lessons learned** from technical support projects, to a high or moderate extent. Additionally, the majority of them have successfully adopted the new knowledge and skills acquired and have implemented the recommendations provided. The deliverables from technical support projects have contributed to enhanced working practices, organisational restructuring, and the successful implementation of reforms.

Data from DG REFORM outcome questionnaires provide preliminary insights on outcome achievement of TSI projects[37]. Out of the 72 outcome questionnaires completed for the 2021-2023 cycles, beneficiary authorities reported on average that **76.8%**[38] of expected outcomes were achieved about a year after the end of the project. Out of the 125 expected outcomes assessed in the outcome questionnaires[39] for the 2021-2023 cycles: 44% of outcomes correspond to *improved internal working procedures, methodologies and processes, organisation* with a rate of achievement of 80.1%; 33% correspond to the *adoption of (new) procedures and actions to enhance the implementation of reforms* among which 77% were achieved; 14% of outcomes concern the *adoption of a strategy, a new law/act or modification of an existing one* with a rate of achievement of 70.5%; and only 9% relate to *organisational change, change management, improved human resource management,* with a rate of achievement of 69%.

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[37] At this stage, outcome questionnaires do not provide comprehensive data considering only 55% of projects from the TSI 2021 – 2023 cycles are closed, and outcome questionnaires are sent 6, 12 and 18 months after project closure.

[38] Beneficiary authorities are requested to indicate, on a scale of 1 to 10, the extent to which outcomes have been achieved.

[39] Several outcomes may be assessed in a single outcome questionnaire.

Figure 10- Outcomes achieved by TSI projects (2021-2023)
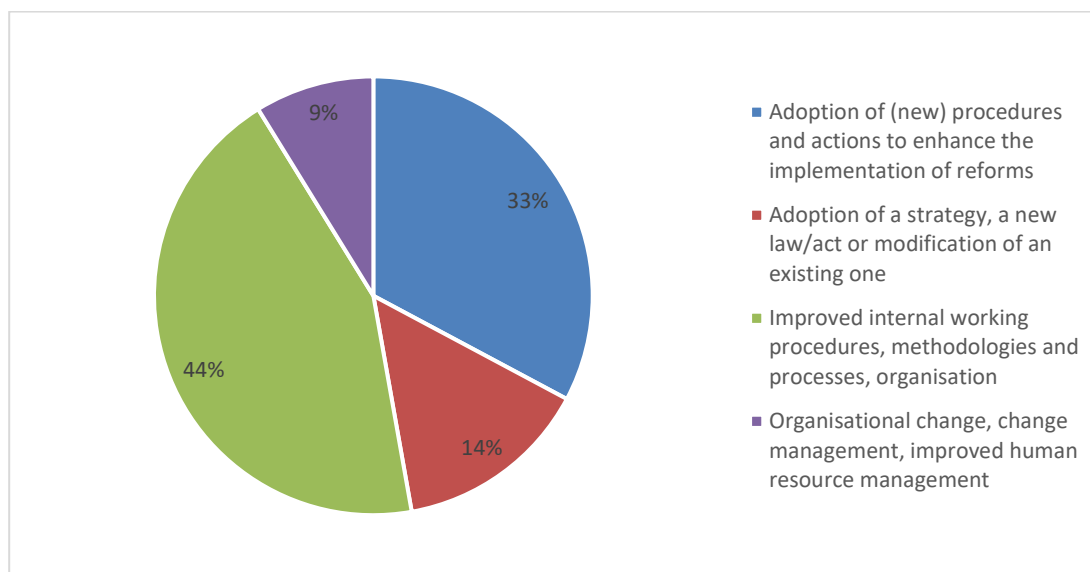
The targeted survey results show that **TSI projects improved all types of administrative capacities**, to a perceived higher extent compared to the SRSP *ex post* evaluation. According to beneficiary authorities, technical support projects contributed most to the application of different administrative systems and tools (71% of respondents agreeing to a high or moderate extent, 42 out of 59), institutional structures (69%, 38 out of 55) and human resources (61%, 35 out of 57). Technical support providers also agreed (100%, 30 out of 30) that the TSI contributed most to the application of administrative systems and tools.

This evidence underscores the significant role of the TSI in improving the internal 'mechanics' of public administration (i.e. functional details of procedures and processes), that lay solid foundations for reforms in EU Member States. Among all expected outcomes, TSI monitoring data confirms that the TSI in 2021-2023 most often supported the achievement of 'improved internal working procedures, methodologies and processes, organisation' (in 68% of projects), and 'adoption of (new) procedures and actions to enhance the implementation of reforms' (in 60% of projects). On the other hand, improved 'organisational change, change management, improved human resource management' was the least frequent outcome (supported by 22% of TSI projects).

Long-term results of TSI projects directly supporting RRPs can be assessed with their contribution to the achievement of RRP milestones. For example, in the case of the TSI project supporting the creation of a National Promotion Agency in Cyprus, the TSI appeared to be fundamental to fulfil a specific RRP milestone (see box below), but there is currently no mechanism to systematically track this long-term contribution.

Box 4- Results of a TSI project directly supporting RRP and in line with country-specific recommendations

In the example of the TSI project supporting the creation of a National Promotion Agency (NPA) in Cyprus (21CY13), the following results were achieved:

- **Project's direct results**: The TSI project supported the Ministry of Finance in its effort to establish the NPA. In particular, the project included a comprehensive market assessment for the identification of the underlying market failures, partly conducted via a large-scale survey to SMEs and interviews with key stakeholders such as investors and debt financiers. In light

of the market failures identified, the investment strategy of the NPA was formulated, along with its legal & organisational structure, IT strategy and workforce plan. Lastly, a comprehensive roadmap for the implementation of the NPA was developed, taking into account all the aforementioned elements.

- **Project's long-term results**: The TSI contribution has been fundamental for the implementation of milestone 140 of the [CY-RRP](#)[40]. The roadmap that the Council of Ministers approved for the establishment of the NPA, has been based on the report delivered through the TSI. Additionally, the TSI contributed to the implementation of 2019 CSR 4 Subpart 7 'Improve access to finance for SMEs' and 2020 CSR 3 'Secure adequate access to finance and liquidity, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises […] and promote private investment to foster […] research and innovation'.
- On the status of the National Promotion Agency, the appointment of key staff and development of website is expected in September 2025, while the offering of financial tools and services as from October 2025. This start of operations is under Milestone 141 of the CY-RRP is currently planned for the eighth payment request[41].

Factors affecting technical support and its results

The mid-term evaluation identified **key factors**, whether within the control of DG REFORM or external, that may have contributed or hindered the TSI implementation and outputs delivery, as well as their uptake by Member States to achieve results. Factors and conditions affecting the project implementation (even if external) should be identified during projects' preparation and monitored during their implementation.

One of the key elements of success is the **ownership of reforms and the commitment** of Member States to implement them. According to the external supporting study, a total of 93% of coordinating authorities (31 out of 33), 85% of technical support providers (51 out of 60), as well as 81% (113 out of 139) of beneficiary authorities agreed and strongly agreed that the national ownership of reforms was a positive factor to achieve TSI results. The results of the cross-case analysis, focus group discussions and interviews confirm the importance of this factor to the successful implementation of the TSI projects. Stakeholders participating in the survey indicated that **continued commitment to reform** was also an important factor for the sustainability of technical support[42]. In particular, **multi-regional projects** present the risk of limited involvement from EU and national authorities according to focus group discussions. Therefore, broad stakeholder engagement (e.g. through a comprehensive communication plan) is crucial to mitigate it.

The case studies provided evidence on the importance of the national context and pre-existing **political priorities** for the implementation of technical support. For example, the support provided through the Green Budgeting Training Programme (TSI) played a crucial role in enabling the Slovenian Ministry of Finance to develop a tagging methodology for assessing the environmental impact of budget lines, leading to the successful achievement of a key milestone in its RRP.

Interviews with beneficiary authorities also highlight **the importance of political factors** on the results of technical support and their sustainability. For example, changing

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[40] The TSI report itself has been part of the evidence provided by Cyprus, as accompanying evidence. The assessment for satisfactory fulfilment of the milestone is found [here](#) (Preliminary Assessment, p. 29).

[41] According to the latest reporting from Cyprus (received in end-October 2024).

[42] Coordinating authorities: 63% agreeing to a strong extent (20 out of 32), 38% moderate (12 out of 32)
Technical support providers: 68% agreeing to a strong extent (44 out of 65), 29% moderate (19 out of 65)
Beneficiary authorities: 53% agreeing to a strong extent (90 out of 171), 37% moderate (64 out of 171).

political agendas and elections sometimes trigger changes to the project teams and often necessitate adjustments to the original outputs and ongoing reforms. Additionally, legal obstacles can arise while translating recommendations into actual reforms, particularly due to the innovative nature of some recommendations. Evidence shows that **broader conditions for political and administrative continuity** are also to be considered. In countries with strong administrative cultures, changes of government have a minimal influence on project priorities and continuity. However, in countries where government changes lead to widespread replacement of officials and shifts in priorities, the sustainability of projects is more likely to be compromised.

Another important factor identified is the **existence of adequate administrative and especially financial capacity** that may constrain the absorption of technical support and the implementation of recommendations in EU Member States[43]. It should still be noted that during the selection of requests, DG REFORM checks that the conditions are met for successful project implementation. For instance, DG REFORM assesses the capacity of the national authorities requesting support to allocate the resources necessary to implement and absorb the support measures to be provided and to carry out the reforms for which support is requested. DG REFORM also assesses the maturity and the focus of the request, as well as the ownership and likelihood that the supported measures will be followed up by the authorities.

Based on the focus group discussions and interviews, the **change of responsible and experienced personnel in beneficiary organisations** and poor information transfer to their successors negatively affected the implementation and follow-up of technical support projects as well as the sustainability of their results, as departing personnel not only create capacity gaps but also take with them critical knowledge and skills. The survey confirmed that the stability of staff in the beneficiary organisation was perceived as influencing sustainability of technical support, with 83% of beneficiary authorities (140 out of 167) stating in the survey that stability of staff did or will have a strong or moderate effect. According to satisfaction questionnaires for closed projects, policy officers have scored an average of 8.55/10 the extent to which beneficiary authorities have the appropriate administrative capacity to implement and absorb the recommendations and support provided.

Consultation with stakeholders during the reform process was also an important factor highlighted in the survey as **influencing the achievement of outcomes**, with 89% (127 out of 142) of beneficiary authorities and 93% of technical support providers (56 out of 60) suggesting that it had a moderate or strong positive effect. This was also supported by the case study evidence. Evidence shows that the **active involvement of stakeholders in the TSI** projects influences results and their sustainability. According to the representatives of the Commission, the broad participation creates a cascading effect within the system, amplifying the impact of the reforms. In essence, the greater the engagement of national stakeholders in these projects, the more profound and lasting the changes are likely to be. For example, the capacity of beneficiary authorities to effectively involve key stakeholders and influence reforms more broadly in the administration proved to be crucial for achieving the outcomes of the projects

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[43]In the survey, 86% of **beneficiary authorities** stated that adequate financial resources did or will have a strong (92 out of 167) or moderate effect (51 out of 167) on the sustainability of technical support. 81% of **technical support providers** expressed that adequate financial resources did or will have a strong (22 out of 66) or moderate effect (32 out of 66) on the sustainability of technical support.

'Strengthening policy development and foresight in the Irish Public Service' and 'SHAPE - Strengthening change management process of executives' in Italy. Similarly, early establishment of cooperation between participating institutions and the clarification of common goals, as well as strong interest and engagement from stakeholders such as NGOs, financial market associations, and universities contributed to the successful implementation of project 'Development of a national strategy for financial education (NSFE) in Poland'.

Finally, several factors were expressed by stakeholders, as likely to **affect positively the sustainability of technical support and foster long-term success**. The **dissemination and exploitation of project results** to the main stakeholders was identified in the survey as one of the most important factors, with 97% of beneficiary authorities (162 out of 168), national coordinating authorities (30 out of 31) and technical support providers (63 out of 65) stating that it could have a strong or moderate positive effect on the sustainability of previous projects. The importance of disseminating outputs to wider audiences to maximise projects' impacts was already highlighted in the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP. DG REFORM already took action by publishing deliverables of closed projects on its website[44], creating a repository to compile and access shared resources, organising more project closing events to share results with stakeholders and disseminating TSI results in several policy areas through thematic factsheets. Systematic cross-country thematic sessions also started in 2023 to facilitate knowledge sharing. However, focus group discussions and interviews showed that some beneficiary and coordinating authorities were not aware of the publication of some TSI projects' deliverables. Accessing the experience of other Member States could also be valuable to learn from already existing knowledge and avoid projects overlap.

Access to **international expertise provided by technical support providers as well as exchange of knowledge among EU Member States** are also considered by all stakeholder groups to have a high or moderate positive effect on the sustainability of technical support. Support to peer-to-peer exchanges via TAIEX and PACE initiatives can therefore contribute to the sustainability of projects by fostering formal and informal connections for existing and future collaborations.

Findings from the study **align with lessons learned collected from DG REFORM's feedback mechanism** in which policy officers have identified as main success factors: the involvement of beneficiaries and main stakeholders in the design and implementation of the project, the clear definition of roles and expectations of technical support measures, the definition of effective communication channels, consistent follow-up and monitoring of projects, the promotion of synergies between different Commission services and the definition of realistic timelines.

Based on the case studies, Table 2 below presents examples of TSI projects in various policy areas, with their direct results, as well as the concrete steps to reforms taken in the Member States on the basis of these TSI projects and factors that contributed to (or hindered) the achievement of reforms. These examples also show that different types of deliverables from technical support project led to different types of outcomes in the medium and long term.

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[44] As per Article 17 of the TSI Regulation.

Table 2- Examples from case studies of TSI results

Project	Project direct results	Indirect results / reforms	Factors identified
Green Budgeting Framework Training Programme *Green Budgeting* *TSI 2021, 23 MS*	• Knowledge on green budgeting frameworks and practices (including institutional settings) • Methods and challenges to identify revenue and expenditure relevant for environmental policies • Recommendations to take better into consideration environmental goals in budgetary decision-making	• Developing a green budget tagging methodology. (Slovenia, Greece, Spain) • Adjusting the existing tagging methodology (Austria, Ireland)	Previously defined policy priorities and written milestones in green budgeting area. (Slovenia)
Technical support for preparation and implementation of green taxation reform in Cyprus *Green Budgeting and taxation* *TSI 2021, Cyprus*	• Good practice analysis • Policy recommendations and assessment of tax reform options • Legal drafts • Stakeholder engagement	The support contributes to CSR 3 2020 for Cyprus. Legislative proposals in Cyprus, with draft bills being based on the drafts produced during the study	Recognition of the urgency of reforms to address pressing environmental issues
Technical Support for the Implementation of the Digital Competence Development Programme in Poland *Supporting reforms on digital education and skills* *TSI 2021, Poland*	• Best practice analysis • Governance framework • Implementation roadmap	Poland's 2020 CSR highlighted the need to improve digital skills, particularly for teachers and parents, and to build digital infrastructure, given that almost half of the population lacks basic digital skills. This project increased the institution's capacity to formulate, develop, and implement reform policies and strategies, enabling a more integrated approach to educational reforms. Concretely, it provided authorities with a precise roadmap for the implementation of the Digital Competence Development Programme by 2030 including various	Governance and leadership changes pose challenges to reforms: concerns about the extent to which the new government would follow the TSI recommendations

		research instruments enabling quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the development of digital competences in Poland.	
Digital transformation and national curriculum reform of primary and lower secondary schools in Slovakia *Supporting reforms on digital education and skills* *TSI 2021, Slovakia*	• Rapid results interventions and guidance for scaling up their results • Adaptation of the rapid results methodology and recommendations for its integration with relevant performance management processes • Analysis of the options for implementing the curriculum reform, its management and quality assessment and recommendation • Support the design of a methodology for the management of the new curriculum for primary and lower secondary schools	Introduction of a methodology for the use of results accelerators in public administration and schools to support the operationalisation of measures in the framework of the national curriculum for primary and lower secondary education reform. The support was in line with to CSR2020 to 'Ensure equal access to quality education for all' and CSR 2019 to 'Improve the quality and inclusiveness of education at all levels, and foster skills'.	Lack of capacity to continue the project: despite the development of a network of mentors and the potential scaling up of the results in Slovakia, the establishment of the network of these mentors of regional centres did not materialise on the ground as the Ministry of Education did not have the institutional capacity to continue the project
SHAPE - Strengthening change management process of executives (Italy) *Public Administration- HR Management* *TSI 2021, Italy*	Improved managerial competencies and skills related to change management and agile leadership, use of agile management tools and processes for the performance management and recruitment of senior executives and workforce planning. The project was aligned with Italy's Plan for Recovery and Resilience (RRP) which emphasised the need to advance public administration reform by improving the competencies of Italy's senior executive leadership in the areas of change management, leadership and innovation. It also contributes to the implementation of	One year after closure of the project, the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) has launched a programme to strengthen the managerial skills of MEF executives, using the competency framework developed in the project	The degree of connectivity within the system: the ability of beneficiary authorities to effectively engage key stakeholders and influence reforms more broadly within the administration

	CSR 3 (2019) and CSR 4 (2020) for Italy on improving the effectiveness of public administration by strengthening public employees' skills		
Strengthening policy development and foresight in the Irish Public Service *Public Administration- HR Management* *TSI 2021, Ireland*	Established policy development framework to strengthen the coordinated approach to policymaking from the centre of government, including the strategic foresight and anticipation component	Based on the project's outputs, the beneficiaries have created a policy handbook for policy development that was further tailored to the Irish context and shared across the civil service	
Resources Hub for Sustainable Investments in Health – A Joint Initiative for the EU *Follow-up on SRSP project* *TSI 2022, Belgium, Austria, Slovenia*	• Supporting health authorities in understanding analytical approaches and tools related to health investment and financing • Utilising the EU funding mechanisms for investment and technical support in the health sector	The establishment of a new department focused on financing the healthcare sector and exploring future EU fund utilisation for reforms (Austria)	The timing of TSI support was the main enabling factor, i.e. identification of political window of opportunity
Recharge and Refuel - Clean, smart and fair urban mobility *Follow-up on SRSP project* *TSI 2022, Belgium*	The recommendations from the first SRSP project were instrumental in providing the requirements for a regulatory framework for shared micro-mobility. The TSI 2022 request was in line with CSR 3 on sustainable transport. Follow-up actions of the SRSP project are: • the data governance recommendations from the SRSP project were included in the Recovery and Resilience Plan • the beneficiary structured the work based on the project recommendations, this coherent approach to data governance is now seen as a model by the Flemish and Walloon regions and at the federal level.	• The TSI project has been instrumental in promoting cooperation and a unified direction in transport policies. • it has significantly enhanced collaboration between the four inter-federal organisations – the three regions and the federal level • But translating the project recommendations into actual reforms, such as new decrees or ordinances, proved more challenging than anticipated.	When trying to implement certain parts of the newly proposed regulatory framework for shared micro-mobility, the beneficiary encountered significant challenges, particularly in data sharing between stakeholders, which is critical for MaaS. Legal challenges from private stakeholders further complicated the process.

| Development of a national strategy for financial education (NSFE) in Poland *Follow-up on SRSP projects* *TSI 2021, Poland* | The development of a National Financial Education Strategy | The adoption of the National Financial Education Strategy: Public policy for improving financial literacy | Early establishment of cooperation between participating institutions and the clarification of common goals, as well as strong interest and engagement from stakeholders such as NGOs, financial market associations, and universities |

4.1.2. *Efficiency*- *To what extent was the TSI efficient in achieving its objectives?*

TSI implementation and administrative procedures.

In the framework of TSI projects, strong cooperation was considered as crucial for their successful implementation. Results of the targeted survey showed that beneficiary authorities regarded **DG REFORM policy officers' support as highly useful**[45] as was their ability to provide support from the start of technical support to its end[46]. Similarly, **cooperation and interaction between technical support providers and beneficiary authorities was viewed positively**[47], as well as the functioning of **project Steering Committees**[48], which was considered as effective.

Another positive element stressed by programme stakeholders is linked to the perceived **proportionate administrative burden**. The targeted survey demonstrated that the beneficiary authorities and technical support providers were very positive about the clarity, transparency and user-friendliness of the **procedures related to the application and selection of requests for funding, monitoring of the projects, approving technical support deliverables and evaluation after the completion of projects,** with satisfaction levels reaching around or above 90%.

However, in the targeted survey, coordinating authorities reported lower satisfaction levels regarding the clarity, transparency and user-friendliness of the **monitoring of TSI projects** including relevant IT tools[49]. Despite coordinating authorities can reach out to beneficiaries to monitor the progress of projects, monitoring practices of coordinating authorities differ across Member States. Feedback from coordinating authorities suggests they would benefit from improved access to information on project implementation and aggregated data at the level of the Member State. The disparity in satisfaction compared to beneficiary authorities, where 92% agreed that monitoring was clear, transparent, and user-friendly, might be attributed to a different involvement in the monitoring of TSI projects. While beneficiary authorities are directly involved in the project implementation, coordinating authorities' perspective cover the entire portfolio of TSI projects at national level. This broader scope requires different tools and procedures to monitor TSI projects and to communicate their progress at the national level. DG REFORM is therefore working on improving the participation of coordinating authorities in the monitoring and evaluation of projects.

The results of the targeted survey also show that beneficiary authorities considered the **administrative burden of applying for and implementing projects** to be reasonable

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[45] **Beneficiary authorities**: 71% strongly agree, 120 out of 168; 26% agree, 43 out of 168.
[46] **Beneficiary authorities**: 65% strongly agree, 108 out of 167; 32% agree, 54 out of 167.
[47] **Technical support providers: 61% strongly agree, 41 out of 67; 34% agree, 23 out of 67.**
Beneficiary authorities: 60% strongly agree, 99 out of 166; 34% agree, 56 out of 166.
[48] **Technical support providers**: 52% of strongly agree, 33 out of 63; 41% agree, 26 out of 63.
Beneficiary authorities: 45% of strongly agree, 69 out of 152, 49% agree, 75 out of 152.
[49] **Coordinating authorities:** 50% agree or strongly agree that the monitoring of projects including relevant IT Tools was clear, transparent and user-friendly.

and proportionate[50]. Satisfaction is slightly lower regarding **project implementation**, with 78% of coordinating authorities (25 out of 32) and 77% of technical support providers (51 out of 66) (strongly) agreeing that the administrative burden was reasonable for project implementation. Specifically, for grant components, 71% of technical support providers (12 out of 17) (strongly) agreed that the administrative burden was reasonable, compared to 79% for public procurement and contribution agreements (23 out of 29 and 11 out of 14, respectively). This may be due to less experience among providers with grant components, where only 50% had worked on three or more TSI projects, as opposed to 86% for public procurement and contribution agreements. Additionally, grants involve a reimbursement mechanism based on actual costs, requiring more administration and raising the risk of errors compared to public procurement.

DG REFORM took important steps to **simplify and streamline programme management**. For example, DG REFORM updated financial templates, guidance, expanded the use of corporate tools. Efforts have also been undertaken to diversify the pool of providers, especially pillar-assessed entities (such as international organisations and Member Sates organisations), which resulted in the signature of more contribution agreements with international organisations pillar-assessed entities, with 262 components of those agreements used for delivering technical support.

85% of technical support providers (46 out of 54) concurred that the **contracting processes**, including IT tools like the adaptation of the EU Funding & Tenders portal for technical support providers, were clear, transparent, and easy to use. Likewise, 92% of technical support providers (44 out of 48) stated that the **payment procedures**, along with the related IT tools, were also clear, transparent, and user-friendly. However, there is scope for further analyses to identify potential improvements to internal processes in handling the contracting and payment procedures and related administrative workload.

As reported in the Annual Activity Reports, **TSI financial management and internal control processes are considered reliable**, as the residual error rate estimated for the TSI (calculated on a cumulative multiannual basis) remains below the materiality threshold of 2%. The overall risk at closure at DG REFORM of 0.63% in 2021, 1.36% in 2022 and 0.66% in 2023[51] indicates that suitable control arrangements were put in place and are effective.

Time-efficiency of the TSI

The selection of requests for support was considered as timely and efficient. The average time from the application deadline to the financing decision (the adoption of the respective work programme) was approximately four months during the 2021-2024 period. The targeted survey revealed that 86% (152 out of 176) of beneficiary authorities and 90% (27 out of 30) of coordinating authorities agreed that the assessment and selection of technical support requests was implemented in a timely and efficient manner.

After the work programme is adopted, TSI projects move into preparation for implementation and contracting. Once contracting is complete, implementation begins. **On average, it took about six and a half months from work programme adoption to**

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[50]On administrative burden related to the **submission of requests**: 29% strongly agree and 64% agree (out of 171 Beneficiary authorities)

On administrative burden related to the **implementation of projects**: 33% strongly agree and 58% agree (out of 162 Beneficiary authorities).

[51] Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support. Annual activity reports 2021-2023.

the start of technical support, with a trend toward shorter times from 2021 to 2023. Monitoring data showed varying start dates, prioritising contracting timing based on factors like project readiness and reform urgency. Multi-country projects often started faster than stand-alone ones, at around 5.2 months versus 6.8 months. However, since there were significantly fewer multi-country than stand-alone projects over the evaluation period, it remains to be seen if this trend will hold over time. Projects using umbrella agreements typically started earlier (6.2 months, from the adoption of the respective work programme) than those with direct management grants (6.5 months), delegation agreements (7.0 months), and procurement contracts (8.2 months). No significant differences were observed in start times between general and flagship requests.

The time from application to the start of technical support was about 11 months in average for TSI 2021-2023 rounds. This duration slightly but continuously decreased over the evaluation period (11.1 months in 2021 10.9 months in 2022 and 10.5 in 2025). Interviews with beneficiary authorities and case study results indicated that a shorter duration between application and project initiation is needed, especially in the case of pressing need for reforms. It is therefore important to **reflect to what extent and how the start of projects may be accelerated while respecting the requirements of the legal and financial framework.**

Beneficiary and coordinating authorities agreed that **the preparation and the implementation phases were carried out in a timely and efficient manner**[52], with no significant differences between the projects selected under the general and flagship requests for technical support. Technical providers agreed that the **project duration** was appropriate for the implementation of the activities and that the projects were delivered according to the agreed timetable. The results of DG REFORM satisfaction questionnaires revealed a similar opinion of the stakeholders on the timeliness of the implementation of technical support projects with an average score of 8.64/10[53]. The main reasons to extend TSI projects beyond the original timeline included the COVID-19 pandemic, overly ambitious initial schedules, changes in the political background, lack of capacities on the beneficiary side, the need for more extensive internal discussions, feedback from beneficiaries and other stakeholders, issues related to the quality of outputs delivered by technical support providers, changes in the project scope, activities and staff, and data availability.

As raised by the study, further reflection might be needed regarding the annual TSI calls and their deadline[54], in order potentially to further increase the efficiency of contracting and project starts.

Cost effectiveness of the programme

The 2021-2023 TSI rounds showed strong demand for TSI support, similar to the previous SRSP, ensuring competition and the selection of high-quality proposals, which boosted the programme's efficiency. However, the capacity to accept all proposals was limited by the number of DG REFORM staff available to manage projects and the TSI

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[52] The survey revealed that 81% and 86% (out of 176) beneficiary authorities (strongly) agreed respectively that preparations and the implementation phase were carried out in a timely and efficient manner.

[53] In satisfaction questionnaires, beneficiary authorities indicate on a scale between 1-10 to what extent the provider delivered the support according to the agreed timeline.

[54] According to the TSI Regulation (Article 9.1), requests for technical support must be submitted by 31 October of the previous year.

budget. While the technical support budget increased significantly, the DG REFORM staff numbers did not grow proportionately.

On the one hand, according to survey data, **multi-country projects** appear to be more cost-effective and time-efficient compared to stand-alone projects. In fact, a single multi-country project requires a lower administrative burden compared to the management of stand-alone projects serving the same national authorities. On the other hand, interviews with national stakeholders and EC officials also revealed that the complex governance and financial structures of multi-country projects may potentially affect their efficiency. Regarding the **flagship** projects, similar observations were gathered during internal workshops with DG REFORM staff, in which officials noted that the annual basis of the flagships might bring additional burdens, as they necessitate frequent negotiations with stakeholders and adjustments to the corporate tools. In addition, it was noted that a medium-term perspective to the flagship could improve the focus on specific challenges.

Furthermore, the increasing number of multi-country projects, comprising about 10% of all TSI projects from 2021 to 2023 and growing steadily helped to share technical support outputs across borders and tackle common challenges among Member States. The adoption of flagship support requests enabled the Commission to advance reforms that were broadly necessary across Member States and in line with EU priorities.

The **overall cost of controls** at DG REFORM was estimated at 4.2% of payments in both 2021 and 2022, and 3.7% in 2023. These figures met the management plan's target of keeping control costs below 5% of annual payments. As the total value of payments increased, the cost of controls as a percentage of total payments gradually decreased[55].

According to the study supporting this evaluation, in 2022, the **estimated budget per administrative staff member at DG REFORM** managing technical support was EUR 2.8 million in commitments and EUR 2.2 million in payments, which is comparable to the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. However, the budget per staff member across all DG REFORM personnel involved in the TSI, including policy officers, was lower, at EUR 0.8 million in commitments and EUR 0.6 million in payments. This discrepancy is likely due to DG REFORM's more active role in project implementation compared to the Commission's executive agencies[56].

Budget execution from commitment to payments

In terms of financial management, DG REFORM demonstrated strong performance in executing TSI-related commitment appropriations, with payments increasing in tandem with the progress of project implementation. The average budget per selected request for support under the TSI 2021-2023 rounds of general calls increased further, reflecting the tendencies already observed under the SRSP. TSI projects, typically taking two years to complete, saw payment appropriations rise from EUR 26.4 million in 2021, to EUR 60.0 million in 2022, and EUR 106.9 million in 2023. As evidenced in the analysis of the external study supporting this evaluation, DG REFORM processed payments within set time limits – 98% in 2021, and 95% in 2022 and 2023 – meeting their target of over 90% on-time payments set in DG REFORM management plan. The average payment processing time was 31 days in 2021, 33 days in

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[55] Overall cost of controls was estimated to be 6.7% of the payments executed in 2018, 4.8% – in 2019 and 4.5% – in 2020.

[56] Calculation from PPMI, see explanations in the supporting study.

2022, and 30 days in 2023. The targeted survey indicated that 88% (46 out of 52) of technical support providers agreed that the payment processes were timely.

Efficiency of TSI projects

The **average budget per selected support request** in the TSI general calls from 2021-2023 continued to rise, following trends already observed under the SRSP. While the SRSP maintained consistent financing mechanisms and project types over time, the TSI saw an increasing portion of multi-country projects. Overview is presented in Figure 3 'Average Budget per project in EUR million'.

As for the delivery methods, the targeted survey showed strong **satisfaction with the chosen delivery methods**: 93% of beneficiary authorities (134 of 144), 90% of national coordinating authorities (19 of 21), and 96% of technical support providers (50 of 52) indicated that these methods met their technical support needs.

Although TSI projects do not require co-financing from Member States, **beneficiary authorities allocate human resources to prepare requests** and handle administrative and technical tasks. Coordinating authorities similarly dedicate personnel for TSI coordination. Based on the calculation of the study considering the results of the targeted survey, beneficiary authorities spent an average of 13.9 person-days preparing a TSI request. This time varies significantly due to factors like policy work related to the reform and internal consultations. As evidenced in the study, preparing requests for multi-country projects took less time (10.1 person-days, N=42) than stand-alone projects (15.5 person-days, N=89) due to shared administrative work. There was no major time difference in preparing general versus flagship requests. Based on EU average labour costs, preparing a request was estimated to cost about EUR 3.5 thousand[57]. Considering the requests submitted in 2021-2023, the annual cost for Member States preparing TSI requests is estimated EUR 2.2 million, about 1.8% of the average TSI annual budget.

As calculated in the Annex 3 of the study and based on the survey of beneficiary authorities, on average beneficiary authorities spend 100.5 person-days on **administrative and technical tasks for a single TSI project**. The time varies due to factors like project diversity, duration, administrative arrangements, and the quality of services from support providers. Based on the calculations of the study, at EU labour costs, carrying out tasks for one TSI project costs about EUR 25.6 thousand. Based on the average number of technical support projects under the 2021 – 2023 cycles, the estimated total costs incurred by the Member States in executing administrative and technical tasks related to the implementation of TSI projects funded under an annual TSI round amount to EUR 7.3 million, representing approximately 6.1% of the average TSI annual budget.

Meanwhile, coordinating authorities (N=32) indicate that the average number of full-time equivalents is 1.1, with variations by involvement and resources. Larger countries tend to allocate more resources, though there is no clear correlation by size. The annual cost per coordinating authority is estimated at EUR 69.4 thousand, with a total yearly cost of EUR 1.9 million incurred by all Member States, about 1.6% of the average TSI annual budget.

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[57] As per calculation of the external supporting study, in 2023, average hourly labour costs was estimated at EUR 31.8 in the EU: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Hourly_labour_costs.

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Based on estimates provided by the study, the **combined annual costs for Member State**s to prepare technical support requests, carry out administrative and technical tasks for project implementation, and fulfil coordinating authorities' duties total approximately EUR 11.4 million. This accounts for about 9.4% of the average TSI's yearly budget.

Factors influencing the TSI projects implementation

The study identified several factors influencing the efficiency of TSI projects implementation. According to the targeted survey, the most important factor affecting the implementation of projects was the **cooperation between the European Commission, beneficiary authorities and technical support providers**, with 96% (146 out of 152) of beneficiary authorities and 98% of technical support providers (60 out of 61) suggesting it had a moderate to strong positive effect. Results of the case studies, focus group discussions and interviews confirm the importance of this factor to the successful implementation of the TSI projects. For example, initial establishment of cooperation between participating institutions and the definition of common goals, as well as strong interest and engagement from stakeholders such as NGOs, financial market associations, and universities contributed to the successful implementation of the project 'Development of a national strategy for financial education (NSFE) in Poland'.

Another factor is the **efficient functioning of the Steering Committees**, that both the beneficiary authorities (95%, 144 out of 152) and technical support providers (94%, 59 out of 63) identified as having a moderate to strong positive effect. In practice, the survey also highlighted that the functioning of project Steering Committees was considered by beneficiary authorities and technical support providers as largely effective for TSI projects selected under the general requests for technical support and to a lesser extent for the flagship ones whose complexity require more steering.

The study also identified **external factors that could possibly hinder the effective implementation of TSI projects,** such as challenges in **accessing necessary information and data** from national administrations. At the same time, 22% of beneficiary authorities (25 out of 112) and 40% of technical support providers (20 out of 50) suggested that **the COVID-19 pandemic was an important external factor having a moderate or strong negative effect on the delivery of technical support**. The negative influence of the pandemic was less pronounced during the implementation of the TSI compared to the SRSP, due to the different timing of these programmes.

4.1.3. *Coherence- To what extent is the TSI internally and externally coherent?*

Internal coherence

Based on the targeted survey and interview data, the evaluation found no significant inconsistencies **among TSI projects within individual Member States**. Survey respondents mostly perceived the **TSI projects as partially complementary**. 60% (27 out of 30) of national coordinating and 75% (47 out of 63) of beneficiary authorities agreed that the TSI projects in their country have synergies and complement each other to a high or a moderate extent.

Evidence from case studies revealed **limited evidence of collaborative mechanisms and synergies** between TSI projects in the same Member State in the same policy field. The highest level of complementarity was found in the case of '**follow-up projects**' (i.e. TSI projects following up on SRSP projects). For example, in Austria, the reform path set by the SRSP-supported development of primary healthcare units was continued under a TSI multi-country project, through the creation of a new health financing department.

Good practices to develop synergies have been highlighted by the study, such as the facilitator role of the country coordinator in Greece, bringing together beneficiaries of TSI projects within the same policy field to enhance their understanding of simultaneous reforms and their contribution to achieving strategic aims. This points to the need of leadership and a good oversight of the TSI projects, to enhance synergies.

National coordinating authorities have a good overview of TSI projects in a Member State and could have a key role in enhancing synergies across projects. Nevertheless, interviews highlighted that coordinating authorities' **involvement varies significantly in their communication about the TSI, their prioritisation of requests** and their **monitoring and follow-up** of TSI projects (see box 1). This disparity results in uneven support to beneficiary authorities across Member States, affecting the consistency of their use of technical support, as well as their monitoring of project results. This uneven and limited involvement of coordinating authorities **may be explained by the fact that their role is not formalised**, that additional resources are not dedicated, as TSI-related activities add to other responsibilities of these institutions.

External coherence

The study found the TSI to be complementary to other EU programmes with similar objectives. Notably, TSI projects support the absorption of and enable other funds/programmes/policy measures (e.g. Just Transition Fund). But there is limited knowledge at Member States level on how to strategically combine various EU instruments to support the whole reform cycle from design to implementation.

The selection process places a strong emphasis on avoiding overlaps. Overlaps in terms of funding were avoided due to the robust two-tier selection process involving national coordinating authorities and Commission services.

First, national coordinating authorities prioritise requests for technical support. In addition to the commitment included in the request that there is no overlap with any other EU funded actions, many coordinating authorities conduct additional checks on funding overlaps in the prioritisation phase (even if some indicated that clear criteria are missing).

Second, DG REFORM organises a consultation with other Commission services to check that the request would not incur in double funding (i.e. that there is no other EU programme already targeting the same action). Moreover, the risk of double funding is also signalled by the Commission services during the assessment stage.

The study points to unique features of the TSI compared to other EU programmes with similar objective to enhance economic and social development within the EU. Unlike technical assistance under other EU programmes (e.g. European Social Fund +, European Regional Development Fund) that provide administrative support for project implementation, the TSI operates with more thematic support and expertise and uses a range of funding mechanisms (see Table 3 below). The study suggests that the purpose and the activities of the TSI are complementary to those of ESF+, the European Regional Development Fund and the RRF. Compared to TAIEX and Fiscalis programmes, that focus on networking and training as one-off activities, the TSI integrates different delivery methods and provides a tailored mix of activities meeting the demands of Member States, to strengthen public authorities' capacities and support the design and implementation of growth-enhancing reforms.

Table 3- Comparison of interventions with similar objectives at the EU level

	European Social Fund +	European Regional Development Fund	Recovery and Resilience Facility	TAIEX	Fiscalis Programme
Aim	Complement and add value to the policies of Member States to ensure equal opportunities, equal access to the labour market, fair and quality working conditions, social protection and inclusion	Strengthen economic, social and territorial cohesion in the European Union	Mitigate the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing sustainability and resilience of the European economies and societies	Provide tailored support to public administrations regarding the approximation, application and enforcement of EU legislation as well as facilitate the sharing of EU good practices	Support tax policy and the implementation of Union law relating to taxation, administrative capacity building as well as foster cooperation between tax authorities
Activities	Analytical, mutual learning, capacity building and networking activities, mobility schemes and social experimentation	Investments in infrastructure, supporting business innovation, enhancing research and development, improving access to services, facilitating networking, cooperation, exchange of experience across sectors	Funding reforms and investments in six pillars: green transition, digital transformation, smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, social and territorial cohesion, health and resilience, and policies for the next generation (including education and skills)	Short-term (up to five days) workshops, expert missions and study visits, delivered in multiple policy fields, including TAIEX-TSI (contribution to the TSI), TAIEX-REGIO (regional and urban policy) and TAIEX-Environmental Implementation Review (peer-to-peer learning between environmental authorities)	Activities are closer to technical assistance (i.e. project-based cooperation, one-off events, training activities – all of them with a precondition that several participant countries are involved) although some activities could be assimilated to technical assistance (such as the study visits).
Funding mechanisms	Shared management, co-funding by Member States. Member States allocate funds to specific projects and programmes	Shared responsibility, the Member States' administrations choose which projects to finance and take responsibility for day-to-day management	Grants and loans to Member States available based on their recovery and resilience plans. Performance-based funding	TAIEX-TSI events are managed by DG NEAR and funded from the TAIEX-TSI budget line (no contributions from Member States are needed)	May be initiated both by the participating countries and the Commission. Implemented via grants allocated to the participating countries

At Commission level, the main links found between the TSI and other instruments consists of **cooperation channels** (such as focal points, regular meetings and consultations) **between DG REFORM and other Commission services**.

The TSI successfully managed to create synergies with TAIEX, which was successfully integrated as a delivery method to support peer-to-peer exchanges of good practices between EU Member States. According to the survey to beneficiary and coordinating authorities, the modernisation of labour market institutions (supported by the ESF+) and investing in infrastructure for employment services (supported by the ERDF) were seen as the least complementary to the TSI[58]. These results could be explained by the limited awareness at Member State level on how the TSI could be combined with other EU programmes and instruments to ensure continuous support through the entire reform cycle, from design to implementation. Case study findings confirmed this lack of a comprehensive view due to the availability of multiple funding instruments within the EU policy framework ('not seeing the big picture').

The **highest complementarity found is between the RRF and the TSI**, as synergies between the TSI and RRF are established in both instruments' regulations. The mid-term evaluation of the RRF highlighted a strong alignment between the RRF and the TSI[59]. This high level of coherence was also confirmed by the survey as well as the mid-term evaluation of the RRF[60]. These synergies between the TSI and the RRF were particularly ensured through the provision of technical support to RRPs since 2021, as one specific objectives of the TSI is to assist national authorities in improving their capacity to prepare, amend, implement and revise RRPs.

It was also facilitated by the continuous communication between SG RECOVER, DG REFORM and DG ECFIN. Even though the implementation of reforms is outside the direct control of the TSI, the performance-oriented nature of the RRF was seen as a facilitator to use TSI project deliverables linked to the implementation of the national RRPs to achieve its foreseen outcomes. The targeted survey results suggest that the TSI projects mostly contributed to the implementation and, to a more limited extent, to the preparation and revision of the national RRPs[61]. The interview evidence suggests that this result may have been determined by the mismatch in the timelines of the dedicated call to support the preparation of the national RRPs and the deadline for the submission of these plans.

Box 5 - TSI support for the preparation and implementation of the national RRPs

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[58] Only 45% of beneficiary authorities (33 out of 74) and 65% of coordinating authorities (13 out of 20) found these programmes complementary to a moderate or a high extent.

[59] ECORYS, CEPS, CSIL, NIESR, and Wavestone, 2023. *Study supporting the mid-term Evaluation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Final Report.*

[60] 71% of beneficiary authorities (63 out of 89) and 83% of coordinating authorities (19 out of 23) indicated complementarity between the RRF and the TSI.

[61] 36% of the coordinating authorities (9 out of 25) perceived the TSI as contributing to the revision of the RRP to a moderate or a high extent. 38% of them (10 out of 26) perceived the TSI as contributing to the preparation of the RRP to a moderate or a high extent. 57% of them (15 out of 26) perceived the TSI as contributing to the implementation of the RRP to a moderate or a high extent.

In February 2021, the Commission launched the RRF. As part of this initiative, Member States were required to develop national RRPs that outline their reform and investment strategies up to 2026. The Commission subsequently launched a dedicated call to support the implementation of RRPs during the TSI 2022 cycle. Additionally, four Member States submitted requests under Article 7.2 of the RRF Regulation, which allows Member States to propose including in their RRP (as estimated costs) payments for additional TSI support. This RRF mechanism was used in 2022 to support Cyprus, Greece, Croatia and Romania in achieving several milestones and targets.

As noted in the mid-term evaluation of the RRF, **the TSI was crucial in helping Member States prepare and implement their RRPs**. In the first year of the RRF, Member States benefited from a dedicated TSI call, allowing the results of the technical support to be integrated into their RRPs. Overall, the TSI supported more than 500 projects linked to RRP milestones over the evaluation period. TSI support was embedded in RRPs, and after their adoption, Member States could request support under subsequent TSI annual cycles or transfer funds to DG REFORM for additional technical support. This support has significantly enhanced Member States' capacity to design and deliver their plans effectively.

Evidence from the case study on RRPs underscores the importance of horizontal capacity-building support, particularly in project management and auditing. Results of the targeted survey **also highlighted the uniqueness of the TSI-funded projects**, with over 71% of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities reporting that similar support for preparing, amending, revising, and implementing the RRPs was unavailable through other means.

Source: compiled by PPMI, based on interview evidence, targeted survey and *ECORYS, CEPS, CSIL, NIESR, Wavestone, 2023. Study supporting the mid-term Evaluation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility;* and *DG REFORM, Delivering on Reforms, 2024, p. 15.*

Furthermore, **the TSI is coherent with the European Semester process**, **through its contribution to addressing country-specific recommendations (CSRs).** A total of 98% of the Member State requests selected in 2023 concerned support for implementing reforms linked to priorities set out under the European Semester framework[62], while 44% of the selected requests (101 out of 231) were linked to reforms in the context of economic governance processes (e.g. CSRs, Country reports)[63]. The link to CSRs plays a role from the onset, as this is one of the circumstances linked to which MS may submit requests, as per the TSI Regulation (Article 9). More specifically, the selection process includes CSRs as part of the assessment of the requests (under the urgency criterion). This link may deserve further strengthening in the TSI programme, to ensure continuous alignment of proposed support requests with EU priorities. This coherence is particularly ensured through the provision of technical support to RRPs since 2021, as it was mandatory for RRPs to address all, or a significant subset of relevant CSRs issued in the context of the European Semester. Evidence from case studies, stakeholder consultation, and desk research confirms the positive role of the TSI to implementing CSRs. The majority of surveyed coordinating and beneficiary authorities (respectively 84%, 27 out of 32, and 75%, 91 out of 121) stated that TSI projects addressed the CSRs issued in the context of the European Semester to a high or a moderate extent. This was confirmed by the case studies, that demonstrated a high level of the TSI's contribution to the implementation of CSRs. While it is highly unlikely that a single TSI project can fully address a CSR, the project 'SHAPE - Strengthening change management process of executives' was focused on the 2019-2020 CSRs that highlighted the need to 'improve the effectiveness of public administration' in Italy (see example in Table 2). Furthermore, the case studies analysed TSI projects in France and Cyprus, that are focused on the implementation of CSRs related to the reduction of territorial and regional disparities as

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[62] European Commission, 2023. *TSI programme performance statement*
[63] Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support, 2024. *Technical Support Instrument - Annual Report 2023*

well as the development of the civil service respectively. However, **challenges remain regarding the monitoring of how TSI projects specifically contribute to fulfilling CSRs**, due to the limited mandate of the TSI post project implementation.

In terms of **coherence of TSI projects with regional or national level priorities and programmes**, the study evidence points to a high level of complementarity and improvements compared to the SRSP. Survey results show that a total of 86% (24 out of 28) of coordinating authorities and 66% (85 out of 128) of beneficiary authorities agree to high or moderate extent that the TSI complements actions of similar national and regional programmes, for example by addressing the same issues, target groups, aiming at the same objectives. At the time of the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP, around half of surveyed beneficiary authorities (54%) indicated complementarity. An example from the case studies is the TSI support to the National Transparency Authority in Greece that contributes to the implementation of the National Public Procurement Strategy 2021-25 and the National Anti-Corruption Plan for 2022-25.

The study also shows that **the TSI has gained increasing recognition** as a valuable tool to support Member States in the implementation of newly adopted EU legislation. Evidence points to the **increasing integration of the expertise provided by the TSI** to support the implementation **of EU laws and policies**[64]**.**

Finally, the evaluation shows that TSI projects **are closely coherent with the Commission's horizontal priorities,** especially in the fields of economic development, digital and green transitions. The increasing number of these projects contributing to horizontal priorities may be linked both with the introduction of flagship requests and with the specificity of the RRF. However, despite a growing number of TSI projects and budget dedicated to equality principles (e.g. support for women, people with disabilities, migrants), the perceived contribution of the TSI to the promotion of equality remains one of the lowest among horizontal priorities[65]. This could be explained by the fact that a large share of the survey respondents was involved in the TSI 2021 projects that were less oriented towards the promotion of this principle. Furthermore, a vast majority of the budget dedicated for the projects related to gender equality (EUR 335.4 million) was assigned to interventions with an expected but not yet achieved positive impact.

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[64] The TSI was mentioned in 53 **legal acts** (i.e. regulations, directives, recommendations, decisions) between 2021-2023 (compared to 24 legal acts mentioning the SRSP between 2017-2020). In terms of **regulations**, the TSI is foreseen to provide support to, among others, the RRF, Single Market Programme and Social Climate Fund. Regarding **decisions**, the TSI is mentioned among other interventions to support the implementation of measures envisaged in the Digital Compass Communication, and also highlighted in the Decision establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030, as well as reforms linked to national or regional strategies on skills under the European Year of Skills. The TSI is mentioned the most in **Commission and Council recommendations**, as providing support for tailor-made reforms in multiple policy fields, including healthcare, environmental and climate policies, civil society, education and childcare, digital skills.

[65] According to the survey of beneficiary authorities, the TSI has mostly contributed to EU digital transition (40% to a high extent, 59 out of 149; 26% to a moderate extent, 38 out of 149). The contribution of the instrument to EU green transition (33% to a high extent, 45 out of 136) and UN SDGs (27% to a high extent, 35 out of 127) has also been pronounced. The contribution of the TSI is perceived as the most limited in the area of equality principles, with 51% of respondents (64 out of 126) noting that the instrument has not contributed to this area at all.

4.2. How did the EU intervention make a difference and to whom?

4.2.1. EU added value - What is the additional value resulting from the TSI compared to what could have been achieved by Member States?

TSI stakeholders highlighted the **strong EU added value of the TSI**, as only 15% of surveyed beneficiaries (21 out of 137) and 22% of coordinating authorities (5 out of 23) agreed that they could have received similar technical support at national, regional or local levels without the TSI. This is in line with the results of the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP, when more than 80% of all stakeholders (106 out of 132) considered that beneficiary authorities could not have received similar technical support or could have received it only to a limited extent at a national, regional or local level during 2017-2020.

Among various **reasons for requesting TSI support instead of other programmes**, most beneficiary authorities selected the absence of financial burdens (103 out of 186, 55%) and TSI ability to meet specific requirements not addressed by other programmes (101 out of 186, 54%).

According to the survey, 98% of beneficiary authorities (161 out of 164) and 100% of coordinating authorities (30 out of 30)[66] agree that the **TSI is distinct from other programmes due to its capacity to mobilise international especially European expertise, collaborative efforts with other Member States, provision of tailored support, and legitimisation of practices**. Interviews with national and EU stakeholders revealed that involving international organisations in the TSI projects increases their legitimacy and enhances visibility at the EU level. Combining local experts with context-specific insights and international providers with a more strategic approach, proved to be beneficial. This approach strengthens the credibility and acceptance of reforms, making the projects more legitimate and impactful.

Evidence shows that the EU added value of TSI projects, compared to what could have been achieved by the beneficiary authorities without EU support, varies depending on the type of intervention. Interviews highlighted the added value of stand-alone projects to implement national priorities, which tends to increase ownership by Member States since the support is specifically designed to their own reform priorities. Data on the circumstances of support confirm that, even when they ask for support to implement their own reform priorities, Member States are also pursuing Union priorities, reforms in the context of the economic governance process or implementation, amendment and revision of the RRPs[67]. Those that are only addressing Member States' own reform priorities only represent 4%.

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[66] As explained in Annex V, coordinating authorities from all Member States, except Finland and Sweden, responded to the targeted survey. While there is one institution performing this role in each Member State, survey invitations were shared with multiple staff members within that institution. As a result, the number of responses received may exceed the number of Member States / coordinating authorities.

[67] Out of 780 selected requests in TSI2021-TSI2023, here are the circumstances of request, as assessed by POs (the sum is over 100%, since there may be several circumstances for the same request):
- Implementation of Union priorities (e.g. green / digital transitions, CMU, Customs Union, etc.): 72%
- Reforms in the context of economic governance process (e.g. CSR, Country reports, etc.): 51%
- Implementation of Member States' own reform priorities to support recovery, sustainable economic growth, job creation and enhance resilience: 62%
- Implementation, amendment and revision of recovery and resilience plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility: 44%

Still the EU added value of multi-countries and flagship projects should not be underestimated. **The TSI produced substantial cross-border and Union-wide results.** Based on survey data, 95% of beneficiary authorities (122 out of 129) and 93% of coordinating authorities (26 out of 28) agreed that the TSI projects help address cross-border/Union-wide impacts. Interviews highlighted that the **added value of multi-country** projects lies in their ability to address broader, cross-border challenges while promoting collaboration and the exchange of good practices among participating countries. This appears particularly beneficial in countries facing similar needs, as illustrated by the projects involving Slovakia, Romania, and Poland in addressing the displacement of Ukrainian refugees. The survey results confirmed that **the TSI produced substantial cross-border and Union-wide results.** Based on survey data, 95% of beneficiary authorities (122 out of 129) and 93% of coordinating authorities (26 out of 28) agreed that the TSI projects help address cross-border/Union-wide impacts.

In the case of multi-country projects, interaction with peers from other countries having similar experiences is highly valuable, fostering learning and improvement in administrative capacities across EU Member States. The case studies revealed that the learning process became in some cases a 'two-way street' as sharing expertise and insights was perceived as beneficial even by public administrations typically seen as advanced in a particular policy area. As evidenced in case studies on 'Green Budgeting', the multi-country aspect allowed Ireland to learn from Denmark about impact assessments, and Denmark to learn from Ireland about budget tagging and considering the implementation of these practices. Similarly, the project '*Cooperative Compliance Programme in Belgium and Poland – strategies for the full roll outs and attracting the participation of the large taxpayers*' demonstrated the opportunity for mutual learning presented by the multi-country modality. Poland gained insights from Belgium's longer experience implementing Cooperative Compliance Programmes, and Belgium incorporated new ideas from the Polish approach. Also, exchanges of experience create motivation and interest for countries to become more involved in implementing reforms. For example, the case study on 'Green Budgeting' illustrates how peer exchanges play a crucial role in fostering trust and engagement among Member States, strengthening their commitment to tracking public finances related to green issues. Under the EU Green Budgeting Programme, 17 peer exchanges were organised, and over 1 200 civil servants received training across 23 Member States, further strengthening technical expertise and cross-country collaboration. These exchanges have also contributed to building a growing community of practitioners dedicated to integrating sustainability into budgetary processes and enhancing confidence in the practical implementation of green budgeting methodologies.

According to the targeted survey, 99% of beneficiaries (174 out of 175) and 100% of coordinating authorities (30 out of 30) identified the most specific characteristic of the TSI in promoting the **exchange of lessons, good practices, and creation of network of expertise**. This contribution is more strongly perceived compared to the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP, when 86% of national coordinating authorities agreeing/strongly agreeing that technical support increased the sharing of knowledge and good practices,

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- Reforms in the context of economic governance process (e.g. CSR, Country reports, etc.): 51%Implementation of Union law (e.g. infringements): 10%
- Preparation of recovery and resilience plans under the Recovery and Resilience Facility: 5%
- Implementation of economic adjustment programmes: 1%.

which may be explained by the increase in the number of multi-country projects under the TSI.

Interviews with national stakeholders confirmed that the TSI offered the opportunity to create channels of communication with peers and professionals across Member States, e.g. through peer-to-peer engagements, such as TAIEX. Interviewed national coordinating authorities perceive TAIEX as a useful tool which has a positive effect on sharing of good practices among the EU Member States. Some stakeholders also emphasised that TAIEX allows formal and informal connections to be built for future collaboration. In particular, the flagship PACE (launched under the TSI in 2023) aims at creating a European community of civil servants to share good practices and create bilateral contacts and is implemented through TAIEX.

According to the survey, 96% of beneficiary authorities (157 out of 164) and 85% of coordinating authorities (24 out of 28) agreed that the TSI promotes the **creation of a community of experts and foster a continuous cooperation** among the Member States. The case studies demonstrated the specific role of **multi-country projects and flagships** (stand-alone and multi-country) in this respect. Thanks to the TSI support on Green Budgeting, a dynamic community of practitioners emerged, fostering collaboration through in-person meetings and open discussions that strengthened the exchange of expertise and best practices among Member States. Projects on Health Systems Performance Assessment created a community of practice among the participant and interested Member States. Another example, the EU Supervisory Digital Finance Academy support project encouraged knowledge sharing between EU supervisors, facilitating the establishment of a community of digitally savvy financial supervisors across EU Member States, that will be instrumental in the completion of the Savings and Investment Union.

Interviews with Commission officials confirmed that multi-country projects and flagship projects fostered **continuous cooperation** among Member States even beyond the project timelines, by providing platforms for sharing technical knowledge and addressing specific challenges, leading to the creation of communities. For example, in the TSI project 'Cooperative Compliance Programme in Belgium and Poland', collaboration between the Belgian and Polish teams was strong, with workshops in France and Ireland allowing both teams to engage with established compliance programmes, leading to the creation of a network of cooperative compliance experts. Participants from various countries continued to engage bilaterally, sharing experiences and learnings from each other in specific areas. Regular, in-person exchanges are emphasised as essential for sustaining effective coordination and preventing stagnation, suggesting a need for structured follow-up mechanisms to enhance the continuous impact of these initiatives.

According to the targeted survey, 97% of both beneficiary authorities (141 out of 145) and coordinating authorities (30 out of 31) (strongly) agreed that another added value of TSI projects is their contribution to the **implementation of the Union law and policies.** This is higher compared to the results of the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP, and may be explained by the introduction of TSI **flagship projects**. The evaluation also suggests a significant contribution of the TSI not only to ('hard') legislative changes but also the application of ('soft') policy instruments. For example, the TSI, aligned with the Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025, devoted a significant share of its budget to support reforms related to gender equality (EUR 335.4 million).

TSI **flagship projects** are designed to align with **EU priorities**, such as environmental sustainability and economic governance. They can thus help meet new regulatory

demands and contribute effectively to the achievement of EU priorities and common goals. In particular, the TSI is showing an increasing contribution to the green transition compared to the predecessor programme SRSP.

According to the targeted survey, 96% of beneficiary authorities (129 out of 135) and 96% of coordinating authorities (28 out of 29) agree that the TSI contribution to the twin digital and green transitions is highly perceived as a characteristic of the TSI. Interviews with national and EU-level stakeholders confirmed the vital role played by TSI projects in advancing the green transition, including with the circular economy and zero pollution objectives, and enhancing energy efficiency across EU Member States.

However, some concerns were raised about the **potential drawbacks in the implementation of flagship and multi-country projects**, in particular as regards their complexity (for example, when multi-country projects split into several stand-alone projects due to different national needs). Additionally, stakeholders noted risks of lower ownership or political commitment from participating countries, which could affect the long-term success of these projects.

The TSI also provided **added value to Member States in the development of their RRPs**, especially in areas not sufficiently covered by other support mechanisms. 74% of beneficiary authorities (65 out of 87) and 71% of coordinating authorities (17 out of 24) stated that similar technical support for preparing, amending, revising, and implementing the RRPs was not available apart from the TSI. Evidence from the case study and interviews with TSI projects' stakeholders in Lithuania, Greece, and Bulgaria, highlighted the importance of horizontal capacity building to enhance the operational capabilities required for the effective execution of RRF initiatives, particularly in areas such as project management and audit.

The mid-term evaluation of the RRF confirmed that the TSI was able to address issues crucial for the implementation of the RRPs, such as project management and governance, by providing both general and specialised support[68]. However, the timing of the TSI support in part limited the added value of the instrument in supporting the preparation of the recovery and resilience plans. As a matter of fact, by the time the TSI was made available to Member States, the plans had already been presented, which limited the need for support.

4.3. Is the intervention still relevant?

4.3.1. *Relevance- To what extent are the TSI objectives relevant to address the needs expressed by the Member States and correspond to wider EU policy goals?*

Consultations provide evidence that there is a continuous need for technical support. As evidenced in the targeted survey, overall, the need remains at a similar level as during the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP (83% of beneficiary authorities, 95% of national coordinating authorities and 82% of technical support providers in SRSP evaluation indicated that there is a need for further support).

Evidence from consultations indicate that the **TSI objectives** are still relevant to address the needs expressed by Member States (with some variations observed between

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[68] ECORYS, CEPS, CSIL, NIESR, and Wavestone, 2023. *Study supporting the mid-term Evaluation of the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Final Report.*

countries). According to the targeted survey, Member States still face the challenges when requesting technical support still faced the challenges identified in the *ex ante* evaluation of the SRSP, which underlines the continuous relevance of technical support over time The most common challenges reported by beneficiary authorities concern:

- Limited administrative and institutional capacity: 70% (130 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 71% (25 out of 35) coordinating authorities[69].
- The design and implementation of structural reforms, in line with the Union's economic and social goals: 35% (66 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 51% (18 out of 35) coordinating authorities[70].
- The application and implementation of Union law: 11% (20 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 34% (12 out of 35) coordinating authorities[71].

In addition to these challenges, new needs were also frequently expressed, such as:

- Mitigating the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis: 10% (19 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 46% (16 out of 35) coordinating authorities[72].
- Addressing the challenges of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine was selected by 4% (7 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 31% (11 out of 35) coordinating authorities[73].

In terms of **types of activities needed**, stakeholders highlighted the need for technical support particularly in defining and implementing procedures and methodologies[74] as well as in developing and implementing reform strategies[75].

The design of the TSI is assessed as more relevant than the SRSP to address the needs of Member States. Recent adjustments with the introduction of **multi-country/multi-regional projects and flagship requests** for support, have provided an opportunity to

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[69] The Member States most in need for this type of support are Austria (87.5% of respondents from this country, i.e. 7 out of 8) and Estonia (75% of respondents from this country, i.e. 3 out of 4). In contrast, the Member States where this challenge was the least prominent are Luxembourg, Sweden, Slovakia, and Poland (the share of respondents varies from 0 to 14%).

[70] Stakeholders from Lithuania (57% of respondents, i.e. 4 out of 7), Slovakia (50% of respondents, i.e. 7 out of 14) and Sweden (50% of respondents, 1 out of 2) mostly perceive this as challenge to be addressed. The Member States where this need is perceived to a low extent are Luxembourg (0%, 0 out of 1), Estonia (0%, 0 out of 4), and Malta (11%, 1 out of 9).

[71] The respondents from Hungary (33%, 1 out of 3), Germany (25%, 2 out of 8), the Netherlands (22%, 4 out of 9), and Malta (22%, 1 out of 9) experience it to a higher extent. However, this need is the least recognised by stakeholders from Luxembourg, Sweden, Bulgaria, Belgium, Estonia and Greece (0%).

[72] Concerns about economic and social consequences of the pandemic are the most prominent among respondents from Lithuania (29%, 2 out of 7), Greece (27%, 3 out of 11) and Estonia (25%, 1 out of 4), while this issue is not a priority for respondents from Luxembourg, Malta, Hungary, Sweden (0%).

[73] Respondents from Czechia (22% of respondents, 2 out of 9), Romania, Denmark and Ireland (16% in each) and Lithuania, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Poland (14% each) marked them as needed to be addressed, while no need for support in this area was identified by the respondents from Luxembourg, Estonia, Malta, Finland, Hungary, Austria and Sweden (0%).

[74] 89% of beneficiary authorities and 94% of national coordinating authorities expressed this need to a high or moderate extent.

[75] 84% of beneficiary authorities and 91% of national coordinating authorities expressed this need to a high or moderate extent.

better align TSI support with EU priorities and improved the instrument's ability to facilitate the application and implementation of EU legislation.

The **relevance of TSI projects to the key needs of beneficiary authorities and Member States, was assessed very positively by all stakeholder groups** responding to the targeted survey, with improvements compared to the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP. A vast majority of surveyed beneficiary authorities (98%, 170 out of 174), coordinating authorities (97%, 32 out of 33) and technical support providers (97%, 65 out of 67) (strongly) agreed that the projects addressed the key needs of the institution / country.

A total of 91% of beneficiary authorities (136 out of 174) also (strongly) agreed that the TSI provided timely support, matching the needs of their institution. In addition, a vast majority of surveyed beneficiary authorities (98%, 157 out of 161) and national coordinating authorities (97%, 26 out of 29) (strongly) agreed that the objectives of technical support project(s) corresponded to the key reform goals of their country. This is significantly higher compared to the *ex post* evaluation, when 83% of beneficiary authorities and 73% of national coordinating authorities agreed with this statement.

According to the case studies, four out of five multi-country projects analysed contributed to the strengthening of the administrative and institutional capacity of Member States. Interviews with coordinating authorities highlighted that **the relevance of the flagship and multi-country projects relies in with their collaborative component**, creating opportunities to cooperate with institutions and entities that would not exist otherwise. Nevertheless, it highlighted that the success of multi-country projects depends on participating countries progressing at a similar pace. According to the interviewed coordinating authorities, the flagship requests for support are relevant for the Member States as they are directly aligned with the EU priorities. However, some coordinating authorities emphasised in interviews as well as in a survey conducted by DG REFORM in 2023 that a balance with stand-alone projects (tailored to the specific needs of Member States) should be kept.

In terms of **policy areas**, evidence from the Eurobarometer data[76] shows a very **strong alignment between the perceived needs and the support received from the TSI** in some Member States. For instance, the Greek citizens perceive the highest need of reforms in the public health sector (70%), in the education sector (58%), in the family, housing and social protection sector (46%) as well as in the employment and working conditions sector (28%), whereas 25% of the TSI projects are in the labour market, education, health & social services area. Similarly, in Austria, 50% of citizens perceive the need for public health reforms, 37% for family, housing and social protection, 36% for education reforms and 26% for employment and working conditions, while the

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[76] European Commission, 2023. Flash Eurobarometer 526: Understanding Europeans' views on reform needs. Note: survey respondents could select up to three answers to this question *[YOUR COUNTRY] undertakes reforms to respond to the needs of society. Reforms are actions taken to improve institutions, structures or public services. In your opinion, in which areas are reforms most needed in [YOUR COUNTRY]?*.

majority (35%) of the TSI projects in the country are in the labour market, education, health & social services area.

Such alignments are also observed in Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania. In contrast, in some Member States, a need for support in public health and education was perceived significantly higher compared to other areas, but these sectors are less represented in TSI support. For example, in Finland, 54% of citizens perceive a need for public health reforms and 47% for reforms in education, which are the least supported areas in this country. Similar patterns are observed in Bulgaria and Czechia.

The TSI design demonstrated high **flexibility to address Member States' unforeseen and emerging needs** through dedicated calls and special measures outlined in the TSI Regulation (Article 12.7 and Article 9.3). The majority of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities (88% of beneficiary authorities, 136 out of 154 and 74% of national coordinating authorities, 23 out of 31) agreed or strongly agreed that the design of the TSI was able to address urgent and/or unforeseen needs of the country, with improvement compared to the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP. However, interviews with representatives of the Commission and national coordinating authorities highlighted some limitations in the response to urgent needs through general calls of the annual cycle, considering the risk that projects do not start until at least one year after the need emerges and possible delays in the implementation of projects.

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED?

5.1. Conclusions

Since its creation in 2021, the TSI has provided technical support to Member States to improve their capacity to design, develop and implement reforms, as well as to prepare, amend, implement and revise recovery and resilience plans (RRPs) under the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).

In 2021-2023, the implementation of the TSI was found to be overall successful in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and coherence. The programme was also found to be highly relevant in addressing the needs of beneficiary authorities and Member States, which is mainly due to the design of the instrument. The TSI also had EU added value compared to what could have been achieved by Member States alone.

Effectiveness

Despite some limitations encountered in the assessment of effectiveness, findings from the evaluation show that between 2021 and 2023, the TSI made significant progress towards its **objectives** as set out in the TSI Regulation. TSI effectively assisted Member States in improving their capacity to design and implement reforms. It also supported the preparation and implementation of national RRPs by contributing to more than 500 projects directly or indirectly linked to specific RRP milestones.

In relation to **support to RRPs**, certain misalignments between the deadlines of the RRP milestones and the delivery schedule of TSI support occurred during the early implementation of the support in 2021. In some cases, TSI support was provided too

early while in others it arrived too late to be used, which was due to the very narrow window in terms of timing. These shortcomings highlight the relevance of addressing technical support needs of Member States from the outset of funding or policy initiatives, ensuring timelines and deadlines are properly aligned.

A vast majority of TSI stakeholders expressed high satisfaction with the success and results of technical support projects. TSI projects have delivered valuable **outputs**, especially recommendations, workshops, training sessions and training material, analysis reports, action plans and roadmaps, and guidelines. Outputs have been utilised to a substantial extent by beneficiary authorities to achieve changes at individual, organisational and policy levels. This contributed to progress in achieving expected **outcomes of the TSI**. The TSI played a significant role in strengthening all types of administrative capacities, especially internal administrative mechanisms for reforms across the EU. However, these achievements are highly dependent on **national factors**, such as ownership of reforms, availability of financial resources to follow up on recommendations, staff stability as well as political and administrative continuity. The actual achievement of reform results depends on wider efforts of Member States, considering that the cooperation and support plans, in which their commitment to engage in the implementation of support measures is expressed, are not legally binding documents. Nevertheless, there is good potential to multiply these benefits and improve their sustainability, by fostering (in)formal connections for existing and future collaborations and exploiting existing knowledge, through a more systematic dissemination of project results, continued support from Commission officials and exchange of knowledge among Member States.

Efficiency

Overall, the execution of the TSI and its associated administrative processes has been **largely efficient**. Thanks to the design of the instrument, there are no reporting obligations for Member States, and the **administrative burden** is very low compared to other EU instruments, which is praised by all Member States. Beneficiary authorities considered the administrative burden associated with the application and project implementation processes to be reasonable and proportionate.

The high demand for TSI support ensured a good level of competition and the selection of high-quality proposals, based on the internal scoring attributed to the selected requests under the seven criteria assessed.

To improve efficiency, DG REFORM has implemented lessons learned from evaluations of the SRSP, for example by **simplifying and streamlining programme management**. The introduction of multi-country projects, representing about 10% of all TSI projects from 2021 to 2023, helped tackle common issues among Member States. Multi-country and flagship projects appear to be more **cost-effective and time- efficient** than stand-alone projects and those selected under general requests. However, the efficiency of multi-country projects may potentially be affected by the increased complexity of such projects.

In 2021-2023, the programme was efficient in terms of **process duration** and **budget execution** from commitments to payments, achieving a high budget utilisation rate. The overall **cost of controls** by DG REFORM progressively decreased in 2021-2023 and remained in line with the DG REFORM target and comparable with other EU programmes.

The total time between the application deadline and the start of technical support slightly but continuously decreased over the evaluation period, amounting to 11 months on average. Minimising the time gap between the application and the actual start of the project was considered crucial for the success of individual projects and their effective contribution to ongoing reforms, especially to respond to urgent needs. Further reflection may be considered on the annual deadlines for the submission of general requests and the extent to which setting different deadlines could improve the efficiency at the start of technical support.

TSI projects are implemented through various **delivery methods**. Beneficiary authorities and technical support providers were generally very positive about the clarity, transparency and user-friendliness of the procedures for application and selection of requests for funding, approval of deliverables, project monitoring and evaluation. Coordinating authorities were less satisfied with the **monitoring of TSI projects**, especially with the tools and procedures and the access to relevant information at national level. Beneficiary authorities considered the support of DG REFORM policy officers as highly useful, from the start to the end of the technical support.

Coherence

In terms of **internal coherence**, the evaluation found no major inconsistencies between the TSI projects in individual Member States. However, there is limited evidence of collaborative mechanisms between different TSI projects in the same Member State. The evaluation also found significant differences in coordinating authorities' involvement in programme implementation across the EU. There is room for exploring synergies between TSI-funded projects in the same Member State in the same policy area.

During the evaluation period, the TSI demonstrated **increased external coherence** compared to its predecessor, the SRSP, with regional and national level interventions as well as other EU interventions having similar objectives. The TSI operates in a complementary manner to other EU instruments and programmes. The evaluation found the TSI's purpose and its activities to be complementary to those of the European Social Fund Plus, the European Regional Development Fund and the RRF. The TSI is not only different in terms of budget implementation methods, but also in its cross-cutting nature and broad scope of intervention(not limited to a specific policy sector), the duration of support provided and the type of capacities supported. Coherence could be further improved if Member States strategically combined various EU instruments to support the whole reform cycle from design to implementation. The greatest synergies appear to be

developed with the RRF and TAIEX[77]. By providing both general and specialised support, the TSI was able to address issues crucial for the implementation of the RRPs, such as project management and governance. Evaluation evidence highlighted the significance of TSI support in strengthening the operational capabilities required to effectively execute RRF initiatives.However, the evaluation raised concerns from some Member States on the need to have a more comprehensive view due to the availability of multiple funding instruments within the EU policy framework.

The TSI is also consistent with the European Semester process, through the role it plays in addressing country-specific recommendations (CSRs) issued as part of the European Semester. Most coordinating and beneficiary authorities stated that TSI projects supported reforms addressing CSRs to a high or a moderate extent. This was confirmed by the case studies, which demonstrated that the TSI played a major rolein implementing CSRs. However, challenges remain regarding the systematic monitoring of how TSI projects specifically contribute to carrying out CSRs, due to the limited mandate of the TSI after project implementation.

Finally, TSI projects are closely aligned with the Commission's top priorities, such as the digital and green transitions. The increasing number of TSI projects contributing to top priorities may be linked with the introduction of flagship requests. The TSI has also gained recognition as a valuable tool to support Member States in implementing EU legislation.

EU added value

The TSI exceeded what individual Member States could have accomplished independently. In particular, the TSI offers **international - especially European - expertise** that is typically unavailable at local, regional or national levels, addressing specific needs that Member States would struggle to meet alone. By combining international and local expertise, the TSI proved to be beneficial - with local experts offering context-specific insights and international providers providing more strategic approach - and helped to increase the credibility and acceptance of reforms.

The TSI provided EU added value by supporting the development and implementation of the RRPs. The TSI produced **significant cross-country impacts**, and delivered high EU added value by building communities of experts and sustained cooperation among Member States. By offering the chance to create channels of communication with peers and professionals across various Member States, the TSI facilitated the sharing of lessons learned and good practices across Member States. Also, TSI projects have played a major role in implementing EU policies and priorities and supporting the digital and green transitions. In this regard, **flagship projects** (encompassing both standalone and multi-country projects) add value by supporting EU priorities, driving regulatory compliance, and promoting the application of EU law. However, stakeholders noted that flagship

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[77] TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) is an EU institution building tool, which mobilises public sector expertise from EU Member States in a Team Europe spirit to support reform processes around the world.

projects risk diverging from the specific aim of the TSI, which is to provide support tailored to the needs of specific Member States. There is a strong consensus among stakeholders consulted on the TSI's significant contribution to the digital and green transitions. In particular, the TSI contributes more to the green transition than its predecessor, the SRSP.

Multi-country projects are seen as valuable because of their ability to tackle broader, cross-border challenges while boosting collaboration and the sharing of good practices among participating countries. However, concerns were raised about their complexity and the fact that these projects may lead to lower ownership and political commitment by participating countries, potentially undermining their success.

Relevance

Findings from the consultation suggest that the **TSI is a highly relevant instrument, well-tailored to the needs of Member States and their beneficiary authorities**, with improvements in areas identified in the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP. Evidence shows that there is still a **need for technical support**, especially in developing and implementing procedures and methodologies.

Most consulted beneficiary authorities and coordinating authorities agreed that the TSI was suitable to provide technical support, and confirmed that TSI projects were able to address the main needs of their institutions, mainly thanks to the design of the instrument, and in a timely manner. All stakeholders view the TSI's **design and structure** as highly relevant for strengthening the administrative and institutional capacity of Member States to design and implement the reforms needed to tackle the challenges faced.

However, it is important to consider these positive findings in the context that TSI support is provided at almost no cost to all Member States whose requests are accepted, regardless of their capacity to organise their own technical support. Interviews highlighted some limitations in the response to urgent needs through general calls of the annual cycle, considering the necessary duration for projects to start after the need emerges. However, The TSI design demonstrated high flexibility to address Member States' unforeseen and emerging needs through dedicated calls and special measures outlined in the TSI Regulation. Compared to the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP, and thanks to these modalities, most beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities agreed that thanks to its design, the TSI was able to address urgent and/or unforeseen needs of the country. The introduction of flagship requests for support and of multi-country and multi-regional projects made it possible for the programme to better address EU priorities and to improve the application and implementation of EU law.

5.2. Lessons learned

The evaluation highlighted several improvements in the TSI compared to its predecessor, the SRSP, demonstrating a more active involvement of stakeholders and a greater cross-country dimension. The main lessons learned from the TSI mid-term evaluation, based on its findings and conclusions, are set out below:

Design of the TSI

- The **demand-driven nature** of the TSI helps ensure Member State's ownership of projects and stakeholders' commitment, which are crucial for the success of reforms, although concrete achievements are highly dependent on **national factors**. Projects' alignment with the European Semester framework and relevant EU priorities is ensured during the selection process, through the selection criteria.

- The current design of the TSI suffers from limitations in tracking specific outcomes in Member States because its legal base does not directly refer to the achievement of reforms, nor does it impose specific requirements on Member States to report on the status of supported reforms. In the future, these observations should be taken into account and ways should be explored to improve the focus on reforms. Additionally, specific reporting obligations should be considered, while ensuring that the administrative burden remains proportionate to the activities carried out under the instrument.

- Technical support should maintain enough flexibility to cater to the needs of Member States and adapt to shifting political priorities and situations. Public authorities might encounter both internal and external changes - including policy changes, economic and social challenges, and changing legal and regulatory landscapes - which necessitate technical support and assistance to adjust to new objectives and strategies.

- The TSI's design has been generally effective in addressing the needs of Member States, but the annual cycle might limit its ability to respond to urgent needs of Member States. While the TSI effectively addressed some urgent needs through dedicated calls, these calls require significant time and resource investment.

TSI project implementation

- Evaluation findings highlight the importance of identifying the most appropriate project type for technical support, considering Member States' strengths, weaknesses, needs and contexts. **Multi-country** and **flagship** projects (covering stand-alone and multi-country projects) proved to be highly relevant in addressing EU priorities, fostering collaboration, and sharing good practices across borders. **Stand-alone** projects appear to be more appropriate and better tailored to address more specific needs, as they enable more targeted reforms, ensuring more engagement by beneficiary authorities.

- A variety of **delivery methods** were used across technical support projects, with high satisfaction rates among stakeholders. Evidence demonstrates that private providers may be more suitable to deliver technical tasks, while international organisations appear to be better suited to contribute to broader strategic issues, and ensure a consistent response across the EU to the same type of need in the case of multi-country projects. Using a tailored mix of delivery methods – such as combining TAIEX with other methods – proved to be an effective approach, particularly for complex or multi-country projects.

- Nevertheless, further efforts are needed to ensure the effective use of TSI deliverables and concrete follow-up by Member States.
  The ad-hoc support of DG DIGIT providing expert advice has been assessed as beneficial for the implementation of projects. This support has been exacerbated after the adoption of the Interoperable Europe Act Regulation (EU) 2024/903.

Remarkably, the "*Statistical Interoperability Node*" project was awarded the special "ASEDIE 25 years" prize due to the value provided.

Facilitator role of the Commission

- The evaluation found that the Commission has played a **significant role in the implementation** of TSI projects. In particular, DG REFORM policy officers' close involvement was crucial in supporting project design (to facilitate implementation) and addressing diverse challenges encountered during implementation. Their continuous operational supervision was important too.

- Stakeholders indicated that further support by Commission policy officers might be useful after the completion of TSI projects to ensure the sustainable achievement of long-term results.

- In some cases, closer involvement of policy officers from **specific Directorates-General of the Commission** was highlighted as beneficial for improving the implementation of TSI projects, especially for TSI projects related to the implementation of EU law (in the case of complex EU legislative requirements, such as the 'do no significant harm' principle).

Results and sustainability of the technical support

- Beneficiary authorities have used the outputs of TSI projects - such as recommendations, findings from workshops, and analysis reports - to achieve **changes at individual, organisational and policy level**.

- The **success of technical support** and the achievement of long-term sustainable **results depend on Member States' consistent and systematic follow-up of technical support projects**. Continued ownership by national authorities proved to be a crucial factor to ensure that they take follow-up action and that outputs delivered by technical support projects are used. The evaluation found that this follow-up also depends on national factors, such as ownership of reforms, availability of financial resources, staff stability, and political and administrative continuity.

- However, apart from filling in the satisfaction and outcome questionnaires, national authorities have not yet formally committed to following up on technical support projects (e.g. by adopting relevant reforms). Further reflection may be considered on how to incentivise Member States to more consistently and systematically follow up on technical support projects and report on this follow up. There is also a need to strengthen the **monitoring and evaluation of the technical support** to better track achievements, objectively and depending on the type of measures (e.g. training and capacity-building, support for specific reforms, recommendations to national authorities, etc.), as well as to use lessons learned to improve new projects.

Multiannual dimension

- **The TSI currently lacks a medium- to long-term programming approach, which would connect technical support to other programmes to improve their effectiveness and create a coherent strategic vision for technical support in a given Member State**. However, this needs to be reconciled with the annual nature of

the instrument, which is enshrined in the TSI Regulation. A short-term strategic overview of the TSI's implementation is provided in cooperation and support plans, but these documents are not legally binding. In 2021-2023, the alignment of technical support with the ongoing reforms at national level was also ensured through national RRPs.

- Some consideration may also be required on the definition of **flagship** projects. For example, it might be advantageous to develop flagship projects with a medium-term perspective, spanning multiple years or calls for technical support. A medium-term perspective on flagship projects could bring more focus to specific challenges faced by Member States and the EU as a whole and, at the same time, improve efficiency by reducing the administrative burden linked to annual consultations with different Commission services and Member States and the adjustment of corporate tools on an annual basis.

Thematic and policy dimension

- Since 2023, initiatives such as the European Administrative Space (ComPAct) – including the Public Administration Cooperation Exchange Programme (PACE) – have proposed specific actions implemented through the TSI, to help public administrations meet the needs of people and businesses across the EU. These initiatives have highlighted the added value of the TSI in strengthening the administrative capacity of public administrations at national, regional and local level, and ensuring all citizens have access to timely and high-quality public service provision. If successfully implemented, these initiatives and projects could serve as **an inspiring example in terms of policy integration, coherence and effectiveness in the provision of technical support across policy areas**.

- The ComPAct initiative provides a good platform and 'knowledge hub' for the provision of technical support in the field of governance and public administration, complementing other EU instruments.

- Over the years, technical support projects have generated a wealth of thematic policy knowledge. In the evaluation period, DG REFORM played a more active role in disseminating outputs and deliverables of technical support, which could be strengthened to better use them in all **thematic fields**. The [EU Supervisory Digital Finance Academy](#) platform constitutes a good practice example of effective dissemination to foster the use of materials and deliverables from other and closed projects, especially in the same thematic area.

- Through the TSI, Member States have benefitted of tailored technical expertise to design and implement digital reforms. It supported projects that enhance digital governance, modernise public administration, and improve public service delivery through the adoption of digital technologies and foster cross-border interoperability.

Country dimension

- The evaluation found that there is a need for **improved coordination and synergies between TSI-funded projects in the same Member State.** Some consideration may also be required on how to further improve the overview and follow-up of support provided, developing a more holistic vision of country support. This might also help

to strengthen synergies and complementarities between different EU programmes and to better align timelines and country-specific deadlines.

- Over the evaluation period, **the role of DG REFORM country coordinators and coordinating authorities** proved key to ensuring the country relevance of the technical support measures delivered, identifying any issues emerging during the implementation phase, and proposing adequate mitigation measures.
- Evidence shows untapped potential for coordinating authorities to monitor the need for and use of technical support deliverables at national level to achieve medium- and longer-term results (e.g. adopt the relevant reforms) as well as to adopt a strategic approach towards combining technical support with other EU programmes and instruments.
- The evaluation found that the engagement of coordinating authorities might depend on their position within the institutional framework, the size of the Member State's public administration, and the resources dedicated to this task. Strengthening the institutional framework and introducing reporting obligations for Member States might increase the effectiveness of the programme.
- A more formalised and unified role for coordinating authorities has the potential to strengthen ownership of reforms (through an improved prioritisation of requests) and improve the monitoring of projects across Member States, while keeping some flexibility in tailoring the role of coordinating authorities to the specific context of each Member State.

Cross-country dimension

- The TSI has demonstrated significant **cross-country impacts**, with multi-country projects tackling broader, cross-border challenges and strengthening collaboration and the sharing of knowledge and good practices among participating countries.
- The programme has built communities of experts and sustained cooperation among Member States, delivering high EU added value.
- The TSI has also been instrumental in increasing the credibility and acceptance of reforms, boosting their legitimacy and visibility at national and EU levels.
- The introduction of **multi-country and multi-region** requests has also brought significant efficiency gains, by enabling the selection of multiple requests under a single contract or agreement. However, these projects present a certain risk of diluting country-specific needs, limiting the engagement of Member States progressing at different paces.
- The introduction of **flagship requests** was considered a success as they enabled a better alignment between national reforms and EU priorities, driving regulatory compliance, and promoting the application of EU law. These projects could cater to more long-standing, structural challenges across Member States and the EU at large.

Synergies with other EU programmes

- The TSI has been effective in supporting the implementation of reforms, with a significant number of reforms linked to specific RRP milestones. Incorporating technical support from the outset of implementation of funds and other policy instruments, as it has happened in specific cases for the RRF, could be advantageous,

and could help ensure that administrative capacity requirements are satisfied, and timelines are synchronised.

- The TSI has been consistent **with other EU processes**, such as the European Semester, and has contributed to the achievement of EU priorities, including the digital and green transitions.

- The TSI can improve the effectiveness of other programmes by building the administrative and institutional capacity required for their successful implementation. However, the evaluation showed that some Member States would prefer to have a more comprehensive view given the availability of multiple funding instruments within the EU policy framework**.**

The mid-term evaluation of the Technical Support Instrument (TSI), in the middle of the programme's operating time, has been completed in line with Article 16 of the Regulation establishing the TSI. The Decide planning entry for the mid-term evaluation is PLAN/2023/1833.

The evaluation was led by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM), under the guidance of an Interservice Steering Group (ISSG) composed of 25 Commission services (DG AGRI, DG CLIMA, DG CNECT, DG COMP, DG DEFIS, DG DIGIT, DG EAC, DG ECFIN, DG EMPL, DG ENER, DG ENV, DG ESTAT, DG FISMA, DG GROW, DG JUST, DG MARE, DG MOVE, DG NEAR, DG REGIO, DG RTD, DG SANTE, SJ, SG and SG RECOVER and DG TAXUD) established in July 2023. The ISSG helped ensure the representativity of the evidence considered, the validity of the analysis and the reliability of conclusions. In particular, the ISSG was consulted seven times: 27 September 2023, 16 January 2024, 22 February 2024, 13 June 2024, 5 September 2024, 24 October 2024 and 22 January 2025.

This evaluation is based on evidence gathered via different channels and an overview is presented in Annexes II and III. This evaluation relies primarily on an external independent supporting study commissioned by the Commission that started in 21/12/2023 and ended in 1/12/2024. The 'Supporting study for the mid-term evaluation of the Technical Support Instrument (2021-2027)' was awarded to PPMI in cooperation with CSES under specific contract No REFORM/SCTP2023/011, implementing framework contract No GROW/2021/OP/0001 – Lot 1.

In addition, a call for evidence was published on Have your Say with an Open Public Consultation for 12 weeks, that was launched on 18 March and closed on 10 June 2024.

Overall approach

The supporting study builds on a solid evaluation methodology and is informed by the results of the open public consultation (OPC), targeted survey, interviews, focus group discussions, cross-case analysis, monitoring data of the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) as well as other findings of desk research.

The supporting study combined several data collection and analysis activities to collect solid evidence and provide well-informed answers for the replies to the evaluation questions.

The following data collection methods were used: desk research, stakeholder consultation (OPC, targeted survey, interview programme and focus group discussions) as well as case studies. In addition, to ensure the validity and reliability of evaluation findings, the supporting study triangulated different data sources (to the extent possible) by complementing the perceptions of stakeholders (e.g. interview results) with objective data (e.g. administrative and monitoring information).

Data collection

1. **Desk research** - The desk research consisted of two key elements: (i) a review of publicly available documents and (ii) an analysis of internal administrative and monitoring data received from DG REFORM

2. **Stakeholder consultation**

Table 4: Summary of consultation activities

Activity	Duration	Target audience	Number of participants	Number of Member States represented	Type of data analysis
Open public consultation (OPC)	18 March – 10 June 2024	Member State coordinating authorities, Industry/business/ workers' and other organisations, public authorities, researchers/consultants, general public	51	17 + 1 non-EU country	Descriptive statistics
Targeted survey	19 April - 19 May 2024	Beneficiary and coordinating authorities, technical support providers	289	27	Descriptive statistics

		DG REFORM officials, Representatives of other DGs and services of the European Commission involved with the TSI, beneficiary and coordinating authorities, technical support providers			
Interview programme	29 April – 21 October 2024	DG REFORM officials, Representatives of other DGs and services of the European Commission involved with the TSI, beneficiary and coordinating authorities, technical support providers	114	25	Content analysis
Focus group discussions	3 June – 11 July 2024	Beneficiary, coordinating authorities and technical support providers	37	20	Content analysis

Note: A total of 300 survey responses were received, but only 289 were analysed after cleaning the targeted survey data; While some interviews involved a few (up to four) participants, the count refers to the total of number of interviews carried out.

3. **Case studies and comparative analysis** - The case study programme consists of seven thematic case studies that cover 21 stand-alone, and five multi-country projects funded by the TSI during 2021-2023. Overall, the case study programme covers a total of 98 projects in all EU Member States and TSI-related policy areas (each corresponding to a different unit of DG REFORM).

Overall, the mid-term evaluation provides robust evaluation findings built on the analysis of a high quality and representative data collected through desk research, stakeholder consultation activities and thematic case studies.

1. RELEVANCE

QUESTION	SUMMARY & SECTION	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATOR	POINT OF COMPARISON	DATA SOURCES
			To what extent are the TSI objectives relevant to address the needs expresses by the Member States and correspond to wider EU policy goals?		
To what extent are the TSI objectives relevant to address the needs expressed by the Member States beneficiary authorities?	**Section 4.1.1.** • Member States are still facing the challenges identified in the *ex ante* evaluation of the SRSP, such as limited administrative and institutional capacity, challenges in implementation of the EU law and design and implementation of structural reforms in line with the Union's economic and social goals, but some of them – to a lesser extent. • All stakeholder groups involved in the TSI projects positively assess the relevance of technical support to the key needs of beneficiary authorities and Member States, with notable improvements compared to the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP • There is a continuous need for technical support, with the greatest demand for the definition and implementation of procedures and methodologies.	Member States are still facing challenges identified in the *ex ante* evaluation of the SRSP **Links to the intervention logic section on needs and challenges of the programme**	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the institution/Member State faces limited administrative and institutional capacity *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** 67% *(no disaggregation by stakeholder group available)* **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • Beneficiary authorities 72% • National coordinating authorities 68% • Technical support providers 62%	Targeted online survey, OPC
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the institution/Member State faces challenges in the design and implementation of structural reforms in line with the Union's economic and social goals *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** 43% *(no disaggregation by stakeholder group available)* **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • Beneficiary authorities 30% • National coordinating authorities 68% • Technical support providers 46%	
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the institution/Member State faces challenges in the application and implementation of Union law *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** 14% *(no disaggregation by stakeholder group available)* **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • Beneficiary authorities 11% • National coordinating authorities 23% • Technical support providers 11%	
			Number of infringement cases *(by year)*	**2014**[118]: 1 247 cases **2020:** 1 786 cases	Desk research *(European Commission, 2023. Report from the Commission: Monitoring the application of European Union law 2022 Annual Report)*
			Stakeholders' perception on the key challenges that prevent the government and public institutions to design and implement reforms:	n/a	OPC, interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities, the Commission)*

			• Lack of skills or inadequate skills • Weak coordination between public institutions • Frequent political changes / lack of continuity due to changes in political priorities • Low adequacy / understanding by the administration of society's needs • Excessive bureaucracy • Lack of staff or financial resources • Lack of a long-term vision and strategy to design relevant and sustainable reforms		
		There is a continuous need for technical support from Member States/institutions	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that there is a continuous need of technical support *(in %)* (*by Member State, type of project, type of stakeholders*)	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 83% of beneficiary authorities • 95% of national coordinating authorities • 82% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey
		The TSI meets the needs of Member States	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI project addressed the key needs of their institution/country *(in %) (by Member State, type of project, type of stakeholders)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 95% of beneficiary authorities • 86% of national coordinating authorities • 95% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI provided timely support, matching the needs of their institution/country *(in %) (by Member State, type of project, type of stakeholders)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
			• Existence of overlap between the key policy areas supported by the TSI in a Member State and perceived need of reforms to improve the following areas: • Green transition and climate adaptation • Energy supply, including cost of energy (electricity, gas, petrol) • Digitalisation of public services • Public health system and services • Education and school services • Functioning of public institutions (including the judiciary)	n/a	Desk research (*Eurobarometer*), OPC

			• Support to businesses and enterprises (e.g. green loans to SMEs, access to capital markets) • Taxation systems and policies • Employment, including access, work opportunities, and conditions • Migration • Family, housing, social protection • Education for financial decisions in everyday life • The efficiency and accountability of public institutions • Defence readiness		
To what extent did the design of the TSI take into account lessons learned from the implementation of its predecessor programme, the SRSP, to better address Member States needs/priorities?	**Section 4.1.2.** Changes in the design of the TSI that took place in 2021-23 made the instrument more suitable to address the needs of Member States.	Changes in the design of the TSI better reflect the needs/priorities of the Member States	Existence of changes in the design of the TSI, allowing the needs/priorities of the Member States to be better reflected (*links to the sub-question 1.1*)	n/a	Desk research *(Annual Work Programmes and Activity Reports of DG REFORM)*, interviews *(the Commission)*
To what extent are TSI projects (including multi-country projects and flagship technical support projects) appropriate for enhancing the administrative and institutional capacity of Member States to design and implement the reforms needed to tackle the challenges faced?	**Section 4.1.3** • TSI is perceived as a suitable instrument for providing technical support, to a slightly higher extent than in the SRSP *ex post* evaluation. • Objectives of the TSI align more closely with the Member States' key reform goals, than in the SRSP *ex post* evaluation. • Multi-country projects contribute to strengthening administrative and institutional capacities of beneficiary authorities, but their success depends on participating countries progressing at a similar pace. • Flagship requests for support are in particular relevance to Member States due to their direct alignment with the EU priorities.	The TSI's design is suitable to address the needs of Member States	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI- is suitable instrument to provide technical support *(in %) (by Member State, type of project, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 98% of beneficiary authorities • 91% of national coordinating authorities • 95% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the project(s) design (identification of the problem, definition of the objectives and results to achieve, definition of the activities to carry out) was appropriate *(in %) (by Member State, type of project, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 95% of beneficiary authorities • 86% of national coordinating authorities • 95% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities agree that the objectives of technical support project(s) corresponded to the key reform goals of their country *(in %) (by Member State, type of*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 83% of beneficiary authorities • 73% of national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey

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QUESTION	SUMMARY & SECTION	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATOR	POINT OF COMPARISON	DATA SOURCES
			project, type of stakeholder)		
			Number of the multi-country/multi-regional and flagship projects analysed in the case study that contribute to the strengthening of the administrative and institutional capacity of Member States	n/a	Case studies: interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities, the Commission)*, desk research
To what extent did the TSI adapt over time to changing circumstances or to respond to unforeseen needs (e.g. through dedicated calls or the launching of flagship initiatives)?	**Section 4.1.4** • Slightly higher proportion of stakeholders expressed satisfaction with TSI's capacity to address the country's urgent needs, in comparison to the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP. • The TSI design allows some capacity to address the emerging needs of the Member States through dedicated calls	The TSI design is suitable to address urgent and/or unforeseen needs of the Member States	Existence of changes in the design of the TSI, allowing urgent and/or unforeseen needs of the Member States to be better addressed *(links to the sub-question 1.1)*	n/a	Desk research *(Annual Work Programmes and Activity Reports of DG REFORM)*, interviews *(the Commission, beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*
			Existence of mechanisms to ensure feedback loop between DG REFORM and Member States on the design of the TSI		
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the design of the TSI is suitable to address urgent and/or unforeseen needs of their country *(in %) (by Member State, type of project, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 84% of beneficiary authorities • 69% of national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey
Do the objectives of the TSI still correspond to wider EU policy goals and priorities?	**Section 4.1.5** • The objectives of the TSI are in line with European strategic policy documents. • TSI contributes to climate action and environmental protection mainstreaming, supporting EU commitments to the Paris Agreement. • TSI addresses broader environmental and social challenges within the EU.	The objectives of the TSI are in line with European strategic policy documents	Existence of links between the TSI objectives and wider EU policy goals and priorities	n/a	Desk research *(TSI Regulation, DG REFORM Annual Work programmes and Activity Reports, strategic documents of the EU)*, interviews *(the Commission)*

2. EFFECTIVENESS

QUESTION	SUMMARY & SECTION	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATOR	POINT OF COMPARISON	DATA SOURCES
To what extent is the TSI consolidating the achievements and lessons learned of the SRSP? What are the main lessons learned of the	**Section 4.2.4** • DG REFORM of the Commission has effectively applied the lessons from the SRSP during the design and execution of the TSI projects. • However, strengthening the monitoring	Lessons learned of the mid-term evaluation of the SRSP and the Impact Assessment Accompanying the document Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament on the establishment of the Reform Support Programme have been applied to improve	The number of lessons learned / recommendations that have been applied *(disaggregated by type of lessons learned and policy area)*: • Enhanced role of national coordinating authorities in the formal monitoring of the progress achieved in each project and with respect to the CSP; • Introduction of a mechanism that	n/a	Desk research *(mid-term and ex post evaluation of the SRSP, Annual Work Programmes and Activity Reports of DG REFORM, TSI annual reports)*, interviews *(the Commission, national coordinating authorities)*

SRSP? Have they been applied during the design and execution of the TSI? (*programme level*)	and evaluation of the programme, particularly its contribution to fulfilling CSRs, could enhance its effectiveness by enabling improvements informed by performance results.	the design of the TSI	would allow monitoring how project results are used after their closure; • Introduction of incentives to cooperate for the long-term results of the projects; • Introduction of the possibility to rediscuss the project work plan; • Incentives for Member States to start and/or accelerate and/or complete the reforms, which preparation, design and implementation was supported; • Enhanced complementarity with the other instruments; • Gained access to international expertise and strengthened peer-to-peer advice during the provision of technical support; • Close and continuous involvement of national authorities in the pre-implementation phase; • Enhanced consultation and communication activities; • Improved dissemination and exploitation of projects; • Reduced cyclical nature of the programme; • Further simplification and streamlining of the grant management; • Improved ways to address the challenge of applying and implementing EU legislation within the demand-driven programme; • Enhanced Commission's role in facilitating multi-country projects, and sharing of technical support outputs across borders. The number of reasons behind the implementation / not implementation of lessons learned / recommendations, as perceived by representatives of the Commission and national coordinating authorities (*by the type of reason*)		
How successful is the TSI in progressing towards its objectives?					
What are the observed changes in the beneficiary Member States?	Section 4.2.2 • The TSI contributed to changes in the EU Member States on three different levels	The TSI contributes to the strengthening of the individual capacities in Member States	Share of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI contributed to individual capacities in their country *(in %) (by Member State, type*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP** *Ex post* **evaluation:** • Increased knowledge and skills of staff: beneficiary authorities – 90% /	Targeted online survey

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| Are they in line with expectations? | (the individual, organisation and policy level).
• In terms of thematic areas, the TSI contributed to a high extent to the efficient and transparent functioning of public institutions and the digitisation of public services. The TSI also showed an increasing contribution to the thematic field of green transition and climate adaptation compared to its predecessor programme.
• The organisational and policy changes at the national level are resulting from the successful implementation of TSI projects and the effective achievement of their outputs.
• The TSI provided high-quality technical support on the ground and achieved high satisfaction of all programme stakeholders. | **Links to the intervention logic section on outcomes (results) (individual-level outcomes)** *(project level)* | *of stakeholder):*
• Increased knowledge and skills of staff
• Improved contacts and relationships among different stakeholders
• Improved individual adaptability to change
• Improved organisational processes, procedures and methodologies
• Improved capacities for reform/policy formulation, development and implementation (including monitoring and evaluation)
• Improved capacities for the assessment of public service delivery and reorganisation proposals
• Improved capacities for project/change management
• Improved human resource management | national coordinating authorities – 82%
• Improved contacts and relationships: 28% / 82%
• Improved individual adaptability to change: 65% / 68%
• Improved organisational processes, procedures and methodologies: 43% / 82%
• Improved capacities for reform/policy formulation, development and implementation: 70% / 82%
• Improved capacities for the assessment of public service delivery and reorganisation proposals: 51% / 64%
• Improved capacities for project/change management: 57% / 66%
• Improved human resource management: beneficiary authorities 30% / 43% | |
| | | The TSI projects contribute to changes in sectoral policy areas
Links to the intervention logic section on outcomes (results) (policy-level outcomes) *(project level)* | Share of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI contributed to changes in sectoral policy areas *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder):*
• Improved strategies and reform/policy documents
• New legal acts adopted or existing legal acts modified
• Improved application and implementation of EU law
• New or modified 'soft' instruments (e.g. standards, guidelines and recommendations) issued
• Better provision of information and communication to the general population or specific target groups (e.g. consumers or producers)
• Better application of economic instruments (taxes, charges, fees, fines, penalties, liability and compensation schemes, subsidies and incentives, deposit-refund schemes, labelling schemes, tradable permit schemes, etc.)
• New information/knowledge has been produced
• Enhanced sharing of good practices and lessons learned between different EU countries addressing similar | **SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a
SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:
• Improved strategies and reform/policy documents – 70%
• New legal acts adopted or existing legal acts modified – 35%
• Improved application and implementation of EU law – 31%
• New or modified 'soft' instruments issued – 60%
• Better provision of information and communication – 40%
• Better application of economic instruments – 20%
• New information/knowledge has been produced – 82%
• Enhanced sharing of good practices and lessons learned between different EU countries addressing similar situations – 65% | Targeted online survey |

			situations	
		The TSI projects contribute to the design, development and implementation of reforms and policies **Links to the intervention logic section on outcomes (results) (organisation (institution)-level outcomes)** (*project level*)	Share of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI contributed to reforms and policies in their country *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder):* • Green transition and climate adaptation; • Energy supply, including cost of energy (electricity, gas, petrol); • Digitalisation of public services; • Public healthcare system and services; • Education and school services; • Functioning of public institutions (including the judiciary); • Support for businesses (e.g. green loans for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), access to capital markets) • Taxation systems and policies; • Employment, including access, work opportunities, and conditions; • Migration; • Family, housing, social protection; • Education to help with financial decisions in everyday life; • The efficiency and accountability of public institutions; • Defence readiness.	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation[78]:** • Policies supporting climate action: beneficiary authorities – 16% / national coordinating authorities – 59% • Policies supporting health and long-term care: 13% / 59% • Policies supporting skills, education and training: 26% / 87% • Reforms of public administration: 37% / 81% • Judicial reforms: beneficiary authorities 9% / 55% • Product market reforms: 20% / 54% • Labour market reforms: 8% / 54% • Fiscal, tax and pension reforms: 12% / 68% • Policies supporting investment, innovation and private sector development: 29% / 50% • Policies promoting sustainable sectoral development: 25% / 41% • Policies supporting labour market, social services and migration: 12% / 57%	Targeted online survey
		The TSI contributes to changes and developments in Member States (*programme level*)	Share of stakeholders who agree that changes and developments in their country's public institutions, public administration and public policies resulted from the support of TSI *(in %) (by policy area)*	n/a	OPC
To what extent are these changes resulting from the TSI projects?		The outputs produced during the TSI project were further used by Member States to achieve the aims indicated in the request for technical support (*project level*)	• Share of beneficiary authorities that were involved in any follow-up activities *(in %) (by type of follow-up activity, Member State and policy area)* • Share of national coordinating authorities agreeing that the follow-up actions were taken after the project end, building upon the project outputs and results *(in %) (by Member State*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 51% of beneficiary authorities were involved in any follow-up activities • 52% of national coordinating authorities were aware of actions taken after the project end	Targeted online survey

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[78] The values of similar question in the survey of the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP ('To what extent has the SRSP contributed to the following reforms and policies in your country?') will be used as a point of comparison.

			and policy area)		
			Level of capacity of beneficiary authorities (on a scale from 1 to 10) to implement and absorb the recommendations and support provided, as perceived by DG REFORM policy officers	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 8.1	Desk research (*satisfaction questionnaires)*
			Number of the TSI projects analysed in the case study programme that used their outputs to address the problems identified in the request for services[79]	n/a	Case studies: desk research (*national-level document analysis*), interviews (*beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*
		The TSI projects produced the expected outcomes **Links to the intervention logic section on outcomes (results)** (*project level*)	Share of beneficiary authorities who agree that the expected outcomes were achieved by the time of the implementation of the study *(in %) (by type of outcome)*: • the adoption of a strategy, a new law / act or modification of an existing one; • the adoption of (new) procedures and actions to enhance the implementation of reforms; • improved internal working procedures, methodologies and processes, organisation; • organisational change, change management, improved human resource management.	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • the adoption of a strategy, a new law / act or modification of an existing one: 49% • the adoption of (new) procedures and actions to enhance the implementation of reforms: 52% • improved internal working procedures, methodologies and processes, organisation: 61% • organisational change, change management, improved human resource management: 21%	- Targeted online survey
			Share of technical support projects that produced the expected outcomes in 12 months after the project end (*in %*)	Target: 80% (KPI of DG REFORM)[80] • 2020: 70% • 2021: 83% • 2022: 80%	- Desk research (*Annual Reports of DG REFORM)*
			Evidence on differences in terms of green transition results between the EU Member States that are participating and not participating in the TSI	n/a	Case studies: desk research (*requests for technical support, national reform documents and official statistics)*, interviews (*the Commission, beneficiary*

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[79] Request for services, point 2.1.: 'Briefly indicate the support measures envisaged (key outputs/deliverables) (e.g. diagnostic report, comparative analysis, recommendations, feasibility study, technical specifications for an IT tool, guidelines, etc.). Describe how these measures will help to address the problem identified.' Case studies will allow tracing this mechanism.

[80] Key performance indicator 1 / Specific objective 1.1. of DG REFORM. Data used in the DG REFORM Annual Report 2022: REFORM questionnaires to Member States after the projects' completion. Building on the intervention logic, outcomes include: a) the adoption of a strategy, a new law / act or modification of an existing one; b) the adoption of (new) procedures and actions to enhance the implementation of reforms; c) improved internal working procedures, methodologies and processes organisation; d) organisational change, change management, improved human resource management.

					and national coordinating authorities)
		The objectives set in the cooperation and support plans are achieved annually *(programme level)*	Share of the objectives set in the cooperation and support plans, which have been achieved due, inter alia, to the technical support received *(in %)*	Target: 70% (TSI Regulation)	Desk research
		The key stakeholders are satisfied with the quality and results of the technical support provided under the TSI *(project level)*	Beneficiary authorities' and DG REFORM policy officers' perception on the quality of the technical support provided (on a scale from 1 to 10)	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** Beneficiary authorities: 8.6 DG REFORM: 8.9	Desk research (*satisfaction questionnaires*)
			Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who are satisfied with participation in the TSI and the project(s) results *(in %)* (*by Member State, type of project and type of stakeholder*)	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation**[81]**:** 94% of beneficiary authorities satisfied with their participation in the SRSP and with the results of technical support projects	Targeted online survey
To what extent are the TSI projects contributing so far to improve national authorities' institutional and administrative capacities?	**Section 4.2.1** • The TSI successfully pursued its specific objectives by providing most support to the definition and implementation of processes and methodologies and the development and implementation of reform policies. • The TSI played a significant role in supporting the implementation of national RRPs in EU Member States, thus improving the quality of design and implementation of structural and administrative reforms. • The implementation of the TSI improved all types of institutional and administrative capacities: institutional	The TSI contributes to the strengthening of institutional and administrative capacities in Member States **Links to the intervention logic section on objectives** *(project level)*	Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who observe strengthened structures as a result of the implementation of TSI projects *(in %)* (*by type of project, policy area and type of stakeholder*)	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation**: • Beneficiary authorities: 38% • Technical support providers: 64% • National coordinating authorities: 63%	Targeted online survey
			Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who observe strengthened human resources as a result of the implementation of TSI projects *(in %)* (*by type of project, policy area and type of stakeholder*)	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation**: • Beneficiary authorities: 36% • Technical support providers: 60% • National coordinating authorities: 68%	Targeted online survey

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[81] The question was not applicable to national coordinating authorities and technical support providers in the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP.

	structures, human resources, and administrative systems and tools (in particular the application of different administrative systems and tools in national and sub-national administrations). • The PACE flagship, established under the 2023 round of the TSI, allowed creating a European community of civil servants through 'project-based' exchanges		Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who observe strengthened systems and tools as a result of the implementation of TSI projects *(in %) (by type of project, policy area and type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation**: • Beneficiary authorities: 50% • Technical support providers: 72% • National coordinating authorities: 91%	Targeted online survey
**What are the factors driving or hindering the achievement of the expected outcomes and impacts of the TSI projects and why?**				
What are the main challenges in the implementation of TSI projects?	**Section 4.2.3** • There was a good deal of ownership and commitment from Member States' beneficiary authorities to achieve the outputs of technical support. • There are important challenges in accessing necessary information and data from national administrations during the provision of technical support. • Good cooperation between the European Commission, beneficiary authorities and providers of technical support, as well as consultation with different stakeholders during the reform process were the main factors driving the achievement of the programme's results. • A lack of adequate administrative and especially financial capacity constrained the absorption of technical support and the implementation of the associated reforms in EU Member States (outside the direct control of DG REFORM).	Individual factors are perceived as negatively affecting the implementation of the TSI-funded projects **Links to the intervention logic section on impacts and external factors; mechanisms of influence**	Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who perceive individual factors as negatively affecting the delivery of outputs of the TSI projects *(in %) (disaggregated by external factors, indicated in the intervention logic)*: • Cooperation between the European Commission, beneficiary authorities and providers of technical support • Consultation with different stakeholders during the reform process • National/regional ownership of reforms and commitment for them • Partnership between national, regional and local authorities during the reform process • Implementation of structural and/or administrative reforms during the provision of technical support in the country • COVID-19 crisis	n/a[82]	Targeted online survey, interviews *(the Commission, technical support providers, beneficiary authorities)*, focus group discussion
What are the external factors driving or hindering the achievement of the expected outcomes and impacts of TSI projects, and why (in general and per policy area)?		Individual factors are perceived as negatively affecting the achievement of the TSI projects' outcomes	Individual factors negatively/positively affecting achievement of the TSI projects' outcomes and impacts *(by policy area)*	n/a	Interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*, case studies

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[82] No point of comparison is available as the stakeholders were asked to evaluate these factors impact on outputs and outcomes during the *ex post* evaluation of the SRSP.

3. SUSTAINABILITY

SUB-QUESTION	SUMMARY & SECTION	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATOR	POINT OF COMPARISON	DATA SOURCES
**How sustainable are the effects of the reform support projects funded under the SRSP? How could the sustainability of effects be increased?**				
How likely are the effects of the reform support projects funded under the predecessor programme, the SRSP, expected to last after implementation end?	**Section 4.3.1.** • Most beneficiary authorities reported utilising the deliverables from the SRSP and TSI projects to a high or moderate extent after the end of project implementation. This appears to be facilitated especially by the dissemination and exploitation of project results to the main stakeholders. • Member States benefited from SRSP and TSI support by adopting new tools and methods, in some cases leading to significant institutional changes and the implementation of long-term reforms	Achievements, good practices and lessons learned of the SRSP are used after the support was finished (*project level*)	Share of beneficiary authorities who agree that the good practices and lessons learned from the specific technical support project(s) were used after the support was finished *(in %) (by Member State, policy area)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 88% of beneficiary authorities used the good practices/lessons learned after their support was finished	Targeted online survey
			Number of the TSI projects analysed in the case study programme where specific good practices and lessons learned from the specific technical support project(s) were used after the support was finished	n/a	Case studies: desk research (*national-level document analysis and official statistics*), interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*
		Outputs of the SRSP projects contributed to sustainable effects	Share of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities who agree that different types of outputs produced during the SRSP projects are still useful in their Member State *(in %) (by Member State)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
			Usefulness of the project (on a scale from 1 to 10), as perceived by the beneficiary authorities	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 8.87	Desk research (*satisfaction questionnaires*)
			Number of the TSI projects analysed in the case study programme where the outputs of the SRSP projects were used	n/a	Case study on the follow-up of the SRSP projects: desk research (*national-level document analysis and official statistics*), interviews *(the Commission, beneficiary and coordinating authorities)*
		National-level indicators related to the impacts of the SRSP are improving	National-level indicators related to impact of the SRSP[125]	n/a	Case study on the follow-up of the SRSP projects (*requests for technical support, national reform documents and official statistics*)
		SRSP projects are perceived as having long-term impact	Share of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities who agree that SRSP projects have a long-term impact on enhanced implementation of reforms,	n/a	Targeted online survey

			improved internal working procedures, and improved human resource management *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder)*		
What are the external factors affecting (positively or negatively) the sustainability of technical support?	**Section 4.3.3** • Adequate financial resources and stable staffing within beneficiary authorities are crucial for sustaining project outcomes, with staff turnover posing a significant risk to continuity. • Changes in government and political agendas, as well as legal obstacles, can undermine the sustainability of projects, particularly when reforms need adjustments or face implementation challenges. • The absence of a centralised long-term monitoring system limits the ability to track and assess the sustainability of project outcomes effectively.	Individual factors are perceived as positively or negatively affecting the sustainability of technical support	Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who perceive individual factors as positively or negatively affecting the sustainability of technical support *(in %) (by type of stakeholder):* • Access to international expertise under the TSI within the same policy area • Exchange of knowledge and experience among EU Member States • Continued commitment to structural and administrative reforms • Stability of staff in the beneficiary organisation • Adequate financial resources of the beneficiary authorities and other institutions • Dissemination and exploitation of project results to the main relevant stakeholders	n/a	Targeted online survey, case studies: interviews (*the Commission, with beneficiary and national coordinating authorities*), desk research (*national reform documents and official statistics*)
What are the factors within the control of DG REFORM to increase the sustainability of projects' results?	**Section 4.3.2** • Effective dissemination and exploitation of project outputs are essential for maximising sustainability. However, the evaluation indicates that stakeholders' awareness about the deliverables produced by the TSI projects could be further improved. • Knowledge exchange across the EU, such as through projects using Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) as a delivery method and exchanges implemented under PACE project, strengthens the sustainability of the TSI projects by building informal communities and fostering ongoing collaboration between Member States. • Ongoing support from DG REFORM during and after the TSI project implementation is crucial for sustaining reforms but maintaining it after the end of the project remains a challenge.	Mechanisms are in place to ensure the continuity and sustainability of reforms initiated under SRSP	Number of existing linkages between the mandate of DG REFORM in the implementation of the TSI and its possibilities to increase the sustainability of projects' results Number of measures and tools used by DG REFORM to monitor, evaluate and disseminate the project's results after their end	n/a	Desk research (*TSI Regulation, Annual Work Programmes and Activity Reports of DG REFORM, TSI annual reports*), interviews (*the Commission, national coordinating authorities*), focus group discussion

4. EFFICIENCY

QUESTION	SUMMARY & SECTION	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATOR	POINT OF COMPARISON	DATA SOURCES
To what extent was the TSI efficient in achieving its objectives?					
How are implementation bottlenecks identified in previous evaluations of the predecessor programme SRSP, tackled and addressed by the TSI?	**Section 4.4.1** The TSI's implementation structure and procedures were largely built on the experience and procedures developed under the SRSP. DG REFORM took steps to address the lessons learned and suggestions for improvements identified in previous evaluations of the predecessor programme SRSP.	Implementation bottlenecks identified in the previous evaluations of the SRSP were addressed to improve the implementation of the TSI	The number (and extent) of implementation bottlenecks identified in the previous evaluations of the SRSP that have been addressed to improve the implementation of the TSI[126]	n/a	Desk research (*mid-term and ex post evaluation of the SRSP, Annual Work Programmes and Activity Reports of DG REFORM*), interviews *(the Commission, technical support providers, beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*
How time-efficient is the TSI as regards the process duration from request submission by Member States to the completion of the technical support on the ground (including extensions and amendments)?	**Section 4.4.2** • DG REFORM achieved very good results in the timely selection of requests for support. The average time from the application deadline to the financing decision was approximately four months during the 2021-2024 period, substantially below the applicable time-to-inform target of six months set out in the Financial Regulation. • The total time span between the application deadline and the commencement of the technical support was approximately 11 months under TSI 2021-2023 rounds. A shorter time period between the application and the actual start of the project is crucial for project success. It is therefore important to devote further efforts to accelerating the start of projects.	The TSI administrative procedures were timely	The average duration of: a) the evaluation and selection procedures of the technical support projects; b) preparation for implementation of the technical support projects; c) implementation of technical support projects *(in months)*	Time-to-inform target set in Article 194.2(a) of the Financial Regulation: 6 months[83] **SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** • Selection process (time-to-inform): 5 months on average • Preparation for implementation: 6 months on average • Implementation: 6-18 months on average **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation**: Selection process (time-to-inform): 4 months on average	Desk research *(monitoring system of DG REFORM)*
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that selection process was implemented in a timely manner *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 86% of national coordinating authorities and 91% of beneficiary authorities	Targeted online survey
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that preparation for implementation process was implemented in a timely manner *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** 77% of beneficiary authorities **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 66% of national coordinating authorities and 87% of beneficiary authorities	

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[83] This Article of the 2018 Financial Regulation refers to grants and was used as a benchmark in the previous evaluations of the SRSP for comparison purposes.

			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the project was implemented in a timely manner *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** 93% of beneficiary authorities **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 89% of national coordinating authorities, 93% of beneficiary authorities	
		The duration of the project implementation was sufficient to implement its activities	Share of beneficiary, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers agree that the project duration was appropriate *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 96% of beneficiary authorities • 90% of national coordinating authorities • 82% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey
			Technical support providers and DG REFORM policy officers' perception on how realistic the timeline for the implementation of technical support projects is (on the scale from 1 to 10*) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 7.9 (technical support providers) • 8.4 (DG REFORM)	Desk research (*satisfaction questionnaires*)
		TSI is flexible for changing conditions of the project implementation	Number and share of projects that were amended/extended *(by year)*	n/a	Targeted online survey, desk research (*TSI Annual report 2021-2022*)
			The number of reasons behind projects amendment or extension, as perceived by representatives of the Commission and national coordinating authorities	n/a	Interviews *(the Commission, national coordinating authorities)*
To what extent is the governance of the TSI and administrative procedures efficient? How efficient is the cooperation with external providers and other Commission Services? In particular, how efficient is the governance of TSI multi-country projects?	Section 4.4.3 • The programme stakeholders were generally positive about the clarity, transparency and user-friendliness of the TSI administration procedures and the proportionality of the administrative burden. An area for improvement relates to projects' monitoring. • The cooperation and interaction between technical support providers and beneficiary authorities has been largely effective. Both beneficiary authorities and technical support providers valued the support provided by DG REFORM policy officers. Such cooperation was regarded as crucial for the successful implementation of the TSI projects. • The residual error rate estimated for the TSI was below the materiality threshold of 2%, which indicates that suitable control arrangements were put in place	The governance of the TSI is perceived as efficient	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the procedures of application and selection of requests for funding were clear, transparent and user-friendly *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 95% of beneficiary authorities • 81% of national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey, interviews *(with the Commission, beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*
			Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who agree that the monitoring of the project(s) was clear, transparent and user-friendly *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 97% of beneficiary authorities • 80% of national coordinating authorities • 94% of technical support providers	
			Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who agree that the evaluation procedures and processes after the completion of the project(s) were clear, transparent and user-friendly *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 92% of beneficiary authorities • 74% of national coordinating authorities • 89% of technical support providers	

and are effective		Existence of clearly defined and enacted roles and responsibilities of the key stakeholders (DG REFORM and other Commission services, technical support providers, beneficiary and national coordinating authorities) involved in the project implementation	n/a	Case studies: desk research *(project work plans, cooperation and support agreements, TSI Regulation)*, interviews *(the Commission technical support providers, beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*
	Delivery methods were suitable for the implementation of projects	Share of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who agree that the delivery methods selected for the projects were efficient and met their implementation needs *(in %) (by type of project, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 99% of beneficiary authorities • 63% of national coordinating authorities • 91% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey, case studies *(interviews with beneficiary and national coordinating authorities, technical support providers)*
	The administrative burden of the TSI is perceived as proportional	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that administrative burden related to the submission of requests was proportionate *(in %) (by type of project, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 95% of beneficiary authorities • 95% of national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey
		Share of beneficiary, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who agree that the administrative burden related to implementation of the project(s)/coordination activities was proportionate *(in %) (by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 96% of beneficiary authorities • 95% of national coordinating authorities • 84% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey
	Cooperation with stakeholders of the TSI projects was efficient **Links to the intervention logic section on inputs and administrative costs**	Share of beneficiary authorities who agree that the providers of technical support have the required expertise and skills *(in %)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 88%	Targeted online survey
		Technical support providers have sufficient skills to provide the agreed support (on the scale from 1 to 10), as perceived by beneficiary authorities and DG REFORM policy officers	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** Beneficiary authorities: 8.6 DG REFORM: 9.0	Desk research *(satisfaction questionnaires)*
		Share of beneficiary authorities and technical support providers who agree that support provided by DG REFORM officers has been useful *(in %) (by policy area, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 89% of beneficiary authorities • 92% of technical support providers	Targeted online survey
	Financial management and control procedures ensured legality and regularity of the	Residual error rate	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** <2% of relevant expenditure	Desk research *(Annual Activity Report of DG REFORM)*

		TSI expenditure			
To what extent was the TSI cost-effective in reaching its objectives?					
To what extent is the total annual budget of the TSI proportionate compared to the amount of requests for support submitted by the Member States, in general and per policy area? To what extent the TSI programme was cost-effective in reaching its objectives?	**Section 4.4.4** The 2021-2023 TSI implementation rounds revealed a high demand for TSI support, which ensured a sufficient level of competition and the selection of high-quality proposals. However, the number of the TSI projects was limited both by the internal capacity of DG REFORM and the allocated TSI budget. The costs of controls were in line with the DG REFORM target and comparable with the other EU programmes.	The demand for technical support is satisfied	Ratio of submitted and selected requests for support *(by Member State, policy area)*	• 2017 – 59% • 2018 – 33% • 2019 – 45% • 2020 – 37%	Desk research *(monitoring and administrative data)*
How efficient is the budget execution from commitments to payments?	**Section 4.4.5.** DG REFORM has achieved good results in the execution of TSI-related commitment appropriations. The amount of payments has grown in line with the progress of project implementation.	The budget execution is efficient from commitments to payments **Links to the intervention logic section on inputs and administrative costs**	Implementation rate of TSI-related commitment appropriations *(commitment appropriations implemented and execution rate)*	• 2017 – EUR 22.5 million (100%) • 2018 – EUR 29.35 million (100%) • 2019 – EUR 78.68 million (100%) • 2020 – EUR 83.97 million (100%)	Desk research *(monitoring system of DG REFORM)*
			Implementation rate of TSI-related payment appropriations *(payment appropriations implemented and execution rate)*	• 2017 – EUR 2.63 million (67%) • 2018 – EUR 15.23 million (97%) • 2019 – EUR 34.62 million (99%) • 2020 – EUR 54.65 million (100%)	Desk research *(monitoring system of DG REFORM)*
			Share of payments processed within the set time limits	2017 – 79% 2020 – 96% 2021 – 98%	Desk research *(monitoring system of DG REFORM)*
How cost-effective are the projects funded under the TSI? Have any inefficiencies been identified?	**Section 4.4.6** • The average budget per selected request for support under TSI 2021-2023 rounds of general calls has increased further, reflecting the tendencies already observed under the SRSP. The higher average budget of technical support projects was related to the broader and more significant reforms supported under the programme and a growing share of multi-country projects. • The stakeholders generally agreed that the financial allocation to TSI projects was proportionate to the needs of technical support. • Although TSI projects do not require co-	The TSI projects are cost-effective **Links to the intervention logic section on inputs and administrative costs**	Implementation costs of the TSI at the national administration level: • Person-days spent to prepare the TSI request for technical support • Person-days spent for administrative tasks of project implementation	n/a	Targeted online survey
			Implementation costs *(cost of controls)* of the TSI at the DG REFORM level	**Over time:** • 2018 – 6.7% of the payments executed • 2019 – 4.8% • 2020 – 4.5% **With other programme management costs:** the programme management costs of the Commission's Executive Agencies on	Desk research *(monitoring system of DG REFORM)*

financing from the Member States, applicants and beneficiary authorities allocate their human resources for the preparation of requests for technical support and the execution of administrative and technical tasks related to project implementation. Similarly, the coordinating authorities assign their personnel to coordinate the TSI within the Member States. These total annual costs incurred by the Member States amounted to approximately EUR 11.4 million, representing around 9.4% of the TSI annual budget.				average constituted 4.25% in 2020	
			Budget 'per head' of the DG REFORM staff	**Over time:** • Administrative staff - EUR 2.8 million in 2020 • All staff - EUR 0.6 million in 2020 **With other Commission DGs and services:** Budget 'per head' of administrative staff of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EUR 2.1 million), the Consumers, Health, Agriculture and Food Executive Agency (EUR 2.3 million) and the Research Executive Agency (EUR 3.3 million)	Desk research *(monitoring system of DG REFORM)*
	The annual budget of the programme (per TSI cycle) is proportionate to the requests for support submitted by Member States	Average budget dedicated for a selected request for support	• 2017 – EUR 142 000 • 2018 – EUR 209 000 • 2019 – EUR 302 000 • 2020 – EUR 372 000		Desk research *(monitoring and administrative data)*
		Share of beneficiary, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers who agree that the financial contribution of the TSI was proportionate to the needs/scope of technical support *(by type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation**: n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • Beneficiary authorities – 93% • National coordinating authorities – 89% • Technical support providers – 80%		Targeted online survey
	No obvious inefficiencies or wasted resources in programme management	Adequacy of the human resources available for the programme management to ensure its smooth implementation		n/a	Desk research *(Annual work programmes and reports of DG REFORM)*, interviews *(the Commission)*
		Adequacy of the IT and other resources available for the programme management to ensure its smooth implementation			
		Existence of overlaps in management functions, needs for simplification, streamlining of processes, clarification of roles and responsibilities			Desk research *(mid-term and ex post evaluation of the SRSP, Annual Work Programmes and Activity Reports of DG REFORM, TSI annual reports)*, interviews *(the Commission)*, focus group discussion

5. COHERENCE

QUESTION	SUMMARY & SECTION	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATOR	POINT OF COMPARISON	DATA SOURCES

**To what extent is the TSI externally and internally coherent?**				
To what extent are the projects funded under the TSI (internally) coherent and operating together to achieve TSI objectives as set out in the Regulation?	**Section 4.5.1** • The internal coherence of the TSI is ensured by the functioning of a two-tier institutional mechanism (check of requests for technical support by coordinating authorities and the Commission services), which helps avoid double funding. • Limited evidence on the existence of collaborative mechanisms and synergies between the TSI projects points to the need of further improvements in terms of internal coherence of the programme, which would help turning individual projects into a network of reforms, contributing to strategic aims of a particular policy field.	There are no clear overlaps between the TSI projects	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that there are synergies between different TSI projects implemented or currently under implementation in the Member State *(in %)* *(by Member State, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	Targeted online survey, interviews *(the Commission, beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*, focus group discussion
			Existence of collaborative mechanisms and communication channels among beneficiary authorities engaged in the TSI projects		Interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*, focus group discussions
			Existence of synergies/overlaps between projects, contributing to the achievement of the TSI objectives		Case studies: desk research (*TSI country factsheets, national reform programmes*), interviews (*beneficiary and national coordinating authorities*), focus group discussions
To what extent is the TSI (externally) coherent with other interventions with similar objectives at regional, national and EU level, such as technical assistance through structural and investment funds, and enhancement of rule of law? Have synergies been created with other interventions?	**Section 4.5.2** • The TSI is externally coherent with other interventions with similar objectives at the EU level. It has also become increasingly recognised within the Commission, leading to its integration into EU legislation as a support measure for the implementation of EU laws and policies. • With the increasing availability of the Commission instruments and programmes (e.g. TAIEX, technical assistance under the European Social Fund +) dedicated for similar objectives as the ones of the TSI, additional guidance is relevant for Member States and individual authorities to choose and/or combine instruments that are the most suitable for their reform needs. • Compared to the SRSP, the TSI demonstrates increased complementarity with similar regional or national-level programmes.	There is complementarity between the TSI and other interventions with similar objectives on the EU level **Links to the intervention logic section on EU priorities, other EU programmes and instruments**	Existence of synergies/overlaps between the TSI and other interventions with similar objectives on the EU level (e.g. ComPAct, RRF, Digital Europe, Policy Support Facility)	n/a	Desk research (*documents establishing and regulating individual instruments/programmes*)
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI complements technical assistance provided through the European Structural and Investment Funds *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 29% beneficiary authorities • 40% national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI complements interventions enhancing institutional capacity of public authorities and stakeholders and efficient public administration supported by the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 28% beneficiary authorities • 40% national coordinating authorities	
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI complements modernisation of labour market institutions (supported by the	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 12% beneficiary authorities • 35% national coordinating	

			European Social Fund) and investing in infrastructure for employment services (supported by the European Regional Development Fund) *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, type of stakeholder)*	authorities	
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI complements strengthening sustainability and resilience of economies and societies as well as the preparation for the green and digital transitions (supported by the Recovery and Resilience Facility) *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	
			Share of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI complements bringing digital technology to businesses, citizens and public administrations (supported by Digital Europe Programme) *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	
			Existence of coordination mechanisms among the Commission DGs/units responsible for relevant programmes	n/a	Desk research (*Annual Work Programmes and Reports of respective DGs, regulations and other documents regulating the implementation of particular instruments*), interviews (*the Commission*)
		There is complementarity between the TSI and other interventions with similar objectives on regional and national level	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI complement actions of similar national and regional programmes *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 54% beneficiary authorities • 50% national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey
			Existence of synergies/overlaps between the TSI and other interventions with similar objectives on regional and national level (e.g. by addressing the same issues, target groups, aiming at the same objectives, etc.)	n/a	Case studies: interviews (*beneficiary and national coordinating authorities*), desk research (*documents establishing and regulating individual instruments/programmes identified during interviews*)

To what extent are TSI projects contributing to various circumstances of the request for technical support?				
To what extent is the TSI consistent with the preparation, implementation and revision of recovery and resilience plans? Have synergies been created?	**Section 4.5.3** • High level of synergies was developed between the TSI and the RRF. This was facilitated by the continuous communication between SG RECOVER, DG REFORM and DG ECFIN, given the synergies between the TSI, RRF and the European Semester. • The performance-oriented nature of the RRF increases the possibility to use deliverables produced during the TSI projects linked to the implementation of the national RRPs.	TSI projects contribute to successful preparation, implementation and revision of RRPs	Share of TSI projects that contribute to the implementation of RRPs	Target: at least 6 per year (KPI of DG REFORM[127]) • 2020 – n/a • 2021 – 128 • 2022 – 108	Desk research (*Annual Reports of DG REFORM*)
			Share of the TSI projects dedicated for the general capacity-building support for the preparation/ implementation of RRPs	• 2020 – 6 • 2021 – 24 • 2022 – 5	
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI projects contributed to the preparation, implementation and revision of RRPs *(in %) (by project type, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
		TSI projects contributed to the implementation of REPowerEU	Number and share of the TSI projects supporting the implementation of REPowerEU	n/a	Desk research (*monitoring and administrative data*)
To what extent is the TSI consistent with and integrated in the European Semester (e.g. to which extent is it contributing to the design and implementation of the country-specific recommendations)?	**Section 4.5.4** • The TSI is strongly linked to the European Semester as the requests for support are expected to outline their contribution to reforms in the context of the economic governance process and are prioritised based on their contribution to the design and implementation of CSRs. • The TSI projects addressed the CSRs issued in the context of the European Semester to a high or a moderate extent. However, there is a need to improve the monitoring of the TSI's contribution to the European Semester process, allowing it to be better explained which projects and how to contribute to the implementation of CSRs.	The TSI projects address the European Semester recommendations	Share of the TSI projects linked to the implementation of CSRs	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** 45% **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 58%	Desk research (*monitoring and administrative data*)
			Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI projects address the European Semester recommendations *(in %) (by project type, policy area, Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 74% beneficiary authorities • 90% national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey
			Share of CSRs with some or full/substantial progress in their implementation (*in %*) (*by year*)	**2015[128]:** • Some progress: 44.2% of CSRs • Full/substantial progress: 4.2% of CSRs **2019:** • Some progress: 38.7% of CSRs • Full/substantial progress: 1.1% of CSRs	Desk research (*European Parliament, 2020. Country-specific recommendations: An overview [129]*)
To what extent are TSI projects contributing to the achievement of EU priorities?	**Section 4.5.5** • The TSI coherence with the EU priorities is most pronounced in the fields of economic development, as well as green and digital transitions, which also results from the complementarity with the RRF. • Findings of the publicly available	There are mechanisms in place to link TSI projects with the EU priorities	Number of mechanisms in place to ensure annual, dedicated and flagship projects calls' compliance with the EU priorities	n/a	Desk research (*Request for technical support form, Annual Work Programmes and Activity Reports of DG REFORM*), interviews
		The TSI projects contribute to the EU priorities **Links to**	Share of the TSI projects linked to the achievement of EU priorities (*in %*)	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** 28% **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 30%	Desk research (*administrative and monitoring information*)

information (i.e. projects' descriptions, country factsheets and deliverables) analysis with the OSDG tool suggest that the TSI has been contributing to all UN SDGs, with the most significant contribution to the fields of economic growth, strengthening of institutions and enhancing the quality of education.	**the intervention logic section on EU priorities, other EU programmes and instruments**	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI projects contribute to the development of a strong and vibrant economic base *(in %)* *(by project type, policy area, Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 45% of beneficiary authorities • 67% of national coordinating authorities	Targeted online survey
		Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI projects contribute to building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe *(in %)* *(by project type, policy area, Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 32% of beneficiary authorities • 77% of national coordinating authorities	
		Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the TSI projects contribute to the protection of citizens and freedoms *(in %)* *(by project type, policy area, Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** • 21% of beneficiary authorities • 31% of national coordinating authorities	
	The TSI projects contribute to horizontal priorities	Share of TSI projects contributing to horizontal priorities *(in %)*: Green transition Digital transition Equality	n/a	Desk research (*TSI Annual Reports)*
		Budget contributions to horizontal priorities (green, digital and gender elements)		Desk research (*TSI performance report*)
		Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that horizontal priorities (green, digital and equality/gender elements) are integrated in their projects *(in %)* *(by project type, policy area, Member State, type of stakeholder)*		Targeted online survey
	The TSI projects contribute to the UN SDGs	Classification of TSI country factsheets in terms of contribution to SDGs *(with PPMI-developed OSDG tool: https://osdg.ai/)*	n/a	Desk research (*country factsheets*)
		Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that the UN SDGs are integrated in their projects *(in %)* *(by project type, policy area, Member State)*		Targeted online survey

6. EU ADDED VALUE

QUESTION	SUMMARY & SECTION	JUDGEMENT CRITERIA	INDICATOR	POINT OF COMPARISON	DATA SOURCES
**What is the additional value resulting from the TSI compared to what could have been achieved by Member States?**				
What is the additional value resulting from the TSI compared to what could reasonably have been achieved by Member States acting at a local, regional and/or national level without EU support?	**Section 4.6.1** • The TSI offers tailored solutions and international expertise that is typically unavailable at local, regional, or national levels, filling gaps and addressing specific needs that Member States would struggle to meet alone. • The TSI is favoured by beneficiary authorities due to its low administrative burden and the absence of a requirement for financial contributions, making it a preferred and unique tool for supporting reforms. • By leveraging international expertise, the TSI enhances the credibility and acceptance of reforms, boosting their legitimacy and visibility on both national and EU levels.	Technical support similar to the TSI was not available on national, regional or local level	Share of beneficiary authorities who agree that no similar technical support (e.g. in terms of addressing the same issues, target groups, aiming at the same objectives) was available on national, regional or local level *(in %) (by project type, policy area, Member State, type of stakeholder)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 80%	Targeted online survey
		The results of the TSI projects could not have been achieved without TSI support	Stakeholders agree that their Member State was not able to implement changes without TSI support *(in %) (by Member State)*	n/a	OPC
		There are characteristics distinguishing the TSI from other programmes on national, regional or local level	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities who agree that there are characteristics distinguishing the TSI from other programmes (e.g. international expertise, collaboration with other Member States, tailored support, legitimisation) *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	Targeted online survey, interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*, desk research *(on particular programmes identified during the interviews)*
		TSI projects enhance the implementation of agreed reforms	Share of stakeholders who agree that the EU can best support their country in achieving important reforms by raising political awareness and supporting the implementation of agreed reforms *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	OPC
What was the additional added value in the case of TSI projects to prepare, amend, revise and implement the recovery and resilience plans?	**Section 4.6.2** The TSI provided critical support to Member States in preparing, revising, and implementing their RRPs, particularly in project management and governance, areas not sufficiently covered by other support mechanisms	Similar technical support on national, regional or local level was not available to prepare, amend, revise and implement the recovery and resilience plans	Share of beneficiary authorities who agree that no similar technical support was available on national, regional or local level to prepare, amend, revise and implement the recovery and resilience plans *(in %) (by Member State, type of stakeholder, type of project)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
			TSI projects had an added value to prepare, amend, revise and implement the recovery and resilience plans compared to the capacities of the national administrations, as perceived by beneficiary and national coordinating authorities	n/a	Case studies interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities)*, focus group discussion

To what extent are support measures / own initiatives proposed by DG REFORM under the TSI (e.g. flagship support projects), adding value to better exploit synergies across Member States?	**Section 4.6.3** • TSI projects are widely recognised as exceeding what individual Member States can achieve alone, particularly by fostering synergies and enabling more impactful reforms. • Stand-alone TSI projects are perceived to deliver greater EU added value than what beneficiary authorities could achieve independently, with their value primarily linked to contributions to national priorities rather than broader EU-wide impacts.	TSI projects are facilitating exploitation of synergies across Member States	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI projects contribute to the exploitation of synergies across Member States *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
			Share of stakeholders who agree that the EU can best support their country in achieving important reforms by supporting the management of a crisis or a major challenge (e.g. pandemics, natural disasters, conflicts) or the recovery after it *(in %) (by Member State)*	n/a	OPC
			Existence of synergies across Member States, resulting from engagement in the TSI projects (esp. under dedicated calls or flagship support projects)	n/a	Case studies: interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities),* focus group discussion
What is the added value of the TSI in supporting the twin digital and green transitions?	**Section 4.6.4** • The TSI is widely recognised for its role in supporting the twin digital and green transitions. • Flagship projects align with EU priorities, driving regulatory compliance and sustainability goals across Member States.	The TSI is perceived as having added value in supporting the twin digital and green transitions *(links to judgement criteria on coherence: The TSI projects contribute to horizontal priorities)*	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI projects contribute to the twin digital and green transitions *(in %) (by type of project, policy area, type of stakeholder)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
			Share of stakeholders who agree that the EU can best support their country in achieving important reforms by supporting the twin digital and green transitions *(in %) (by Member State)*	n/a	OPC
			Member States engaged in the TSI projects reach better results in the field of green budgeting compared to non-engaged countries	Scores of the Green Budgeting Database survey in 2021-2023	Case studies: interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities),* desk research (Green Budgeting Database survey*),* focus group discussion
**To what extent does the expected EU added value of the TSI materialise?**					
To what extent is the TSI producing cross-border or Union-wide impacts in the areas of intervention? In	**Section 4.6.5** • The TSI projects produced cross-border and Union-wide impacts, improving cooperation and knowledge sharing across Member States. Multi-country projects are seen as valuable for their	The TSI projects contribute to cross-border/Union-wide impacts	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI projects help to address cross-border/Union-wide impacts *(in %) (by type of project, type of stakeholders)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 72% (national coordinating authorities)[130]	Targeted online survey

particular, what is the added value of multi-country or multi-region projects?	ability to tackle broader, cross-border challenges while enhancing collaboration and the sharing of good practices among the participating countries.		Existence of cross-border or Union-wide impacts (e.g. contribution to green transition: improved energy efficiency, use of renewable energy sources, implementation of climate adaptation measures) produced by the TSI projects	n/a	Case studies: interviews *(the Commission, beneficiary and national coordinating authorities),* focus group discussion
To what extent is the TSI contributing to the implementation of EU law and policies, including the promotion of European values and principles, such as equity and solidarity?	**Section 4.6.5** • The majority of coordinating and beneficiary authorities agreed that the TSI projects contribute significantly to the implementation of EU law and the promotion of European values with evidence showing that the flagship projects are very effective in this regard.	The TSI projects contribute to the implementation of EU law and policies	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers agree that the TSI projects contribute to the implementation of EU law and policies *(in %) (by type of project, type of stakeholders)*	**SRSP Mid-term evaluation:** n/a **SRSP *Ex post* evaluation:** 68% (national coordinating authorities)[131]	Targeted online survey
			Share of stakeholders who agree that the EU can best support their country in achieving important reforms by helping their public administration with expertise, knowledge and practical experience in the implementation of reforms in a specific sector *(in %) (by Member State)*	n/a	OPC
To what extent is the TSI contributing to the exchange of lessons learned and good practices among national / regional administrations, and to building a Union-wide platform and network of expertise?	**Section 4.6.5** • The TSI effectively built a community of experts and sustained cooperation among Member States through its continuous engagement and multi-country projects.	The TSI projects contribute to the exchange of lessons, good practices and creation of network of expertise	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI projects contribute to the exchange of lessons, good practices and creation of network of expertise *(in %) (by type of project, type of stakeholders)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
			Share of stakeholders who agree that the EU can best support their country in achieving important reforms by encouraging learning from other countries' experience in implementing similar reforms *(in %) (by Member State)*	n/a	OPC
To what extent are the flagship and multi-country projects promoting the creation of a community of experts and fostering a continuous cooperation among		The TSI projects contribute to the creation of a community of experts and fostering a continuous cooperation among the Member States	Share of beneficiary and national coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers who agree that the TSI contributes to the creation of a community of experts and fostering a continuous cooperation among the Member States *(in %) (by type of project, type of stakeholders)*	n/a	Targeted online survey
			Existence of continuous cooperation among the Member States that were involved in flagship and/or multi-country/multi-region	n/a	Case studies: interviews *(beneficiary and national coordinating authorities),* focus

the Member States?			projects outside the scope or duration of their implementation		group discussion

TSI Cost Overview

The implementation of the TSI incurred both direct financial charges to the EU budget and administrative expenses at the programme and project levels.

Financial costs to the EU budget

Based on the TSI programme performance statement, the TSI led to EUR 355.7 million in commitment appropriations and EUR 193.3 million in payment appropriations from 2021 to 2023. With high demand for TSI funding, nearly all commitment appropriations were utilised during this period. Given that TSI projects typically take about two years to complete, the executed payment appropriations rose from EUR 26.4 million in 2021 to EUR 60.0 million in 2022 and further to EUR 106.9 million in 2023.

Administrative costs of DG REFORM

Between 2021 and 2023, DG REFORM allocated an average of 161 staff members to provide technical support, with 45 dedicated to administering programmes. The estimated annual staff expenses, including overheads such as infrastructure and operational costs, were approximately EUR 21.6 million. This calculation was done by the external study, based on the average costs set by DG BUDG for the estimates of human resources and overheads in legislative financial statements for 2021 and on the assumption that 75% of staff are officials and 25% are contractual agents. It accounts

In 2022, the budget per administrative staff member responsible for managing technical support was estimated at EUR 2.8 million in commitments and EUR 2.2 million in payments, closely matching those of the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. For all involved DG REFORM staff, including policy officers directing the projects, the budget per person was significantly lower, with EUR 0.8 million in commitments and EUR 0.6 million in payments. This difference could be attributed to DG REFORM's deeper involvement in project execution than that of the Commission's executive agencies. Both beneficiaries and technical support providers highly valued the contributions of DG REFORM policy officers, considered essential for the efficient execution of TSI projects. Over the review period, the budget for technical support overseen by DG REFORM grew notably more compared to the increase in staff numbers.

As indicated in the annual activity reports, the total cost of controls by DG REFORM was 4.2% of payments in 2021 and 2022, decreasing to 3.7% in 2023, aligning with the management plan's target to keep control costs under 5% of payments made annually. The control costs relative to total annual payments decreased over time compared to the previous evaluation period, despite an increase in the overall payments made. These control costs at DG

REFORM were consistent with other EU programmes. For example, the average programme management costs for the Commission's Executive Agencies were 2.93% in 2022. These costs varied, from 0.82% for the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency to 5.03% for the European Education and Culture Executive Agency, depending on the nature of the programmes managed by each agency. Similarly, the Commission's administrative costs can account for up to 5% of the Horizon Europe budget.

Administrative costs to Member States

TSI projects do not need funding from Member States, so they have no direct financial cost, except for voluntary contributions under Article 7 of the TSI Regulation. DG REFORM manages finances and contracts, but applicants and authorities use their staff to prepare support requests and handle project tasks. Coordinating authorities also assign staff to manage TSI projects within Member States.

Based on the targeted survey, calculations of the external supporting study indicate that beneficiary authorities spend on average 13.9 person-days to prepare a TSI technical support request, costing on average EUR 3.5 thousand considering the average hourly labour costs in the EU. With the typical number of requests from 2021-2023, this preparation costs Member States approximately EUR 2.2 million annually, around 1.8% of the TSI annual budget. Beneficiary Authorities also devote 100.5 person-days to administrative tasks for each TSI project, averaging EUR 25.6 thousand in costs per project. Overall, Member States spend an estimated EUR 7.3 million annually on these tasks, about 6.1% of the TSI annual budget. Coordinating authorities allocate approximately 1.1 full-time equivalents, representing EUR 69.4 thousand per Member State each year, totalling EUR 1.9 million across all Member States (about 1.6% of the TSI annual budget).

According to the calculations of the supporting external study based on the values reported in the targeted survey, collectively, Member States invest roughly 358 thousand working hours that represent approximatively EUR 11.4 million annually on TSI-related activities, making up about 9.4% of the TSI budget. As reported in the section of efficiency, stakeholders find the TSI programme user-friendly with minimal administrative burden.

Benefits of the TSI

Direct benefits for beneficiary authorities

TSI projects enhance national and sub-national administrative capacities, leading to improved practices and better human resource management. As shown in the targeted survey, 94% of beneficiary authorities acknowledged receiving outputs, while 83% reported high or moderate use of these deliverables. According to DG REFORM's annual activity report 2023, over 80% of technical support projects (both TSI and SRSP) met expected the expected outcomes within a year of completion. A majority (98%) of surveyed authorities observed improved quality in reforms since the start of the TSI, with 90% rating results as excellent or good.

As evidenced in the targeted for national coordinating and beneficiary authorities, most respondents (98% or 84 out of 86) perceive an improvement in the quality of design and implementation of structural and administrative reforms in the beneficiary countries since the TSI began. Additionally, results from the targeted survey indicate that most coordinating authorities (90% or 28 out of 31) rated the overall implementation of the TSI in their country as excellent or good.

Direct benefits for citizens

Improvements in the capacity of public administrations to design and implement reforms have an impact in the quality and sustainability of service delivered to citizens as well in the functioning of the market. As indicated in the introduction, some of the limitations of the mid-term evaluation is that the longer-term impacts of the support can only be observable in the Member States after some years, and under the condition of the actual implementation of the specific reforms. Nevertheless, interviews of the case studies highlighted important benefits already perceived by citizens as follows:

- The Financial Sector & Access to Finance case study shows TSI's direct impact on citizens by providing accessible and organised resources on finance, law, and AI–areas with limited online guidance. The free e-book and YouTube videos helped citizens understand new EU regulations on crypto-assets and ICT risks, cutting through the technological complexities. This heightened awareness of risks, especially related to ICT and crypto-assets, thus decreasing citizens' vulnerability to cybersecurity threats and financial instability.

- The case study on digital education and skills illustrates that technical support facilitated digital education reforms in several Member States. Croatia, for example, introduced new procedures for assessing digital maturity, enhancing strategic planning for digital education initiatives. This project influenced the national digital education strategy, offering citizens broader access to higher education and narrowing the digital divide. In Slovakia, TSI support led to a methodology for curricular and digital transformation reforms, providing schools with a structured framework for reform implementation, thereby having an impact on the quality of the education offered.

- According to the case study on SRSP follow-up projects, TSI support aided the development of the Cooperative Compliance Programme, enhancing tax compliance through increased collaboration, trust, and transparency between taxpayers and administrations. This benefits citizens, as a fair tax system boosts trust in public institutions and reduces tax evasion. The same study indicates that SRSP and TSI support for health reforms in Austria enhanced citizens' access to quality healthcare by establishing 75 primary healthcare units and implementing robust data-sharing frameworks. These measures improved the efficiency, resilience, and preventive care aspects of health services.

Direct benefits for businesses

Improving the capacity of public administrations to implement reforms can significantly impact business. For instance, enhanced clarity and consistency of the regulatory framework reduces uncertainty and facilitates business environment. Streamlined administrative process reduces bureaucracy and can

lower operational costs for businesses. As noted in the Commission report delivering on reforms, the TSI has aided Member States in cultivating competitive economies. These efforts focus on simplifying administrative processes to facilitate business operations, lowering market barriers, evaluating and strengthening financial markets – especially capital markets – and reducing regulatory and tax pressures on businesses. Additionally, they aim to stimulate the digital economy and innovation and enhance the sustainability of ecosystems, such as tourism[84]. As evidenced in the TSI 2023 Annual Report that provides an overview on how the TSI has supported Member States on competitiveness along nine competitiveness drivers identified in the 'Single Market at 30' Communication and the 2024 annual single market and competitiveness report, the TSI has provided significant contribution to competitiveness supporting European business in driving Member States' economies creating jobs, cohesion innovation and prosperity[85]. More specifically, through the case studies, the external study supporting the mid-term evaluation has provided evidence on direct benefits perceived by business as follows:

- According to the case study on sustainable growth & business environment, the TSI support to REPowerEU supported businesses by enhancing energy security and stabilising energy prices amid geopolitical tensions. By assisting governments in moving away from dependence on Russian oil and gas, it averted potential supply disruptions that could have impacted energy-intensive sectors. Moreover, the TSI supported efforts to expand the use of renewable energy, biomethane, and hydrogen production, which helped to manage rising energy cost and protect business competitiveness.

- As evidenced by the case study on SRSP follow-up projects, the TSI's support for the Cooperative Compliance Programme in Belgium and Poland addressed the need to streamline tax administration and make it more business-friendly. The programme benefits businesses by lowering compliance costs, increasing tax certainty, simplifying administrative procedures, building trust and cooperation with tax authorities, and fostering long-term growth through better risk management and transparency. Additionally, the TSI project in Poland focusing on the Capital Market Development Strategy offered advantages to businesses by crafting a more favourable regulatory framework. This included drafting legal acts and conducting market analyses, alongside supporting innovation and introducing pro-Fintech solutions. These efforts contributed to improve businesses' access to diverse and efficient funding sources.

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[84] DG REFORM. 2024. Delivering on reforms. Delivering on Reforms - European Commission
[85] REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL. TSI Annual Report 2023. EUR-Lex - 52024DC0445 - EN - EUR-Lex

TABLE 1. Overview of costs and benefits identified in the evaluation									
		Citizens/Consumers		Businesses		Administrations		EU Budget / Administration	
		Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment	Quantitative	Comment
COSTS									
Financial Costs	**One-off or recurrent**	No direct financial costs incurred		No direct financial costs incurred		No direct financial costs (because no co-financing is required; except for voluntary contributions of EUR 6.37 million made in 2022 under Articles 7 of TSI Regulation and Article 7.2 of the RRF Regulation). As calculated in the external supporting study, the annual costs incurred by Member States for these TSI-related activities were approximately EUR 11.4 million, representing about 9.4% of the TSI's annual	Although TSI projects do not require co-financing from Member States, applicants and beneficiary authorities allocate their human resources for the preparation of requests for technical support and the execution of administrative and technical tasks related to project implementation. Similarly, the coordinating authorities assign their personnel to coordinate the TSI within the Member States.	EUR 355.7 million in implemented commitment appropriations and EUR 193.3 million in implemented payment appropriations over 2021-2023.	Given the high demand for TSI funds, almost all TSI-related commitment appropriations were executed in the 2021-2023 period. Due to the nature of TSI projects (with implementation typically taking around two years), the amount of executed TSI-related payment appropriations grew over 2021-2023 period from EUR 26.4 million in 2021 to EUR 60.0 million in 2022 and EUR 106.9 million in 2023.

Administrative costs	Recurrent	No administrative costs incurred		No administrative costs incurred		As calculated by the supporting study, in total, the Member States' administrations invest approximately 358 thousand working hours annually in TSI-related tasks.		On average, 161 staff members were assigned to the implementation of technical support by DG REFORM between 2021 and 2023. Of these, 45 were administrative staff responsible for programme administration. As calculated in the supporting study of this mid-term evaluation, the average annual staff costs, including overheads (infrastructure and operating expenditure), was estimated at around EUR 21.6 million. Overall costs of controls represent 4.2% of payments executed in	Costs of control were in line with the DG REFORM target set in the management plan, which is to keep the cost of controls below 5% of payments made in a year. The costs of controls at DG REFORM were comparable with other EU instruments.

budget.

					2021 and 2022 and 3.7% in 2023.
BENEFITS					
Direct benefits	**Recurrent**	The TSI directly benefits citizens by enhancing the quality and sustainability of public services through improved public administration reforms. Notable impacts evidenced in case studies include increasing citizens' financial literacy and reducing vulnerability to ICT risks via accessible resources on finance, law, and new EU regulations. In digital education, TSI support has led to strategic reforms in countries like Croatia and Slovakia, broadening citizen access to digital education and improving educational quality. Furthermore, the TSI's role in developing the Cooperative Compliance Programme fosters trust and transparency in tax systems, positively influencing citizens by boosting trust in public institutions and reducing tax evasion. Additionally, TSI support for health reforms in Austria improved healthcare access and efficiency by establishing new primary healthcare units and data-sharing frameworks, enhancing health services' resilience and preventive care capabilities.	Simplifying administrative processes to facilitate business operations, lowering market barriers, evaluating and strengthening financial markets – especially capital markets – and reducing regulatory and tax pressures on businesses. Evidence from case studies includes benefits such as improved access to diverse and efficient funding by strengthening financial markets and capital market development. Tax initiatives, like the Cooperative Compliance Programme, reduce compliance costs and enhance tax certainty, building better relations with authorities. Similarly, case study on Sustainable Growth & Business Climate Environment, highlights how TSI support on REPowerEU supported businesses by contributing to energy security and stabilising energy prices amid geopolitical tensions.	Enhanced capabilities of national and regional administrations, including more effective use of various administrative systems and tools and improved management of human resources, stem from direct modifications to the administrative practices of beneficiary and other national authorities.	Through the implementation of the TSI, the Commission has consolidated its experience providing tailor-made technical expertise to Member States. The partnership approach with Member States to address common challenges affecting the implementation of key reforms and EU policy priorities has been strengthened. The TSI has consolidated as an instrument that reinforces mutual learning and exchange of good practices, thus contributing to positive spillovers across the Union and uniform implementation of EU policies. With the TSI, the Commission counts with a technical support tool able to quickly mobilise EU-wide high-quality expertise responding to the needs of Member States

The Synopsis report summarises the results of all stakeholder consultation activities carried out during the mid-term evaluation of the TSI by providing a qualitative and quantitative analytical overview of the main results. The purpose of this annex is to inform policymaking on the outcome of all consultation activities and to demonstrate the level of agreement between different groups of stakeholders engaged in consultation activities.

1. Outline of the consultation strategy

Stakeholder consultations are one of the key channels through which the EU can better engage its citizens, civil society and interested groups to influence key policy decisions and ensure the coherence and transparency of EU actions[86]. The Better Regulation Guidelines foresee that the Commission should carry out broad, high-quality and transparent consultations at all stages of the policy cycle, including evaluations. Stakeholder consultation for evaluating the TSI has been implemented in three phases, as presented in the figure below. This annex focuses on the implementation of consultation activities and their results.

Figure 11- Key steps of the stakeholder consultation process
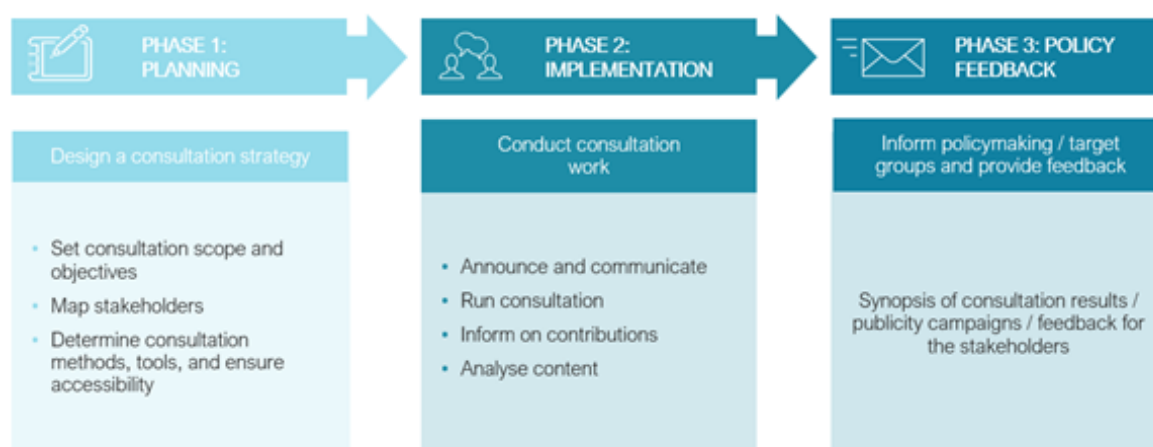
Source: compiled by PPMI based on the Better Regulation Guidelines.

The consultation activities included both the online public consultation and the targeted consultation whose results are presented in the following chapters of this annex:

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[86] Renda, A. (2015). *Too good to be true? A quick assessment of the European Commission's new Better Regulation Package*, CEPS Special Report, No 108. Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies.

- **Open public consultation (OPC).** Duration: 18 March – 10 June 2024, 51 responses from 16 EU Member States and one country outside the EU. Results of the OPC are summarised in Section 2.1.
- **Targeted consultation of specific stakeholders** that employed three methods: targeted survey, interviews and focus group discussions.
  - o **Online survey:** 19 April – 19 May 2024, 289 responses from 27 EU Member States. Results of targeted surveys are summarised[87] in Section 2.2.
  - o **Interviews:** 29 April – 21 October 2024, 114 interviews with representatives from 26 EU Member States and other key stakeholders. Results of the interview programme are summarised in Section 2.3.
  - o **Focus group discussions:** 3 June – 11 July 2024, three focus group discussions with 37 participants from 20 Member States were implemented. Results of the focus group discussions are summarised in Section 2.4.

Special attention was paid for the selection of **participants** of consultation activities (see Table 5). In order to grasp their varying experiences, it was ensured that at least one representative from each Member State is involved not only in the OPC or the online survey, but also in the interview programme or focus group discussions.

Table 5- Distribution of participants in consultation activities

Member State	Participation in the OPC	Participation in targeted survey	Participation in interview programme	Participation in focus group discussion
Bulgaria	✓	✓	✓	✓
Greece	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hungary	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lithuania	✓	✓	✓	
Poland	✓	✓	✓	✓
Portugal	✓	✓	✓	✓
Slovakia		✓	✓	✓
Spain	✓	✓	✓	✓
Sweden	✓	✓	✓	✓
Cyprus		✓	✓	✓
Croatia	✓	✓	✓	✓
Czechia	✓	✓	✓	
Finland		✓		✓
Romania	✓	✓	✓	✓

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[87] The detailed analysis of all answers to targeted surveys is to be found in Annex 4 of the supporting study.

Ireland	✓	✓	✓	✓
Italy	✓	✓	✓	
Latvia		✓	✓	✓
Austria		✓	✓	✓
Belgium	✓	✓	✓	✓
Denmark		✓	✓	✓
Estonia		✓	✓	✓
France		✓	✓	
Germany		✓	✓	
Luxembourg		✓	✓	
Malta	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Netherlands	✓	✓	✓	
Slovenia		✓	✓	✓

The activities of the online public and targeted consultation adhered to the principles (participation, openness and accountability, effectiveness and coherence) and standards (clear content of the consultation process, targeting and inclusiveness, adequate publication, time limits for participation and acknowledgement of feedback) of Better Regulation Guidelines.

2. Overview of the main consultation results

1.1. Summarised results of the open public consultation (OPC)

Implementation of the OPC and data analysis

The OPC is a web-based consultation that was launched on **18 March and closed on 10 June 2024 on the dedicated website of the European Commission 'Have your say'**. The consultation was running in all EU working languages for 12 weeks. It consisted of two main structural parts: the background information and TSI-related questions regarding the key issues of visibility, effectiveness, relevance and EU added value of the programme. The OPC aimed to gather views of a broad spectrum of stakeholders (beyond those directly involved in the implementation of the programme) who are interested in the functioning of the TSI.

The invitation to participate in the OPC was disseminated through social media platforms and websites of both DG REFORM and the contractor. Furthermore, the contractor disseminated invitation emails to 168 organisations in EU Member States (trade unions, research performing organisations and civil society organisations related to the topics of the TSI) inviting to participate and spread the message about the OPC. Individual invitations were sent to 36 researchers whose field of interest includes administrative reforms, public policy, EU governance and similar fields. Finally, national coordinating authorities and representatives of other DGs who participated in the interview programme were requested to contribute to disseminating the OPC as well. Additional

communication measures, including a significant number of individual invitations to those potentially interested in the OPC, were also taken by DG REFORM.

Taken together, **these measures resulted in 51 responses to the OPC from 16 Member States and one non-EU country**. Moreover, two position papers about the implementation of the TSI reforms in two Member States were submitted by a public authority in the Netherlands and by an EU citizen from Poland. Summaries of these contributions are integrated into this report.

Due to a limited number of responses and their quantitative nature, the data was manually checked to avoid cases of campaigning. Descriptive statistics were used as the main method for the data analysis. To reflect both general and stakeholder group-specific trends in responses, the report is designed as following: first, the overview of all results to a particular OPC question is presented; second, the answers of different groups of stakeholders are summarised in boxes dedicated to each OPC question. Given the limited number of responses from a few stakeholder groups, in particular, academic/research institutions (one response) and non-governmental organisations (three responses) (see section Profile of respondents), their responses (when possible) are grouped and presented together with those of the EU citizens. This shaped four groups of stakeholders for the data analysis: 1) public authorities; 2) companies/business organisations; 3) EU citizens; 4) others (non-specified; see the section 'Profile of respondents' below).

Boxes summarising responses to each question include the most frequently selected responses of each stakeholder group and are presented in the following order: public authorities; EU citizens (including academic/research institutions and non-governmental organisations); companies/business organisations; others. However, it should be noted that **the results of the OPC are not statistically representative and are only used to triangulate information collected during the evaluation process**.

Profile of respondents

As depicted in the figure below, the majority of responses (57%, 29 responses out of 51) were provided by **public authorities** (20 authorities, 7 agencies, 1 local authority, and 1 undefined). This was followed by the **EU citizens** (16%, 8 out of 51), **companies/business organisations** (12%, 6 out of 51), **non-governmental organisations** (6%, 3 out of 51), and an **academic/research institution** (2%, 1 out of 51). A total of 8% (4 out of 51) chose the 'Other' category. The vast majority of represented organisations were **large** (250 or more employees; 25 out of 51) or **medium** (50 to 249 employees; 11 out of 51). It is important to note that public authorities were also involved in other stakeholder consultation activities (e.g. targeted survey, interview programme, focus group discussions) designed for the mid-term evaluation of the TSI, therefore, there may be an overlap of participants engaged in various consultation activities.

Figure 12- Categories of respondents

- Public authorities
- EU citizens
- Companies/businesses
- Other
- NGO (Non-governmental organisations)
- Academic/Research institutions
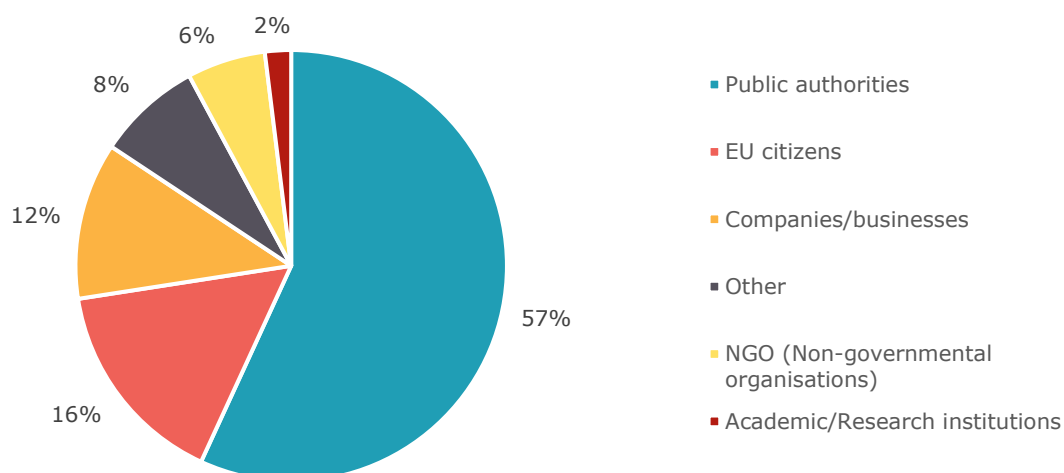
Source: the results of OPC, N=51.

Regarding the **geographical distribution of respondents** (see Figure 13), 16 EU Member States were represented in the OPC, with the largest number of contributions received from Romania (25%, 13 out of 51)**,** followed by Malta (12%, 6 out of 51). Four responses (8% each) were received from Czechia, Croatia, and Italy, three (6% each) from Lithuania, Poland, and Belgium, two (4% each) from Spain and Bulgaria, and one response (2% each) from Hungary, Ireland, Greece, Netherlands, Sweden, and Portugal. One EU citizen who completed the survey indicated Iran as their country of origin.

Figure 13- Geographical distribution of respondents
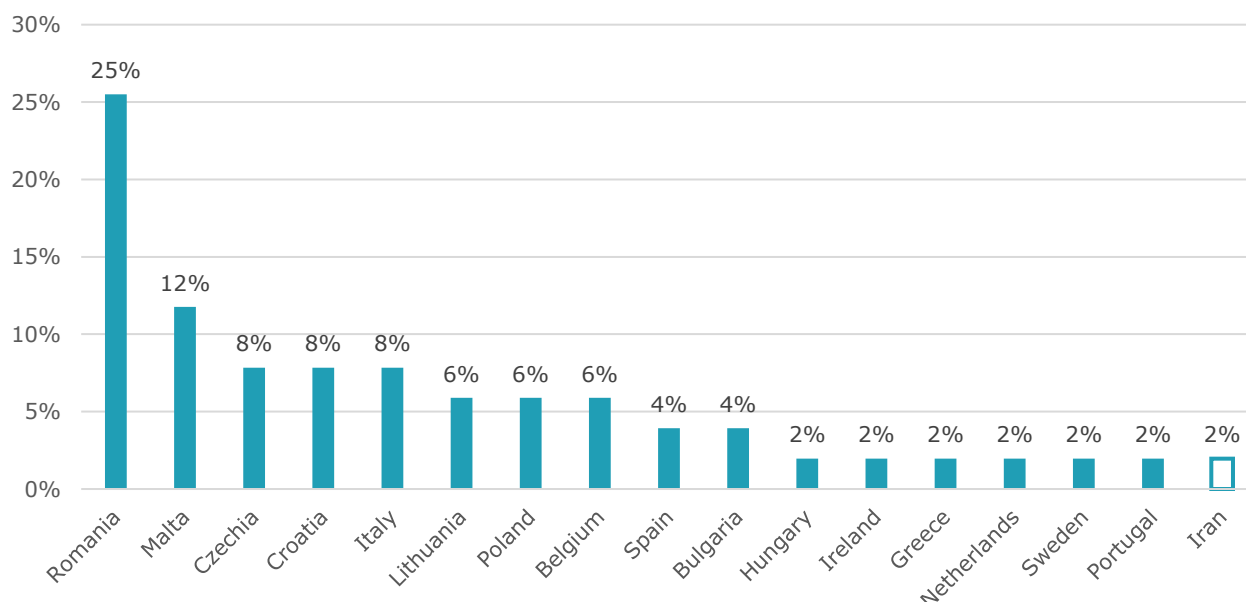
Almost all respondents (94%, 48 out of 51) indicated being **familiar with the TSI** (47%, 24 out of 51, very familiar; 35%, 18 out of 51, fairly familiar; 12%, 6 out of 51, slightly familiar), while three respondents (6%) were not familiar with the programme at all. In total, **82% of respondents (42 out of 51) had been directly or indirectly involved in the implementation of the TSI** in 17 EU Member States (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, and Sweden). They were involved in the programme as a beneficiary authority (49%, 25 out of 51), coordinating authority (14%, 7 out of 51), technical support provider (12%, 6 out of 51) or in other roles (not specified in responses) (8%, 4 out of 51)[88]. **Nearly a fifth of respondents (18%, 9 out of 51) reported not being involved in the TSI.**

Overview of the results

Relevance and coherence of the TSI

When indicating **specific challenges at the EU and Member States levels that should be addressed by the TSI,** nearly all respondents selected limited administrative and institutional capacity to design and implement structural reforms (98%, 50 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent). A similar share of respondents (89%, 45 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent) indicated that the TSI should address difficulties related to implementing EU priorities[89]. A total of 82% of respondents (42 out of 51 agreeing to a high or moderate extent) expect the instrument to address the identified challenges related to the EU`s economic governance processes. Finally, 78% (40 out of 51) of respondents agreed to a high or moderate extent that the TSI should address the inadequate application and implementation of EU law.

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[88] As mentioned above, public authorities who responded to the OPC may have also been involved in other consultation activities designed for the mid-term evaluation of the TSI.

[89] Protecting citizens and freedoms; developing strong and vibrant economic base; building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe; promoting European interests and values on the global stage.

Figure 14- Specific challenges at the EU and Member States levels that are expected to be addressed by the TSI
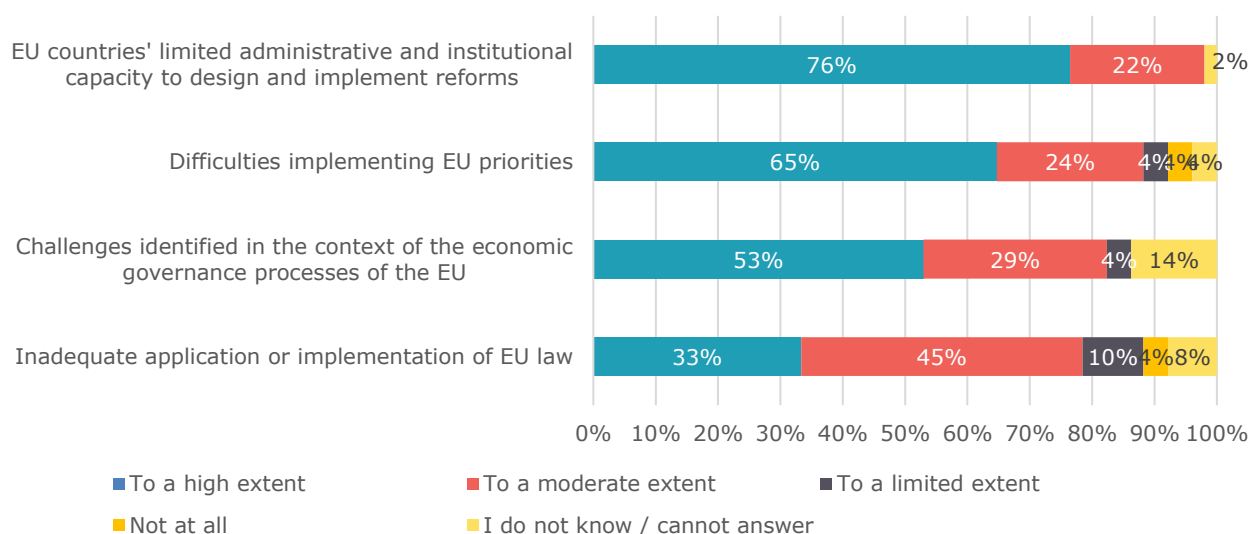
Source: the results of OPC, N=51. Note: the responses are presented in decreasing order by the selection of response 'to a high extent'.

Box 6- Aspects to be addressed by the TSI (by stakeholder type)

- Nearly all public authorities agreed that the TSI reforms should tackle EU Member States' limited administrative and institutional capacity to design and implement reforms (97%, 28 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent), followed by challenges identified in the context of the economic governance processes of the EU and difficulties implementing EU priorities (83% each, 24 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent).
- The EU citizens (including representatives of academia and non-governmental organisations) expressed the need for TSI to address challenges in implementing EU priorities and the limited administrative and institutional capacity of their countries to implement reforms (100% each, 12 out of 12, to a high or moderate extent).
- Addressing the limited administrative and institutional capacity of the Member States was unanimously supported by the respondents representing business (100%, 6 out of 6, to a high or moderate extent). Other answer options were supported by an equal share of respondents from this group (83% each, 5 out of 6, to a high or moderate extent).
- An equal share of respondents in other roles (100%, 4 out of 4, to a high or moderate extent) supported all answer options.

In terms of **factors that prevent the government and public institutions from effectively designing and implementing reforms in their country**, the majority of respondents indicated a lack of staff or financial resources and weak coordination between public institutions to be the main constraints (84% for each, 43 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent). This was followed by a lack of a long-term vision and strategy to design relevant and sustainable reforms (80%, 41 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent), lack of skills or inadequate skills (78%, 40 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent), and lack of continuity due to changes in political priorities (67%, 34 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent). Finally, more than half of respondents reported excessive bureaucracy and low administration understanding of society's needs (65% for each, 33 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent) to pose significant challenges.

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Figure 15- Factors preventing the government and public institutions from effectively designing and implementing REFORMS
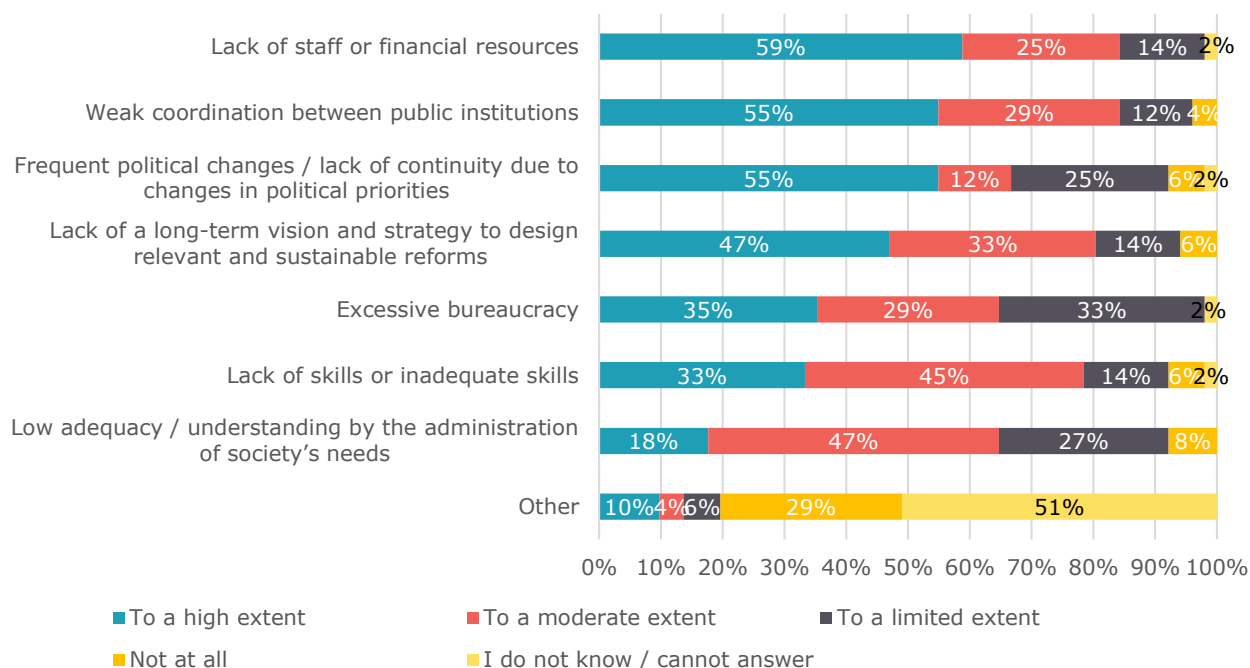
Source: the results of OPC, N=51. Note: the responses are presented in decreasing order by the selection of response 'to a high extent'.

Box 7- Factors preventing Member States from effectively designing and implementing reforms (by stakeholder type)

- The majority of public authorities indicated weak cooperation between the public institutions (83%, 24 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent) to prevent the government and public administration from effectively implementing reforms, followed by a lack of a long-term vision/strategy for designing relevant and sustainable reforms, adequate skills, as well as staff and/or financial resources (79% each, 23 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent).
- Most EU citizens, academia, and non-governmental organisations indicated a lack of staff or financial resources and weak coordination between public institutions as significant challenges (92% each, 11 out of 12, to a high or moderate extent).
- An equal share of business representatives reported excessive bureaucracy, frequent political changes, lack of a long-term vision and lack of skills to prevent public authorities from implementing reforms (100% each, 6 out of 6, to a high or moderate extent).
- All respondents in other roles denoted a lack of staff or financial resources to be the biggest obstacle (100%, 4 out of 4, to a high or moderate extent).

As demonstrated in Figure 16 below, most respondents indicated the high or moderate **need for reforms to improve** green transition and climate adaptation (94%, 48 out of 51), public healthcare system and services (83%, 42 out of 51), as well as to ensure functioning (88%, 45 out of 51) and efficiency/accountability (84%, 43 out of 51) of public institutions. These views on the need for green and public health reforms largely resonated with the opinions presented in the position papers. Somewhat fewer respondents agreed on the reform needs in the field of defence (54%, 28 out of 51). In the responses to the open question, the need for TSI reforms in the public health sector,

including insurance schemes, disease prevention, and health promotion as well as strengthening of resilience was suggested. In addition, a further need to support digitalisation and AI adoption in the public sector (especially in recruitment and training) was mentioned. Finally, one respondent expressed the need for improved coordination to support policy making and monitoring in different policy areas related to climate change across the different policy levels (national, federal, regional and local).

Figure 16- The extent to which reforms are considered necessary to improve individual policy areas in the Member State

| Policy area	To a high extent	To a moderate extent	To a limited extent	Not at all	I do not know / cannot answer
Public healthcare system and services	67%	16%	4%	2%	12%
Green transition and climate adaptation	61%	33%	4%	2%	
The efficiency and accountability of public institutions	59%	25%	10%		6%
Functioning of public institutions (including the judiciary)	55%	33%	2%	2%	8%
Education and school services	53%	27%	6%		14%
Digitalisation of public services	49%	35%	8%	6%	2%
Energy supply, including cost of energy (electricity, gas, petrol)	47%	25%	8%	2%	18%
Employment, including access, work opportunities, and conditions	41%	39%	12%	2%	6%
Family, housing, social protection	39%	41%	4%	4%	12%
Support for businesses (e.g. green loans for small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs), access to capital markets)	35%	41%	12%	2%	10%
Education to help with financial decisions in everyday life	35%	35%	16%		14%
Migration	35%	33%	14%	4%	14%
Taxation systems and policies	35%	39%	6%	4%	16%
Defence readiness	29%	25%	20%	6%	20%

Source: the results of OPC, N=51. Note: the responses are presented in decreasing order by the selection of response 'to a high extent'.

Box 8- Reform needs and priorities (by stakeholder type)

- In terms of reform priorities, the majority of public authorities expressed the need for reforms oriented towards green transition and climate adaptation (93%, 27 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent), digitalisation of public services (90%, 26 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent) as well as

Efficiency and effectiveness of the TSI

Regarding **changes resulting from TSI support**, better delivery and quality of public services (46%, 22 out of 48, agreed to a high or moderate extent) and more transparent, effective and accountable public institutions (46%, 22 out of 48) were the most observed in the field of **public institutions and public administration**, whereas among **public policies**, the majority of respondents reported the emergence of better strategies and reform/policy documents (58%, 28 out of 48) to be the most observed development (see Figure 17). The largest part of respondents from **Malta and Romania observed a rise in transparency, effectiveness and accountability of public institutions in their countries** (11%, 4 out of 36, and 14%, 10 out of 72, respectively), while responses from other countries were more dispersed.

Nearly a quarter of respondents stated that they noticed limited or no changes in administrative processes, public financial and revenue management, and transparency and accountability of public institutions (23%, 11 out of 48, for each). A total of 31% (15 out of 48) disagreed that the TSI resulted in a significantly better provision of information to the general public and/or specific groups. Overall, a considerable number of respondents (from 25% to 42%, 12-20 out of 48) were not able to provide the answer to this question.

Figure 17- Changes in public institutions, public administration and developments on public policies that resulted from TSI support
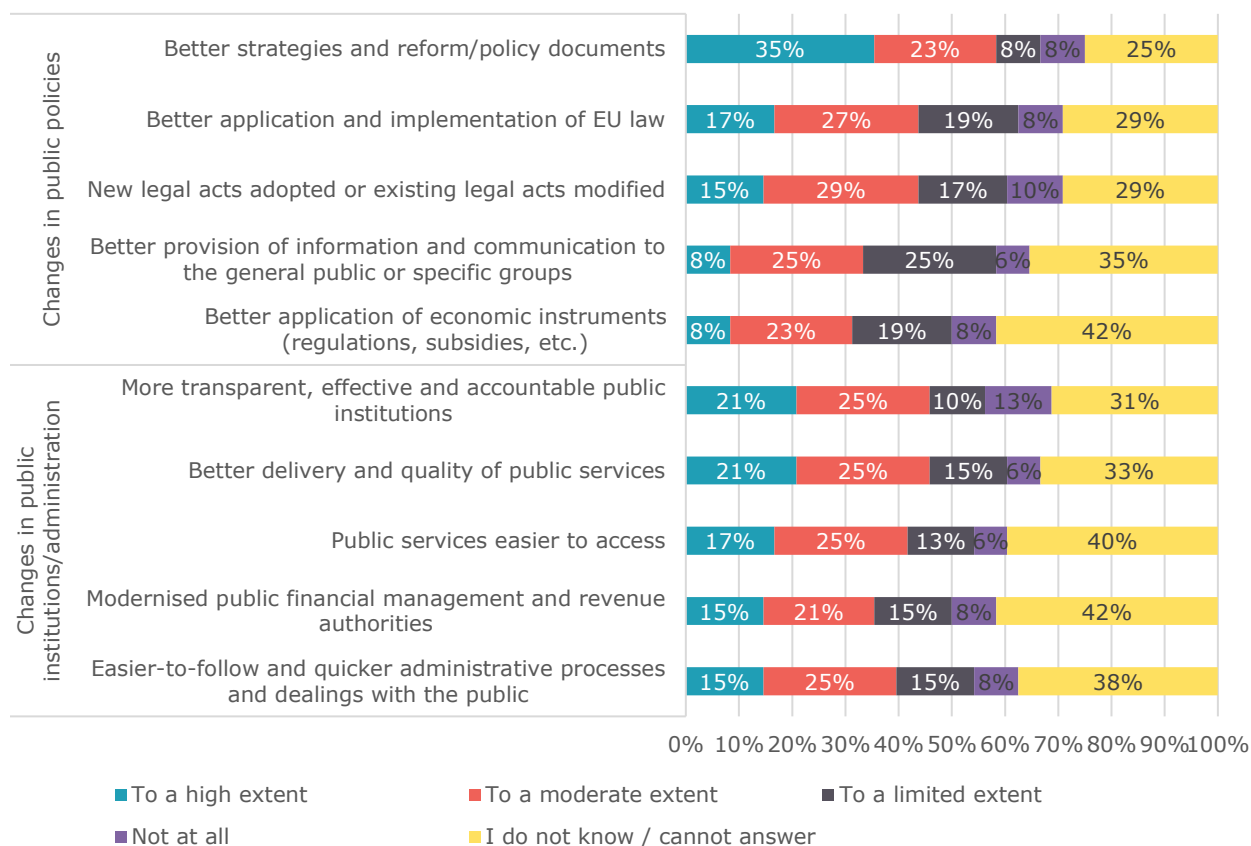
Source: the results of OPC, N=48. Note: the responses are presented in decreasing order by the selection of response 'to a high extent'.
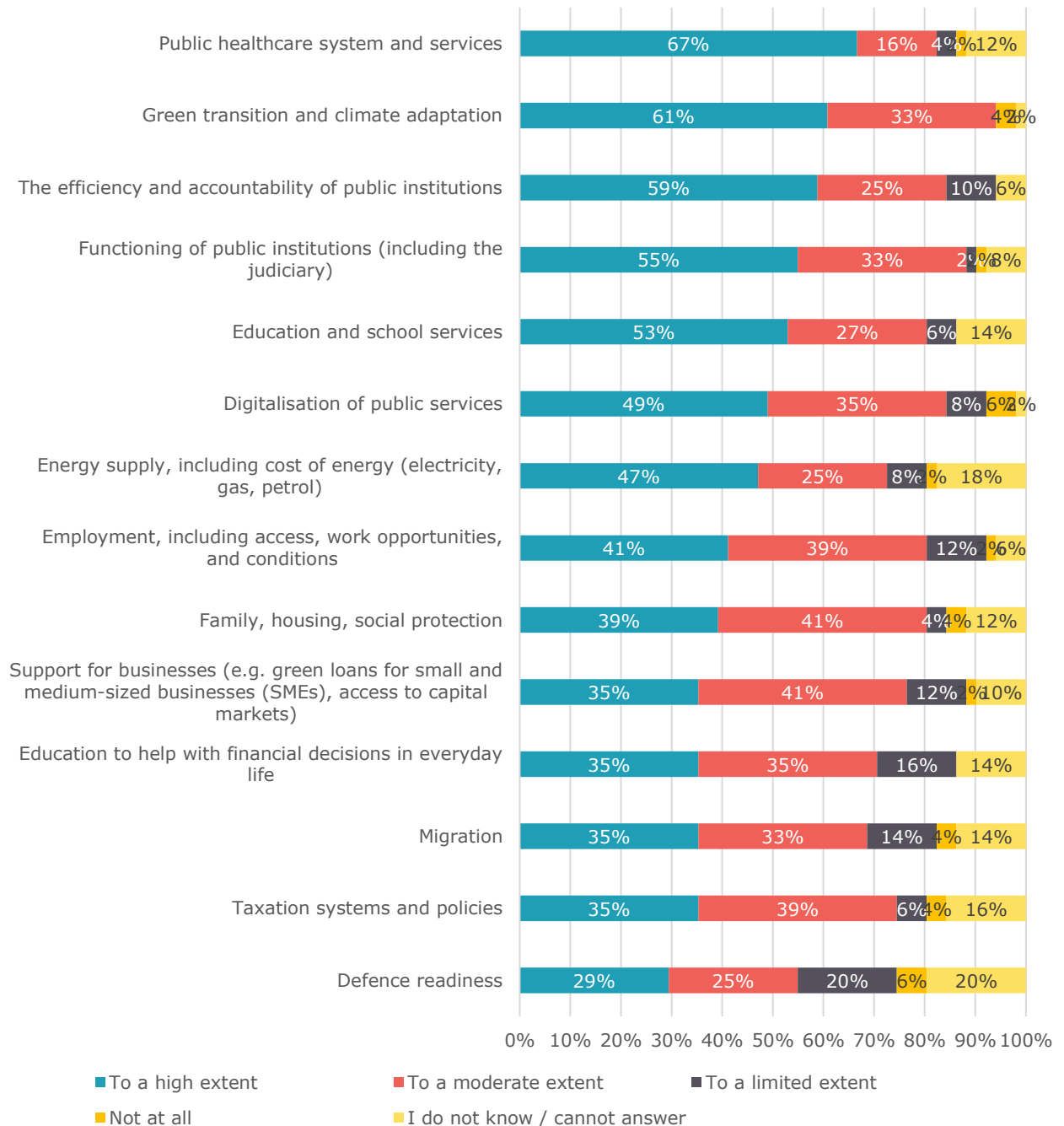
Box 9- Changes in public institutions and public administration as a result of the TSI (by stakeholder type)

- Among the changes in the field of public institutions and public administration, most representatives of public authorities observed positive developments resulting in more transparent, effective and accountable public institutions (48%, 14 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent), followed by better delivery and quality of public services (45%, 13 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent) and quicker administrative processes and dealings with the public (41%, 12 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent).
- Similarly, more than half of EU citizens noticed changes in better quality, delivery and accessibility of public services (63% for each, 5 out of 8, to a high or moderate extent).
- A representative of academia reported that as a result of reforms, public services are easier to access (100%, 1 out of 1, to a moderate extent).
- Respondents from non-governmental organisations either did not have an answer to this question or observed no changes.
- The highest rate of business representatives indicated positive changes in the accessibility of public services (67%, 4 out of 6, to a high or moderate extent) and delivery and quality of public services (50%, 3 out of 6, to a high or moderate extent), while respondents in other roles observed more transparent, effective and accountable public institutions (50%, 2 out of 4, to a high or moderate extent).

Box 10- Changes in public policies as a result of the TSI (by stakeholder type)

- In terms of changes in public policies, the majority of public authorities reported better strategies and reform/policy documents (69%, 20 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent), as well as better application of EU law and new legal acts adopted or existing legal acts modified (52% each, 15 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent).
- EU citizens' responses were more dispersed, with more than a third of respondents reporting new legal acts (38%, 3 out of 8, to a high or moderate extent) and a quarter indicating better application and implementation of EU law, economic instruments, better provision of information to the general public, and better strategies and reform/policy documents (25% each, 2 out of 8, to a high or moderate extent).
- Representatives of non-governmental organisations and academia did not know an answer to this question or observed no changes.
- Half of the business representatives indicated positive developments in the application/implementation of the EU law and strategies, reform/policy documents (50%, 3 out of 6, to a high or moderate extent).
- Respondents in other roles reported the emergence of better strategies and reform/policy documents (75%, 3 out of 4, to a high or moderate extent).

EU added value of the TSI

Overall, more than half of all respondents stated that it would be **hardly possible** to **achieve similar results in the design and implementation of reforms without the support of the TSI** (58%, 20 out of 35, agreed to a limited extent or not at all). Just above a third of all respondents stated that their countries would be to a high or moderate extent able to implement the reforms in the absence of TSI (34% 12 out of 35) (see Figure 18).

Figure 18- Extent to which it would be possible to achieve similar results without TSI support
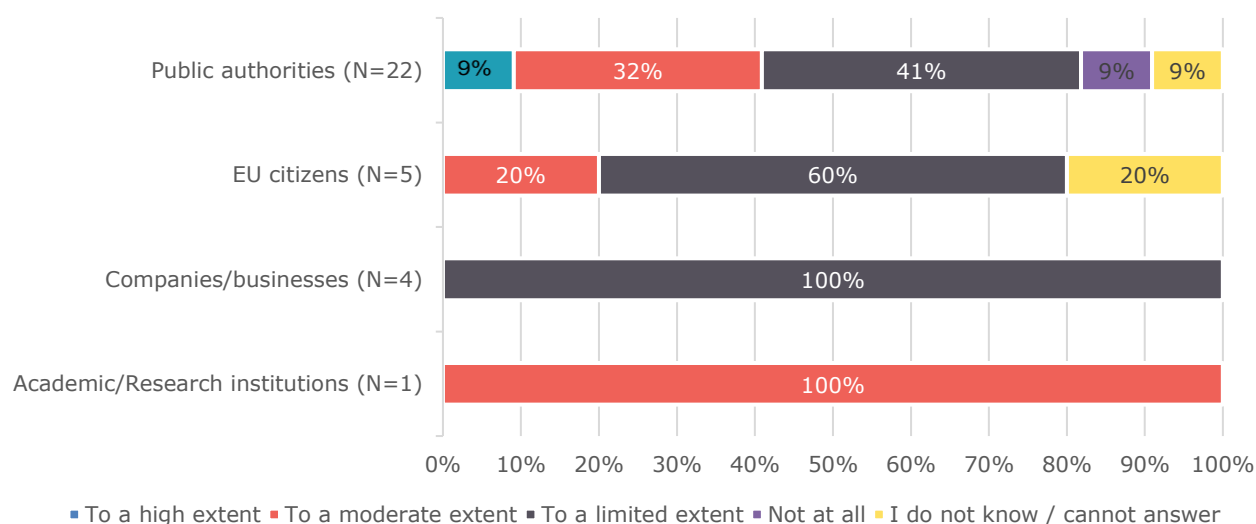
Source: the results of OPC, N=35. Note: the responses are presented in decreasing order by the selection of response 'to a high extent'.

Box 11- Extent to which Member States would be able to implement reforms in the absence of the TSI (by stakeholder type)

- In terms of changes in public policies, the majority of public authorities reported better strategies and reform/policy documents (69%, 20 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent), as well as better application of EU law and new legal acts adopted or existing legal acts modified (52% each, 15 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent).
- EU citizens' responses were more dispersed, with more than a third of respondents reporting new legal acts (38%, 3 out of 8, to a high or moderate extent) and a quarter indicating better application and implementation of EU law, economic instruments, better provision of information to the general public, and better strategies and reform/policy documents (25% each, 2 out of 8, to a high or moderate extent).
- Representatives of non-governmental organisations and academia did not know an answer to this question or observed no changes.
- Half of the business representatives indicated positive developments in the application/implementation of the EU law and strategies, reform/policy documents (50%, 3 out of 6, to a high or moderate extent).
- Respondents in other roles reported the emergence of better strategies and reform/policy documents (75%, 3 out of 4, to a high or moderate extent).A half of the respondents representing public authorities (50%, 11 out of 22) stated that their country would be able to implement reforms in the absence of TSI support only to a limited extent or not at all. A half of the respondents representing public authorities (50%, 11 out of 22) stated that their country would be able to implement reforms in the absence of TSI support only to a limited extent or not at all. 41% of public authorities (9 out of 22) stated that their country would be to a high or moderate extent capable of implementing these reforms without TSI.
- More than half of the group of EU citizens reported that their countries could implement the reforms without the support provided by the TSI only to a limited extent (60%, 3 out of 5).
- A representative of an academic/research institution indicated that their country would be to a moderate extent able to implement the reforms without TSI (100%, 1 out of 1).
- All business representatives who provided answer to this question reported that their countries could to a limited extent implement the reforms without the support provided (100%, 4 out of 4).
- No representatives of non-governmental organisations provided an answer to this question.
- The majority of respondents in other roles indicated limited or no capability to implement the reforms without TSI (67%, 2 out of 3).

Almost all respondents agreed that **in order to help their country implement far-reaching reforms**, the EU should provide the Member States with tools and possibilities to learn from other countries' experiences (98%, 50 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent). Moreover, the majority of respondents stressed the need to help public administrations with non-material resources, such as expertise, knowledge, and practical experience in implementing particular reforms, as well as to raise political awareness and support the implementation of agreed reforms (94% for each, 48 out of 51, to a high or moderate extent). Generally, among respondents, there was slightly less support for the need for the EU's technical support in the management of crises/major challenges (e.g. pandemics, natural disasters, conflicts), with 75% of all respondents (38 out of 51) agreeing with this statement to a high or moderate extent (Figure 19). One position paper highlighted issues related to the lack of expertise of technical support providers, signalling the need to ensure more quality support during the implementation of the projects.

Figure 19- The perceived need for EU support for Member States implementing far-reaching reforms

By helping public administration with expertise on, knowledge of, and practical experience in, implementing reforms in a specific sector: 82% To a high extent, 12% To a moderate extent, 4% To a limited extent, 2% Not at all

By raising political awareness and supporting the implementation of agreed reforms: 69%, 25%, 2%, 4%

By encouraging learning from other countries' experience in implementing similar reforms: 65%, 33%, 2%

By supporting the twin digital and green transitions: 63%, 25%, 4%, 4%, 4%

By supporting the management of a crisis or a major challenge (e.g. pandemics, natural disasters, conflicts) or recovery after it: 45%, 29%, 16%, 6%, 4%

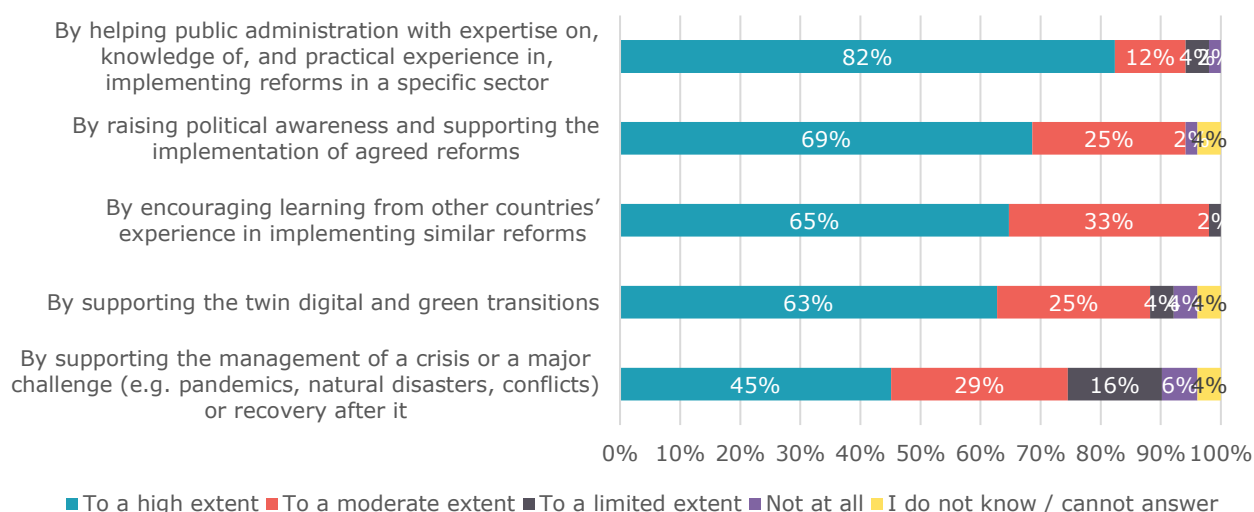Legend: ■ To a high extent ■ To a moderate extent ■ To a limited extent ■ Not at all ■ I do not know / cannot answer

Source: the results of OPC, N=51. Note: the responses are presented in decreasing order by the selection of response 'to a high extent'.

Box 12- Ways for the EU to help Member States in implementing far-reaching reforms (by stakeholder type)

- All public authorities participating in the OPC indicated that the EU could usefully help the Member States in implementing far-reaching reforms by encouraging learning from other countries' experience in implementing similar reforms (100%, 29 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent). This was followed by helping public administration with non-material resources (expertise, knowledge, practical experience, etc.) in implementing reforms in a specific sector (97%, 28 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent), as well as supporting the implementation of agreed reforms and the twin digital and green transitions (87% for each, 26 out of 29, to a high or moderate extent).
- A group of the EU citizens, representatives of academia, and non-governmental organisations expressed the need for more EU support in raising political awareness and supporting the implementation of agreed reforms (100%, 12 out of 12, to a high or moderate extent), followed by encouraging learning from other countries (92%, 11 out of 12, to a high or moderate extent) and supporting the twin digital and green transitions (83%, 10 out of 12, to a high or moderate extent).
- Responses from the representatives of companies/businesses were more dispersed, since all of them expressed a high or moderate need for sharing of good practices between the Member States, assisting public administrations with expertise, raising political awareness, supporting the management of crises as well as twin digital and green transitions (100%, 6 out of 6).
- All respondents in other roles reported the most need for EU support in encouraging learning from other countries' experience, helping public administration with non-material resources needed for implementing reforms, and raising political awareness and supporting the implementation of agreed reforms (100% for each, 4 out of 4, to a high or moderate extent).

1.2. Summarised results of the targeted survey

Implementation of the targeted survey and data analysis

The targeted survey was running **from 19 April to 19 May 2024 on the EU Survey tool.** The main purpose of the survey was to collect opinions on the overall functioning of the TSI, the quality of technical support received, the policy goals and objectives met,

and the results and impacts achieved throughout the evaluation period (2021-2023). The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts: (i) an introduction and (ii) questions adjusted to the experience of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers. Questions for these target groups were split into several blocks on the basis of key evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, efficiency, coherence, and EU added value of the TSI. The survey questions were carefully crafted to ensure comparability across the different groups of respondents and complementarity with the other consultation methods.

DG REFORM directly shared invitations to participate in the targeted survey with the representatives of beneficiary authorities, coordinating authorities as well as technical support providers, involved in the preparation, design and implementation of TSI projects. The mailing list was based on two extractions (at project and sub-task levels) from 15 April 2024 with Better Excel Plugin for JIRA, including contacts of beneficiary authorities (1 to 11 per sub-task) and technical support providers (1 to 5 per sub-task). A regularly updated list on national coordinating authorities were used to reach out to this group of stakeholders (1 to 6 contacts per Member State). The survey was extended twice, and additional reminders were sent for the invited stakeholders. This resulted in **the overall response rate reaching 21.5%** (see Table 6).

Table 6. Participants of the targeted survey

Stakeholder group	Number of Member States represented	Number of invitations sent	Number of responses received	Response rate	Responses per Member State
Beneficiary authorities	26 (*except Luxembourg*)	917	186	20.3%	1-21
National coordinating authorities	25 (*except Finland and Sweden*)	100	35	35%	1-3
Technical support providers	n/a	380	68	17.9%	n/a
TOTAL	27	1 397	289	21.5%	n/a

Note: while there is one institution performing the role of national coordinating authority in each Member State, invitations to the survey were shared with multiple staff members within that institution. As a result, the number of responses received exceeds the number of Member States and coordinating authorities.

To provide robust findings on the targeted survey results, the data was cleaned from empty and partial responses. The data analysis was based on two pillars: (i) a descriptive presentation of the targeted survey results and (ii) an estimation of statistical associations between key variables. Since most of the targeted survey responses were ordinal or nominal, Cramer's V was used to measure the power of association, and Fisher's exact test was employed to identify the statistical significance of the findings.

When presenting quantitative data, N represents the number of selections of a particular targeted survey response. **The N for each question may vary** due to the following reasons:

- while providing descriptive analysis of the targeted survey results, 'Do not know/cannot answer' responses were omitted;
- certain questions were directed only at specific groups of respondents based on their earlier answers (e.g. in the beneficiary authorities' targeted survey, Q25 'To what extent has your institution used the deliverables of the SRSP-funded project(s) in its work?' was available only to respondents who selected a positive response in Q8 'Was your institution involved in the SRSP, predecessor of the TSI, as a beneficiary authority?');
- answering some questions (not marked with asterisk *)[90] was optional.

The breakout of responses to each survey question is presented in the following sub-section of this annex.

Respondents and scope of projects they represent

A total of 289 completed responses of the targeted survey were analysed. A total of 64% (186) of participants were representatives of the beneficiary authorities, 24% (68) – technical support providers, and 12% (35) submitted responses as the national coordinating authorities (20).

Figure 20- Share of the targeted survey respondents
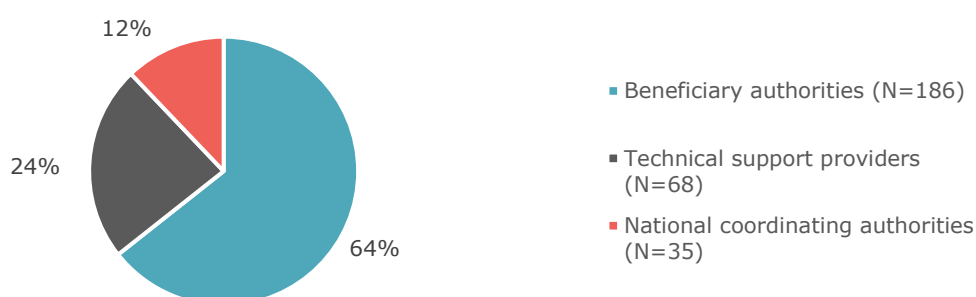
Source: the targeted survey of beneficiary authorities, coordinating authorities and technical support providers, May 2024.

As presented in the figure below, the representatives of the beneficiary authorities from all EU Member States except Luxembourg participated in the targeted survey, while the responses of national coordinating authorities from Finland and Sweden were absent. The majority of technical support providers that participated in the survey represented organisations located in France (14), the Netherlands (6) and Slovakia (6).

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[90] see Annex 6 of the supporting study for targeted survey questionnaires.

Figure 21. Participation of representatives of beneficiary, coordinating authorities and technical support providers in the targeted survey by the country of institution

Beneficiary authorities (N=186) ■ National coordinating authorities (N=35) ■ Technical support providers (N=68)

Source: targeted survey of beneficiary authorities, coordinating authorities and technical support providers, May 2024. Note: while each Member State has one national coordinating authority, a few representatives of one institution were invited to participate in the survey. The figure does not involve category 'other' of technical support providers (N=5).

Regarding the previous experience of the TSI projects implementation, 75% (48 out of 64) of technical support providers were involved in three and more projects, while more than a half of beneficiary authorities (61%, 107 out of 174) were involved only in one project.

As presented in the table below, the highest share of the targeted survey participants was involved in the TSI 2022 projects. The distribution of beneficiary authorities and technical support providers in the TSI projects was rather equal through the period of evaluation (2021-2023), with slightly less beneficiary authorities and technical support providers taking part in the 2023 round.

Table 7. Participation in the TSI projects by year, 2021-2023

	Beneficiary authorities (N=221)	Technical support providers (N=125)
TSI 2021	46% (N=77)	67% (N=40)
TSI 2022	47% (N=78)	85% (N=51)
TSI 2023	40% (N=66)	57% (N=34)

Source: the targeted survey of beneficiary authorities and technical support providers, May 2024. Note: TSI 2021 includes additional technical support under Article 7 of the TSI Regulation and Article 7.2 of the RRF Regulation. The number of responses is higher than the total number of respondents in each of the groups due to multiple-choice nature of the survey question.

A relatively equal share of beneficiary authorities, who responded to this targeted survey question, received support in the fields of governance & public administration (51%, 89 out of 176) as well as financial sector and access to finance (17%, 30 out of 176). A total of 16% of beneficiary authorities received technical support in the fields of labour market, education, health and social service (29 out of 176) and sustainable growth &

business environment (28 out of 176). The smallest share of beneficiary authorities received the TSI support linked to revenue administration and public financial management (13%, 23 out of 176) and horizontal policies (5%, 8 out of 176).

Figure 22- Sectoral areas of TSI support, 2021-2023
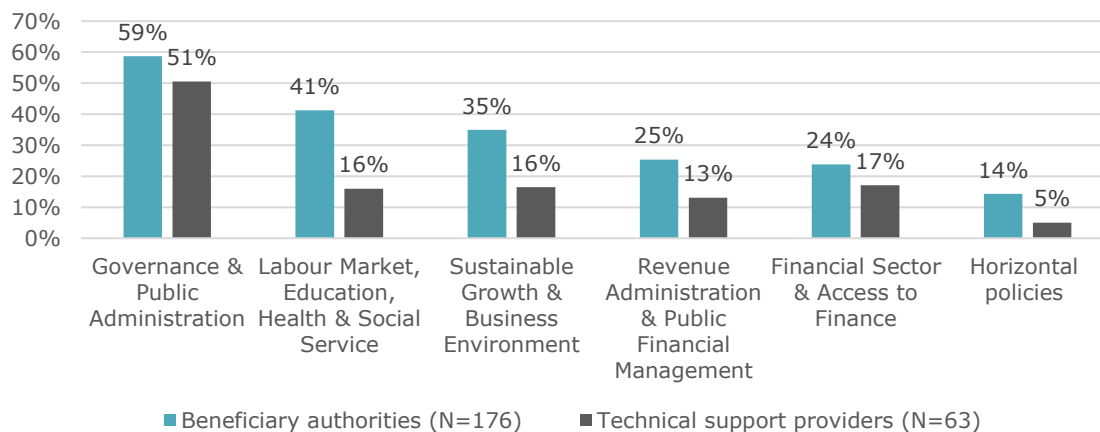
Source: the targeted survey of beneficiary authorities and technical support providers, May 2024. Note: the number of responses is higher than the total number of respondents in each of the groups due to multiple-choice nature of the survey question.

Almost a half of the respondents received or provided technical support through public procurement (49% of beneficiary authorities (75 out of 153), 49% of technical support providers (31 out of 63)). A significantly lower share of beneficiaries (14%, 21 out of 153) and technical support providers (27%, 17 out of 63) relied on grants as the key delivery method. Around a fifth of respondents relied on contribution agreements with pillar-assessed entities (technical support provided by international organisations and other private or public bodies) as the main delivery method (16%, 24 out of 153 of beneficiary authorities; 22%, 14 out of 63 of technical support providers) or other administrative arrangements (4% of beneficiary authorities, 6 out of 153 of beneficiary authorities; 2%, 1 out of 63 of technical support providers). While technical support providers were not involved in the provision of expertise of the Commission or private experts as well as TAIEX, these delivery methods were relevant for a significant share of beneficiary authorities – 12% (18 out of 153) and 6% (9 out of 153), respectively.

Relevance of the TSI

The **most commonly reported challenge across all groups** was limited administrative/institutional capacity, selected by 74% (50 out of 68) technical support providers, 70% (130 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 71% (25 out of 35) national coordinating authorities. Challenges in the design and implementation of structural reforms were noted by 54% (37 out of 68) technical support providers, 35% (66 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 51% (18 out of 35) national coordinating authorities. Challenges in the application and implementation of Union law were highlighted by 21% (14 out of 68) technical support providers, 11% (20 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 34% (12 out of 35) national coordinating authorities. For mitigating the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, 15% (10 out of 68) technical support providers, 10% (19 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 46% (16 out of 35) national

coordinating authorities identified this issue. Addressing the challenges of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine was selected by 7% (5 out of 68) technical support providers, 4% (7 out of 186) beneficiary authorities, and 31% (11 out of 35) national coordinating authorities (see figure below).

Figure 23- Challenges faced by beneficiary authorities and addressed by technical support
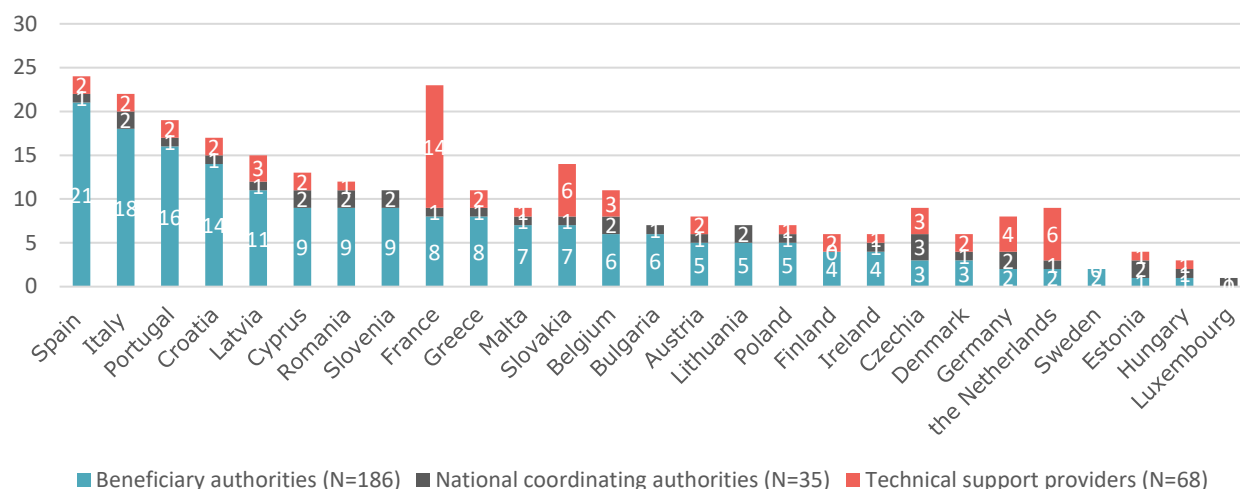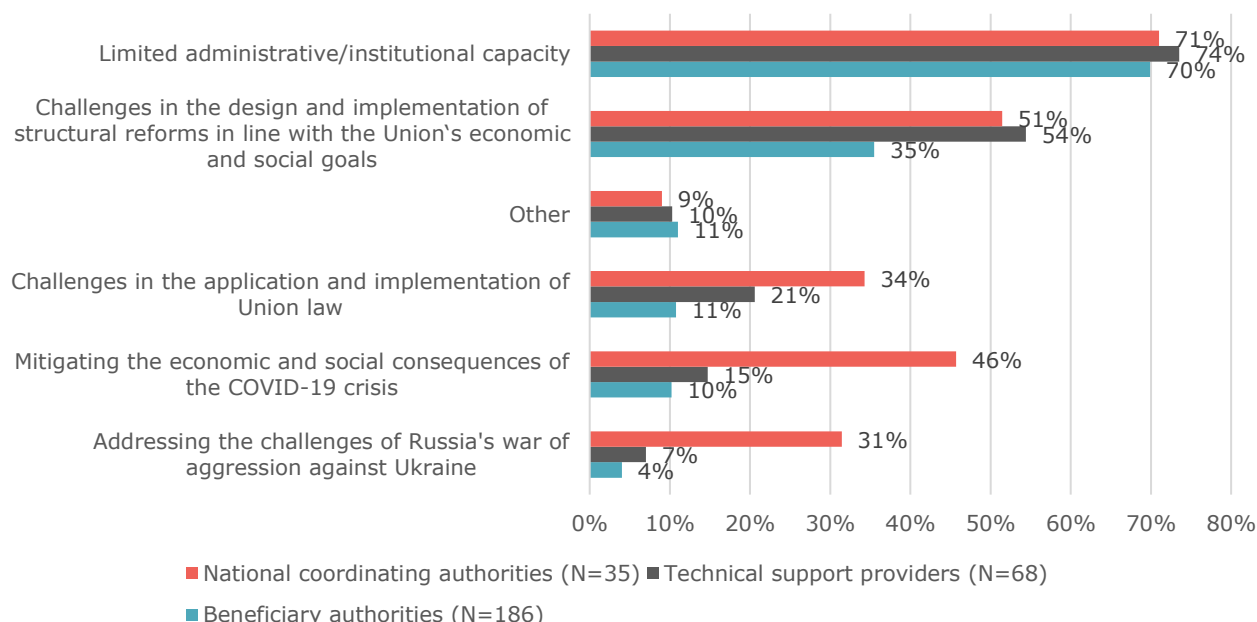

Source: the targeted survey of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers, May 2024.
Question (beneficiary authorities): Which of the following challenges was your institution facing when requesting technical support under the TSI (2021-2023)? Question (national coordinating authorities): Which of the following challenges was your country facing when requesting technical support under the TSI? Question (technical support providers): Which of the following challenges you addressed when providing the technical support?

When discussing the **suitability of the TSI to provide technical support**, all three groups of stakeholders (strongly) agreed that it was a suitable instrument to provide technical support (see figure below). This position was strongly supported by technical support providers (81% strongly agreed, 54 out of 67; 18% agreed, 12 out of 67), slightly less - by beneficiary authorities (67% strongly agreed, 119 out of 178; 30% agreed, 54 out of 178) and national coordinating authorities (59% strongly agreed, 20 out of 34; 35% agreed, 12 out of 34). Both technical support providers and beneficiary authorities strongly that the TSI projects addressed the key reform needs of the beneficiary institution, a total of 72% (48 out of 67) and 61% (106 out of 174) respectively. The largest share of national coordinating authorities disagreed (23%, 7 out of 31) or strongly disagreed (3%, 1 out of 31) that the TSI was able to address the urgent needs of the country. This point was the most negatively evaluated by the beneficiary authorities as well – a total 8% (13 out of 154) disagreed, while 3% (5 out of 154) strongly disagreed with this statement.

Figure 24- Suitability of the TSI to provide technical support projects
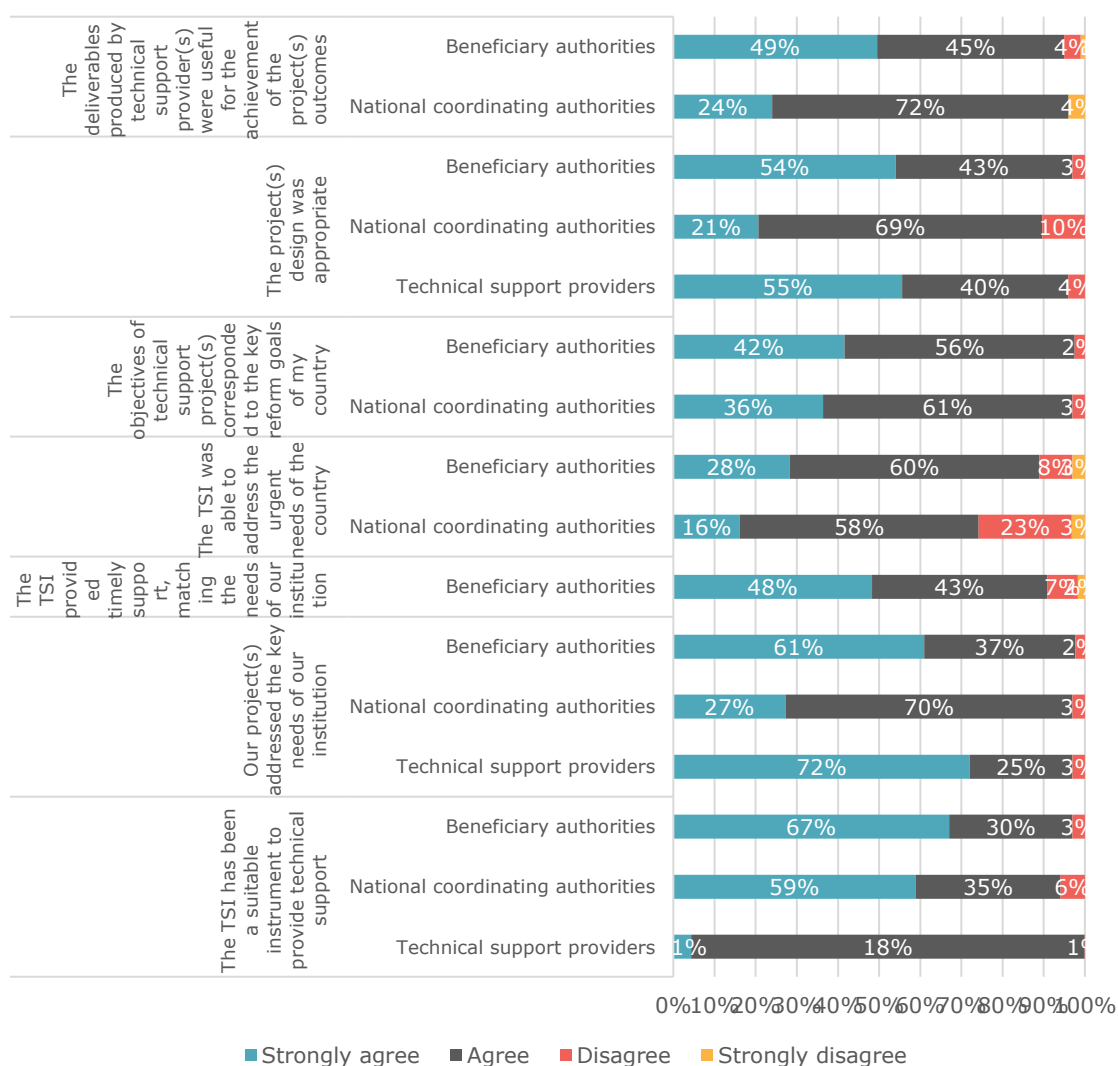
When assessing the **further need for technical support**, the majority of respondents indicated that it is still relevant both for the particular institutions and the Member States. When choosing among several options (design reforms, develop and implement reform policies, ensure human resource management, and else), the largest percentage in all three groups indicated that technical support is still needed to implement processes and methodologies. 95% of coordinating authorities (21 out of 22) reported that the support to define and implement processes and methodologies is needed to a high (69%, 22 out of 32) or to moderate extent (25%, 8 out of 32). This view was supported by 89% of beneficiary authorities (146 out of 164), the majority of which indicated that this type of support is needed to high extent (52%, 86 out of 164), as well as by technical support providers, the majority of whose claimed that technical support is still needed for beneficiary authorities to define and implement processes and methodologies to a high (63%, 40 out of 63) or moderate (30%, 19 out of 63) extent.

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Concerning the administration of technical support, the absolute majority of beneficiaries (89%, 139 out of 157), coordinating authorities (75%, 21 out of 28), and technical support providers (88%, 59 out of 67) agreed or strongly agreed that the procedures for approving technical support deliverables **was efficient**. However, 50% of national coordinating authorities (strongly) disagreed that the monitoring of the projects (including relevant IT tools) was clear, transparent and user-friendly (12 out of 24). Moreover, 13% of beneficiaries (22 out of 168) and 19% of technical support providers (13 out of 67) claimed that the project duration was inappropriate for carrying out the activities. These answers constitute the most positively and the most negatively assessed aspects of the project, among others.

Regarding the **efficiency of the TSI projects implementation** on the ground, the majority of beneficiary authorities (97%, 163 out of 168) and technical support providers (95%, 64 out of 67) (strongly) agreed that the support of DG REFORM policy officers was useful. Beneficiary authorities also (strongly) agreed that DG REFORM was able to provide support from the start of technical support to its end (97%, 162 out of 167) and projects have been delivered on time, according to the agreed timeline (93%, 133 out of 144). In addition, technical support providers were assessed as having the expertise and skills necessary for the project (91%, 154 out of 168), while the cooperation with them was treated as efficient (94%, 155 out of 166). According to the providers of technical support, bureaucratic resistance to change during the implementation of the project activities was one of their main inefficiencies (65%, 39 out of 60).

When asked about the ability of beneficiaries to absorb the support provided, only 52% of technical support providers agreed (to a high or moderate extent) that financial resources were adequate in the beneficiary authority for the implementation of recommendations and 67% agreed that they were properly staffed (see Figure 25).

Figure 25- The extent to which technical support providers agree that beneficiary authorities have the appropriate capacity to absorb the support provided

	Not at all	To a limited extent	To a moderate extent	To a high extent
Financial resources for the implementation of recommendations were adequate in the beneficiary authority or sectoral policy area (N=56)	2%	46%	38%	14%
Exchange of information and cooperation with other institutions and stakeholders was effective during the project implementation (N=66)	2%	17%	47%	35%
Staff of the beneficiary authority was skilled and motivated for specific functions and tasks (N=67)		18%	43%	39%
Beneficiary authority was properly staffed (N=66)	5%	24%	45%	26%
Distribution of roles and responsibilities was well defined (N=65)		17%	46%	37%

Source: targeted survey of technical support providers, May 2024.

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Effectiveness and sustainability of the TSI

The most common **outputs expected to be delivered** through the technical support projects were recommendations (72% of beneficiary authorities, 134 out of 186 and 88% of technical support providers, 60 out of 68), workshops (70%, 130 out of 186, and 87%, 59 out of 68, respectively), analyses and reports (69%, 129 out of 186, and 90%, 61 out of 68 respectively), action plans/roadmaps (62%, 115 out of 186, and 85%, 58 out of 68, respectively), and guidelines, handbooks (55%, 103 out of 186, and 72%, 49 out of 68, respectively). The least common outputs were terms of reference (12% of beneficiaries, 23 out of 186, 19% of technical support providers, 13 out of 68) and legislative proposals (16% of beneficiaries, 29 out of 186, 28% of technical support providers, 19 out of 68). In terms of the **actual delivery of outputs,** 59% of beneficiary authorities (91 out of 155) and 64% of technical support providers (39 out of 61) indicated that some project outputs were delivered by the time of participation in the survey, with more than a third (35%, 55 out of 155 and 36%, 22 out of 61 respectively) reporting that all outputs were delivered.

Figure 26- Changes observed as a result of the implementation of the TSI projects

	National coordinating authorities / Beneficiary authorities	To a high extent	To a moderate extent	To a limited extent	Not at all
Enhanced capacities for ensuring progress of the reforms recommended within the European Semester cycle or the EU's economic adjustment programmes	National coordinating authorities	29%	63%	8%	
	Beneficiary authorities	22%	47%	20%	10%
Improved human resource management	National coordinating authorities	16%	47%	37%	
	Beneficiary authorities	5%	45%	29%	21%
Improved capacities for project/change management	National coordinating authorities	13%	61%	26%	
	Beneficiary authorities	26%	48%	18%	8%
Improved capacities for the assessment of public service delivery and reorganisation proposals	National coordinating authorities	37%	53%	11%	
	Beneficiary authorities	22%	50%	14%	14%
Improved capacities for reform/policy formulation, development and implementation	National coordinating authorities	33%	58%	8%	
	Beneficiary authorities	32%	56%	10%	
Improved organisational processes, procedures and methodologies	National coordinating authorities	57%	35%	9%	
	Beneficiary authorities	34%	54%	10%	
Improved individual adaptability to change	National coordinating authorities	22%	61%	17%	
	Beneficiary authorities	32%	45%	16%	7%
Improved contacts and relationships among different stakeholders	National coordinating authorities	73%	18%	9%	
	Beneficiary authorities	46%	46%	6%	
Increased knowledge and skills of staff	National coordinating authorities	61%	39%		
	Beneficiary authorities	59%	36%	6%	

Source: targeted survey of beneficiary authorities and coordinating authorities, May 2024. Note: The high number of blank responses is due to the fact that the survey question was only provided for respondents who selected 'Most/all project(s) are closed/completed' in question 4. *Question: To what extent have the following changes been observed in the beneficiary institutions because of implementing the TSI projects?*

The results of the targeted survey highlight some **changes observed in sectoral policy areas because of implementing the projects**. According to respondents, the projects resulted (to moderate or a high extent) in the production of new information or knowledge (94% of beneficiaries (61 out of 65) and 89% of coordinating authorities (25 out of 28)), improved strategies and reform/policy documents (83% of beneficiaries (50 out of 60) and 75% of coordinating authorities (21 out of 28)) and issuing or modification of 'soft' instruments (86% of beneficiaries (57 out of 66) and 81% of coordinating authorities (22 out of 27)) or improved application and implementation of EU law (54% of beneficiaries (30 out of 56) and 70% of coordinating authorities (19 out of 27)). Changes such as better application of economic instruments (taxes, charges, fees,

etc.) (39% of beneficiaries (22 out of 56) and 65% of coordinating authorities (15 out of 23)) were somewhat less noticed.

Figure 27- Changes observed as a result of the implementation of the TSI projects (by technical support request type)

Request type	Authority	To a high extent	To a moderate extent	To a limited extent	Not at all
Enhanced sharing of good practices and lessons learned between different EU countries addressing similar situations	National coordinating authorities	57%	32%	7%	4%
	Beneficiary authorities	47%	31%	13%	10%
New information /knowledge has been produced	National coordinating authorities	64%	25%	11%	
	Beneficiary authorities	52%	42%	6%	
Better application of economic instruments	National coordinating authorities	26%	39%	22%	13%
	Beneficiary authorities	16%	23%	18%	43%
Better provision of information and communication to the general population or specific target groups	National coordinating authorities	21%	42%	29%	8%
	Beneficiary authorities	33%	41%	13%	13%
New or modified 'soft' instruments (e.g. standards, guidelines and recommendations) issued	National coordinating authorities	37%	44%	19%	
	Beneficiary authorities	36%	50%	9%	5%
Improved application and implementation of EU law	National coordinating authorities	22%	48%	26%	4%
	Beneficiary authorities	18%	36%	20%	27%
New legal acts adopted or existing legal acts modified	National coordinating authorities	16%	48%	28%	8%
	Beneficiary authorities	20%	22%	24%	34%
Improved strategies and reform/policy documents	National coordinating authorities	46%	29%	21%	4%
	Beneficiary authorities	35%	48%	12%	5%

Source: targeted survey of coordinating authorities and beneficiary authorities, May 2024. Note: The high number of blank responses is due to the fact that the question was only provided for respondents who selected 'Most/all project(s) are closed/completed' in question 4. *Question: To what extent the following changes have been observed in your sectoral policy area because of implementing the project(s)?*.

Figure 28. Follow-up actions after the end of the TSI projects
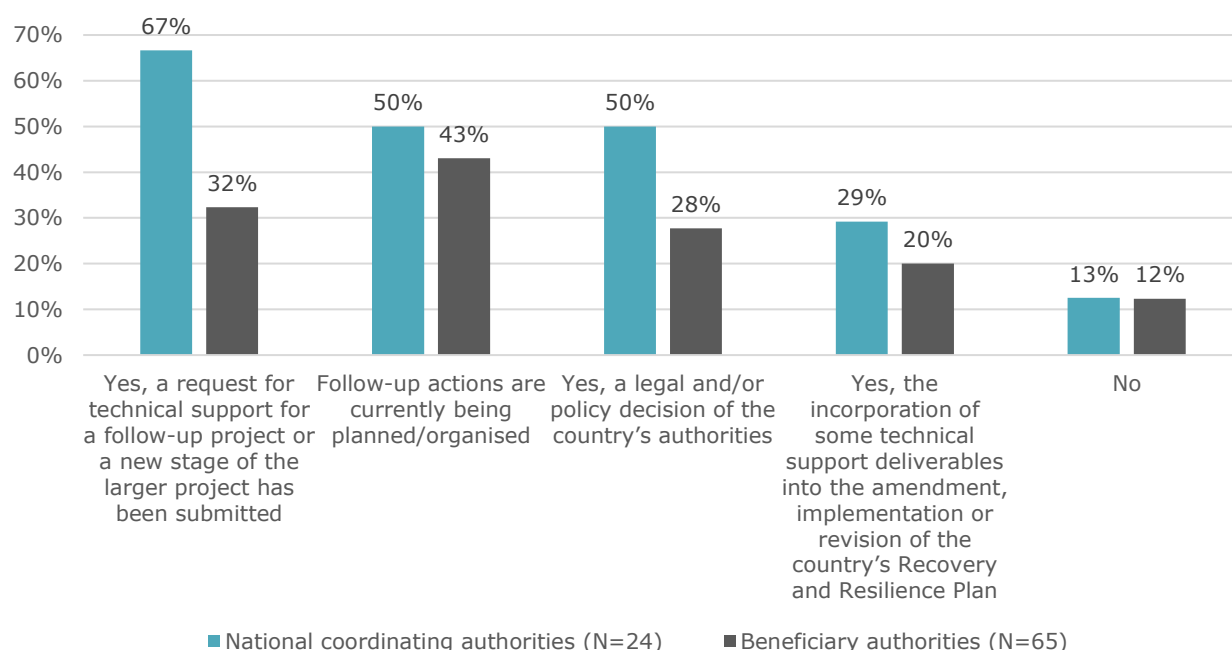
Source: the targeted survey of national coordinating authorities and beneficiary authorities, May 2024. Note: The high number of blank responses is determined by the fact that the survey question was only provided for respondents who selected 'Most/all project(s) are closed/completed' in question 4. *Question: Have there been any follow-up actions taken after the project end and building upon the project outputs?*

In terms of the **sustainability and continuity between SRSP and TSI**, 100% of national coordinating authorities agreed to a high or moderate extent that the results of the previous analysis and reports were used (23 out of 23) as well as new knowledge and skills were maintained (23 out of 23). This view was shared by 90% (57 out of 63) and 89% (59 out of 66) beneficiaries respectively. However, terms of reference were rarely used during public procurement processes, with 42% coordinating (7 out of 17) and 36% beneficiary (14 out of 54) authorities reported using them to a limited extent of not at all. Around a half of beneficiaries, who were previously involved in the SRSP projects, requested technical support from TSI to increase the sustainability of SRSP projects (53%, 10 out of 19).

A total of 94% of beneficiaries (58 out of 62) and 90% of coordinating authorities (18 out of 20) claimed that they used good practices and lessons learned from both TSI and SRSP projects to a high or to moderate extent, while 7% of beneficiaries (4 out of 62) and 10% of coordinating authorities (2 out of 20) indicated not using the good practice/lessons learned at all or using them only to a limited extent.

Figure 29- Factors affecting the sustainability of technical support

		Strong positive	Moderate positive	No effect	Moderate negative	Strong negative
Dissemination and exploitation of project results to the main institutions stakeholders	National coordinating authorities	45%	52%	3%		
	Beneficiary authorities	59%	38%	4%		
	Technical support providers	62%	35%	3%		
Adequate financial resources of the beneficiary authorities and other institutions	National coordinating authorities	43%	47%	10%		
	Beneficiary authorities	55%	31%	14%		
	Technical support providers	55%	36%	7%	1%	
Continued support of Commission officials from DG REFORM and other DGs/services	National coordinating authorities	48%	48%	3%		
	Beneficiary authorities	48%	35%	15%	1%	
	Technical support providers	51%	33%	7%	7%	1%
Stability of staff in the beneficiary organisation	National coordinating authorities	55%	42%	3%		
	Beneficiary authorities	64%	30%	6%		
	Technical support providers	65%	33%	2%		
Continued commitment to structural and administrative reforms	National coordinating authorities	63%	38%			
	Beneficiary authorities	51%	39%	10%		
	Technical support providers	68%	29%	2%	2%	
Exchange of knowledge and experience among EU Member States	National coordinating authorities	67%	30%	3%		
	Beneficiary authorities	69%	24%	6%	1%	
	Technical support providers	59%	35%	6%		
Access to international expertise under the TSI within the same policy area	National coordinating authorities	41%	56%	3%		
	Beneficiary authorities	68%	27%	5%		
	Technical support providers	65%	28%	8%		

■ Had/will have a strong positive effect   ■ Had/will have a moderate positive effect
■ Had/will have no effect   ■ Had/will have a moderate negative effect
■ Had/will have a strong negative effect

Source: targeted survey of beneficiary authorities, national coordinating authorities and technical support providers, May 2024. *Question: Did/will the following factors affect the sustainability of technical support, either positively or negatively?*

Coherence of the TSI

Survey respondents mostly perceived the TSI projects as partially complementary. While the majority of national coordinating authorities (53%, 16 out of 30) indicated that TSI projects are complementary to a moderate extent, similar share of beneficiary authorities perceived the projects as highly complementary (46%, 29 out of 63).

Figure 30. TSI complementarity to the support provided by other EU funds
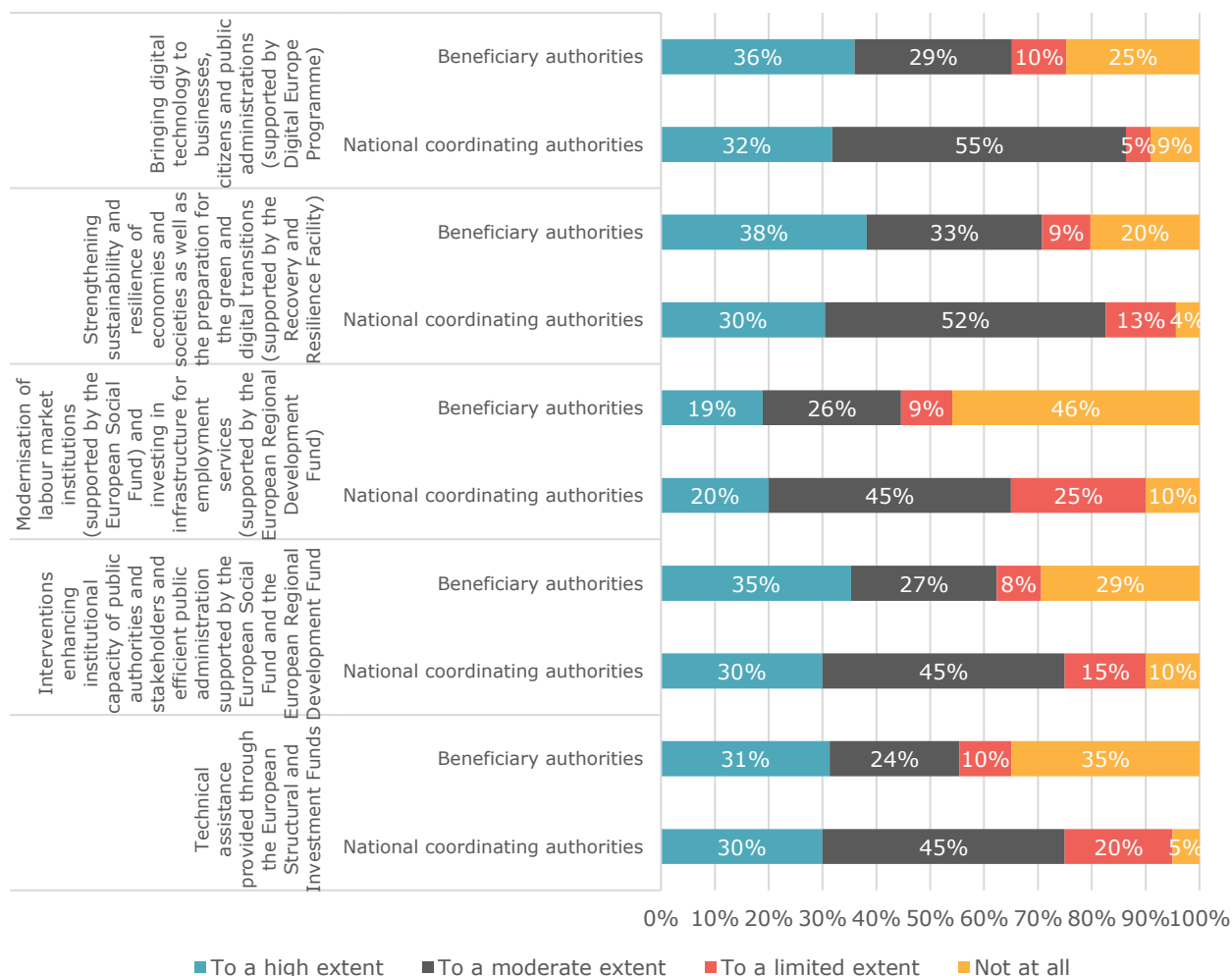
Source: targeted survey of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities, May 2024. *Question: Does the TSI complement (by funding different aspects of similar activities, targeting different groups, etc.) the following support provided by other EU funds?*

Figure 31. TSI contribution to the preparation, revision and implementation of the national RRPs

		To a high extent	To a moderate extent	To a limited extent	Not at all
Implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan and the achievement of its milestones and targets	Beneficiary authority (N=89)	10%	23%	29%	37%
	National coordinating authority (N=26)	38%	19%	31%	12%
Revision of the Recovery and Resilience Plan	Beneficiary authority (N=78)	10%	23%	29%	37%
	National coordinating authority (N=25)	8%	28%	28%	36%
Preparation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan	Beneficiary authority (N=80)	9%	29%	18%	45%
	National coordinating authority (N=26)	19%	19%	23%	38%

Source: targeted survey of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities, May 2024. *Question: To what extent does/did the TSI project(s) contribute to the preparation, revision and implementation of the Recovery and Resilience Plan in your country?*

There were no clear trends when assessing the **complementarity of the TSI with the similar national and regional programmes.** According to the targeted survey results, the largest share of national coordinating authorities (61%, 17 out of 28) considered TSI to be to a moderate extent complemented by other regional/national programmes, while 25% (7 out of 28) reported it to be complementary to a high extent. Considerably larger share of beneficiary authorities (41%, 53 out of 128) claimed TSI to be complementary with other programmes to a high extent, yet 34% of respondents disagreed with this view and instead indicated TSI to be complementary only to a limited extent (18%, 23 out of 128) or not at all (16%, 20 out of 128).

The most numerous groups of both national coordinating authorities (56%, 18 out of 32) and beneficiary authorities (38%, 46 out of 121) perceived the **TSI projects as complementing to the CSRs to a moderate extent**.

In terms of contribution to horizontal priorities, beneficiary authorities agreed that **the TSI has mostly contributed to EU digital transition** (40% to a high extent, 59 out of 149; 26% to a moderate extent, 38 out of 149). The contribution of the instrument to EU green transition (33% to a high extent, 45 out of 136) and UN SDGs (27% to a high extent, 35 out of 127) has also been pronounced. The contribution of the TSI is perceived as the most limited in the area of equality principles, with 51% of respondents (64 out of 126) noting that the instrument has not contributed to this area at all.

When assessing the contribution of the TSI projects **to the implementation of the EU priorities for 2019-2024**, the majority of beneficiary and coordinating authorities agreed

on their moderate to high contribution to the development of a strong and vibrant economic base (59%, 106 out of 181) and to a lesser extent – to building a climate-neutral, green, fair, and social Europe (56%, 104 out of 184). The smallest share of beneficiaries and coordinating authorities (29%, 51 out of 175) indicated that the projects moderately and highly contributed to the protection of citizens and freedoms.

EU value added of the TSI
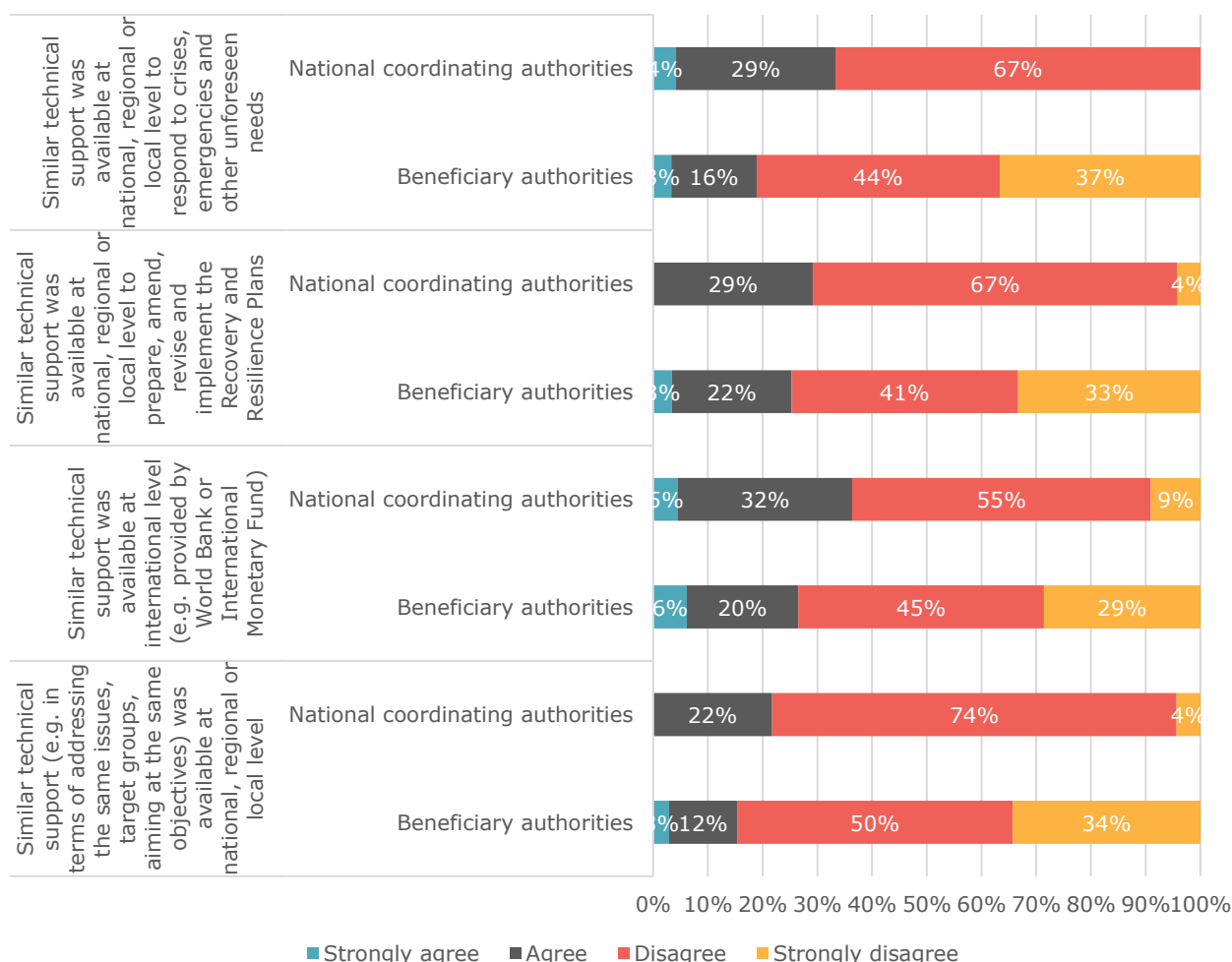
The TSI projects had a significant EU added value.

Figure 32. EU added value produced by the TSI (by type of request/project)
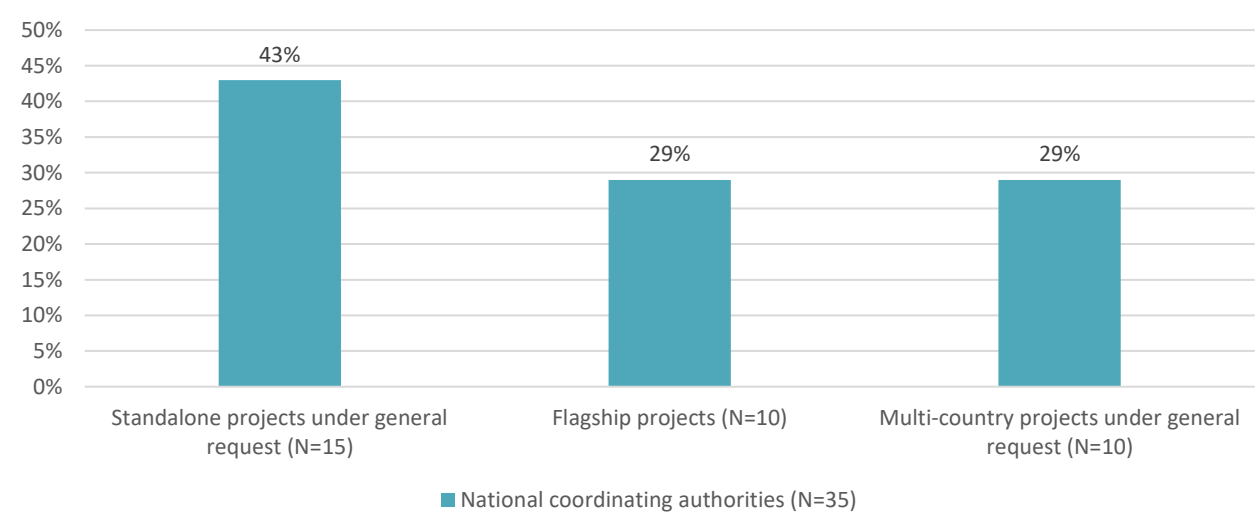
Source: the targeted survey of national coordinating authorities, May 2024. *Question: Which TSI projects produce most the additional value added compared to what could reasonably been achieved by the beneficiary institutions without EU support?*

Figure 33. Availability of technical support similar to the TSI

Category	Authority	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Similar technical support was available at national, regional or local level to respond to crises, emergencies and other unforeseen needs	National coordinating authorities	4%	29%	67%	
	Beneficiary authorities	3%	16%	44%	37%
Similar technical support was available at national, regional or local level to prepare, amend, revise and implement the Recovery and Resilience Plans	National coordinating authorities		29%	67%	4%
	Beneficiary authorities	3%	22%	41%	33%
Similar technical support was available at international level (e.g. provided by World Bank or International Monetary Fund)	National coordinating authorities	5%	32%	55%	9%
	Beneficiary authorities	6%	20%	45%	29%
Similar technical support (e.g. in terms of addressing the same issues, target groups, aiming at the same objectives) was available at national, regional or local level	National coordinating authorities		22%	74%	4%
	Beneficiary authorities	3%	12%	50%	34%

Source: the targeted survey of beneficiary authorities and national coordinating authorities, May 2024.
Question: 39. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on the availability of similar technical support.

Both national coordinating authorities and beneficiary authorities strongly **endorse the unique value of TSI projects.** Both groups of stakeholders identified the highest EU added value of the TSI in contributing to the exchange of lessons, good practices and creation of network of expertise (62% of beneficiary authorities strongly agree, 108 out of 175; 60% of national coordinating authorities strongly agree, 18 out of 30). Among beneficiary authorities, two other aspects of TSI projects emerge as particularly highly valued. The TSI's distinctiveness, stemming from its international expertise, collaboration with Member States, tailored support, and legitimisation of practices, received a similarly positive response, as 54% (89 out of 164) strongly agree and 44% (72 out of 164) agree. This element was also highly supported by national coordinating authorities, with 15 out of 30 (50%) strongly agreeing and 15 out of 30 (50%) agreeing with this statement. Finally, the TSI's role in fostering a community of experts and continuous cooperation among Member States was also widely endorsed, with 42% (69

out of 164) strongly agreeing and 54% (88 out of 164) agreeing. In terms of national coordinating authorities, the TSI's contribution to the twin digital and green transitions was supported, with 55% of respondents strongly agreeing (16 out of 29) and 41% (12 out of 29) agreeing to this as a specific characteristic of the TSI.

1.3. Summarised results of the interview programme

Implementation and participants of interviews

Interviews with EU- and national-level stakeholders are conducted to complement findings from desk research, the OPC and the targeted survey of stakeholders. The interview programme was initially divided into four parts: (i) exploratory interviews with the European Commission officials, (ii) exploratory and follow-up interviews with the national coordinating authorities, (iii) case study interviews, and (iv) validation interviews. However, after consultation with the evaluation team of DG REFORM, instead of the initially planned validation interviews, interviews were conducted with external stakeholders of the TSI (who were not directly involved in the programme's implementation) to ensure that a variety of perspectives were considered in the evaluation.

The interview questionnaires were tailored to each group of stakeholders, and every individual participant of exploratory interviews. Each interview was recorded, and interview notes and/or transcripts were prepared based on the recording, to be analysed with MAXQDA 24 building on the codes derived from the evaluation grid. A **total of 114 interviews were conducted** (see the table below).

Table 8- Implementation of the interview programme

Interview Type	beneficiary authorities	coordinating authorities	technical support providers	Representatives of the European Commission
Exploratory	n/a			26
National level	n/a	12	n/a	n/a
Case study	**38**	**6**	**12**	**17**
B1 – Revenue Administration & Public Financial Management	3	1	-	3
B2 – Public Administration and Governance	3	1	1	3
B3 – Sustainable Growth & Business Environment	7	1	2	*- (2 overlaps with exploratory interviews)*

B4 – Labour Market, Education, Health & Social Services	7	1	2	3
B5 – Financial Sector & Access to Finance	9	1	2	1 (*2 overlaps with exploratory interviews*)
01 – Horizontal Policies	4	-	2	3
Follow-up of the SRSP	5	1	3	4
With external stakeholders	3			
TOTAL	114			

Note: while some interviews involved a few participants, the count refers to the total of number of interviews carried out. Exploratory interviews were carried out with the following DGs of the Commission: DG REFORM (units 01; A1; A2; A4; B1; B2; B3; B4; B5), SG RECOVER; DG REGIO; DG ECFIN; DG ENER; DG ENV; DG EMPL; DG NEAR; DG INTPA).

The interview programme was designed to embrace a wide variety of views, including those coming from the beneficiary or national coordinating authorities as well as from the policy officers and other officials of the Commission. The interviews with external stakeholders engaged representatives of academic community and other Commission services that are not directly involved in the implementation of the TSI. Depending on the question at hand, the interview programme was used either to supplement other sources of evidence or as the main information source in cases when other data sources were scarce.

Coherence and relevance of the TSI

The **main motivation to request for technical support under the TSI** for most of the interviewed coordinating and beneficiary authorities is primarily the need for high-level expertise (which would be impossible to achieve on national-level efforts) as well as institutional and administrative capacity building. Some beneficiaries chose TSI because they have previously **conducted the SRSP project and saw the TSI as a suitable instrument to continue the reform efforts**.

The initial results of the interview programme are **ambiguous on whether the support provided by the TSI does not overlap with other EU programmes**, but instead create synergies. While representatives of the Commission highlighted synergies between the TSI and RRF, the potential overlaps with such programmes as the European Social Fund Plus were highlighted. However, on the project rather than the programme level, multiple national coordinating authorities claimed having internal mechanisms to prevent overlapping requests for services. For example, one coordinating authority reported using an internal database of projects to cross-check on potential duplications. According to

representatives of the Commission, similar measures are applied on the EU level, when relevant DGs flag potentially overlapping projects. However, there seems to be no centralised mechanism to avoid double funding.

A considerable number of interviewees (coordinating, beneficiary authorities, and representatives of the Commission) highlighted some limitations of the TSI to address the urgent needs of the Member States. Since the time period between the submission of the request to the actual start of the TSI project may be relatively long, the instrument cannot provide emergency support in a short span of time. As a result, while positively evaluated by all interviewed stakeholders, **projects under dedicated calls were perceived as not suitable for solving urgent operational challenges** (e.g. support for migrants in the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine) by a few interviewees.

Efficiency of the TSI

Participants of the interview programme highlighted that the **administrative processes of the TSI projects were similar to the SRSP projects, with the biggest challenge being the time constraints**. Some drawbacks were mentioned, including a lengthy time period between the submission of requests for technical support and the beginning of project implementation. In terms of governance of the programme, **cooperation between the beneficiary authorities and the Commission officials, in particular DG REFORM policy officers, was seen as positive,** with several issues related to the staff changes on both sides. Only some delays in project implementation were reported, with national coordinating authorities outlining that the quality of results is more relevant than keeping up with the timeline. Overall, beneficiary authorities interviewed for case studies were satisfied with the support provided, highlighting the usefulness of different types of outputs (recommendations, workshops, etc.).

A few interviewees from the Commission highlighted that **whereas the budget of the programme steadily increased, the human resources in DG REFORM did not keep pace with this development.** As a result, DG REFORM staff is responsible for the management of an increasing number and more complex projects. Since the TSI programme is demand-driven, there are only limited possibilities to prepare for projects implementation in advance (e.g. prepare public procurement specifications in advance), therefore this period overlaps with the highest workload. Limited human resources were also mentioned as the reason for relying on a smaller scope of delivery methods.

Finally, there was **no common agreement between beneficiary, coordinating authorities, technical support providers and representatives of the Commission regarding the management of multi-country and flagship projects**. On the one hand, they were reported to be more efficient as similar project design may be multiplied across the participating Member States, relying on the same management structure and set of deliverables. On the other hand, interviewees from DG REFORM outlined strong priority to preserve demand-based nature of the TSI, meaning that multi-country and/or flagship projects are still tailored to the needs of an individual country. Therefore, in the latter case, policy officers are forced to manage each of the reforms individually, thus increasing managerial burden and reducing the 'economy of scale' effect of multi-country projects. In turn, two interviewees noticed that when **a multi-country project is**

designed to provide tailored technical support for each party engaged, the overall interaction between the Member States is reduced.

Effectiveness of the TSI

Interviewees also provided some evidence on the key factors influencing the success of the TSI projects in terms of achieving the project objectives and implementing reforms in Member States. Among the internal factors/mechanisms of change the following were identified by a number of stakeholders interviewed across all categories:

- **Strong leadership, ownership, and commitment of beneficiary authorities** were mentioned as key factors of successful project implementation, allowing timely decisions to be made, facilitating engagement of relevant stakeholders and ensuring smoother communication between the parties involved. It was noted that in cases without the effective involvement of political authorities, the projects were less likely to result in long-term changes. On the other hand, stakeholders across the four groups claimed that **performance-oriented approach applied to RRF may not be suitable for the TSI.** As suggested by two representatives of the Commission, the TSI is a complementary part of programmes supporting reforms on the EU level, therefore, to ensure implementation of reforms and investments, it may be combined with other programmes;
- **More consultation with beneficiary authorities** when preparing the calls as well as during the tender process. Some interviewees from the beneficiary and national coordinating authorities highlighted the need for a closer involvement of beneficiary authorities into the selection of technical support providers, which would ensure a better match between the contractor, the aims of the project and the expectations of beneficiaries. A considerable number of respondents expressed a need for more flexibility in the relations with technical support providers and tailor-made guidelines for the provision of technical support;
- **The administrative capacity** of the beneficiary and coordinating authorities is vital for securing the effectiveness and efficiency of TSI projects. With a lack of it, recommendations produced in the course of the project rarely translate into actual reforms.
- **Electoral cycle and political support** for the foreseen reforms. If a technical support initiative connects the suggested improvements to a larger, longer-term national strategy, it has a higher chance of success. The involvement of civil servants is crucial in the implementation of reforms since the political cycle has the potential to either encourage or obstruct their implementation.

As a potential recommendation for the future improvements, one coordinating authority **reported the need for feedback after the submission of the application**, specifically in those cases where requests for services are not funded as this is seen as an area for improvement. Importantly, the interviewees identified an analogous problem during the *ex post* evaluation of SRSP.

Sustainability of the TSI

The majority of the interviewees agreed that a sufficient level of project sustainability is maintained, backed by Member States continuous engagement in the TSI projects. Both

beneficiary and coordinating authorities suggested that **sustainability is ensured by implementing follow-up projects, building up on the results of the previous ones**.

One of the main challenges reported by the respondents regarding the sustainability of the projects is the **absence of a monitoring mechanism which would make the assessment of project impacts possible**. Currently, there is no centralised approach towards monitoring of project outcomes and impacts. While the Commission established the feedback mechanism that is perceived as potentially useful by beneficiary and coordinating authorities, **the latter claimed being unfamiliar with the results of satisfaction and outcome questionnaires.** While, building on the initial results of our interview programme, there are no Member States that would have developed a monitoring system, a few coordinating authorities stressed that it is foreseen to be put in place in the near future.

EU added value of the TSI

The majority of participants of the interview programme referred to a few examples of the EU added value. **Sharing of good practices, exchange of know-how and other activities allowing the synergies across the projects to be exploited were highlighted**. Successful exchange of knowledge was recorded especially in multi-country projects, which were said to bring about more cross-border, EU-wide effects. Key factors that encouraged this process included similarities in specific country challenges, national priority reforms and addressing policy areas such as green and digital transition. The EU added value of the TSI was identified as very high by coordinating authorities and beneficiaries, dealing with **multi-country or flagship projects that: i) help to introduce new EU legislation; ii) help to internalise completely new practice that Member States are not familiar with or has only limited experience.** However, one of the coordinating authorities highlighted that where issues faced by Member States are not completely similar, multi-country projects will not be the most efficient way of dealing with these challenges.

1.4. Summarised results of the focus group discussions

Implementation and participants of focus group discussions

A total of **three focus group discussions were implemented** for the mid-term evaluation of the TSI. The first focus group was carried out on 3 June 2024, focusing **on the design and management of the TSI.** Nine representatives from four countries (Estonia, Greece, Hungary, and Sweden) participated, including three representatives of technical support providers and six representatives of beneficiary authorities. Another focus group discussion on the same topic was organised on 11 July 2024, with the participation of 14 beneficiary authorities from 12 Member States (Cyprus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Spain). Finally, one more focus group discussion (**on the implementation and design of flagship and / or multi-country projects**) took place on 10 July 2024, attended by 14 beneficiary authorities from eight Member States (Austria, Croatia, Malta, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia), in addition to a representative of DG REFORM evaluation team.

The participants were selected on the following criteria: 1) the TSI projects they were/are involved in are not covered by the case study programme of the mid-term evaluation; 2) their Member State is comparatively less represented in the targeted survey. Ensuring a variety of delivery methods was also considered in the selection process.

Focus groups on the design and implementation of the TSI followed a meeting agenda, with questions and discussion points organised around four topics: 1) programme management; 2) implementation of the TSI; 3) factors influencing success and sustainability of the projects or coherence of the TSI with other EU instruments[91]; and 4) future improvements of the TSI. The discussion on the design and implementation of the flagship and / or multi-country projects focused on the following topics: 1) relevance of flagship requests for support; 2) relevance and effectiveness of multi-country projects; 3) suitability of the selected delivery method(s); 4) factors that influence success of the projects; 5) future improvements of the TSI.

The focus group discussions were recorded, and transcripts were prepared based on the recording. They were analysed with MAXQDA 24, building on the codes derived from the evaluation grid.

Visibility

The majority of participants of the focus group discussion reported that the TSI's visibility could be improved in their country. Beneficiary authorities from some Member States (Malta, Poland, Spain, Portugal, Ireland, Croatia, Slovenia, Croatia) reported that, in their view, the knowledge about the TSI is limitedly widespread across the public institutions. Most of these respondents only learned about the programme shortly before they applied. For instance, a participant from Malta claimed that they found out about TSI support opportunity through a Brussels-based European Integration Network. In Ireland, it was European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority who approached the beneficiary authority and encouraged them to apply. In Croatia and Slovenia, the beneficiary authorities only received one email alerting them to apply to the TSI. **In contrast, participants from three Member States (Cyprus, Greece, Romania) reported that the TSI was well known in their countries.** Furthermore, **a lack of information in the national language**, which could facilitate the use of the instrument, was emphasised.

Effectiveness

While discussing **drivers and barriers of a successful project implementation,** participants outlined multiple factors. First, the need for **skilled technical support providers**, who have the expertise to do the job, and be committed to supporting the beneficiary authority, rather than simply following the deliverables in their contract with the Commission, was mentioned. Second, attention was paid to the **timeline and organisation of the project activities.** The project needs to have a clear timeline, and all involved parties must be aware about their responsibilities. The timeline must be appropriate to the task, not too long, and not too ambitious to allow the beneficiary authorities to cooperate effectively, and to ensure high-quality outputs.

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[91] Different topics were covered during individual discussions.

Furthermore, while the **TSI does not involve any cost per se, it does require significant time resources**. Many beneficiary authorities did not anticipate spending as much time on the TSI as they did in the end, therefore, initial communication on these costs is relevant to ensure the ownership and engagement of beneficiary authorities. One beneficiary authority brought attention to the **lack of resources from the beneficiary authorities' side to fully absorb the support**. Usually, beneficiaries apply for TSI support when they identify a gap in their capacity to conduct reforms in specific policy areas; but when receiving support, the scarcity of human resources may be in place, resulting in limited capacity to absorb the support provided to a full extent. **Similar challenges may also be faced when achieving the outcomes of the project:** the political attention may shift and thus, funding priorities may deviate to other policy areas. Therefore, a few beneficiary authorities suggested that these projects should be aligned **with national priorities to ensure their relevance in the swiftly changing environment** (Estonia, Greece). **Projects which lacked appropriate adaptation to specific country context were reported to fall short of long-term effects,** primarily because limited political support and legal basis for the implementation of recommendations. In turn, for the successful implementation of the project, commitment from beneficiary authorities was stressed as crucial.

Moreover, **in-house expertise matters.** Already existing in-house capacity enables staff to oversee the projects effectively, to provide their own input, and to make use of project outcomes. Having in-house expertise may reduce the time staff spend getting up to speed.

Generally, **projects involving a larger number of stakeholders or dealing with a new or complex policy area were reported to have a prolonged timeline of implementation**, largely due to the need of having more time for dialogue between different stakeholders (regional authorities, governmental agencies, etc.). In general, **beneficiaries were rather willing to accept delays in project implementation than to accept poorer-quality results**. As for multi-regional projects of the TSI, the risk of **limited involvement of national- and EU-level authorities was indicated as threatening** due to insufficient ownership, which may turn to be challenging in the implementation phase. In other words, **in the case of multi-regional projects, specific attention should be paid for engagement of all relevant stakeholders across multiple levels of governance.** To overcome these problems and ensure continuous engagement from all parties it was advised to compile a communication plan at the offset of the project.

On a similar note, one beneficiary authority (Cyprus) noted that **changes in government administration can mean that projects are deprioritised.** To avoid this, and to ensure that EU funds are spent on projects whose outputs will actually be used, the Commission could hold Member States accountable for following up on the TSI projects.

Efficiency of the TSI

Overall, **all participants agreed on the TSI being a useful and efficient tool to address their needs**. They expressed a high level of satisfaction with the low administrative burden of the programme. This was especially reduced by the selection and contracting of technical support providers performed by DG REFORM. However, perceptions of beneficiary authorities in this regard differed as some of them expected having a higher impact on the selection, contracting and monitoring of technical support

providers (e.g. Croatia, Poland, Malta). Familiarisation with the Commission's contract with the respective technical support providers was mentioned as a potential solution.

Most participants voiced no concerns about the application process. However, the Polish beneficiary authority noted two factors that could be improved: the **request for support forms could be simpler** (except the pre-filled flagship request forms)**, and the timeframe for application could be longer**. In the Polish case, the relevant documents for the application are provided in June with a national-level deadline in September. Because the preparation of these requests requires a fair amount of consultation, both internally and with DG REFORM, the inclusion of the summer holiday period in the application period introduces delays and leads to a last-minute rush to finalise the request.

The **collaboration between the Commission, technical support providers and beneficiary authorities was reported to be positive, with some more negative perception towards the technical support providers.** Of the participants who voiced an opinion about the quality of the technical support they received, similar numbers were satisfied and not satisfied with it. **Six beneficiary authorities (Portugal, Belgium, Ireland, Poland, Slovenia and Spain) reported concerns about the consultancy services** they received. For instance, the Spanish beneficiary authority perceived the team of the technical support provider to be insufficient to cover the four Spanish regions. The Belgian beneficiary authority reported that the consultants were more focused on producing the project deliverables rather than supporting the needs of the Belgian authorities. The Irish beneficiary authority reported that their concerns were not fully recognised throughout the project duration. This perception was caused by the fact that the beneficiary authority was not involved in the selection of the technical support providers and unable to direct their work.

Some beneficiary authorities have also reported **challenges around non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) with technical support providers** (Austria, Latvia, Croatia, and Poland). There is no formal procedure governing NDAs in the TSI. Many consultancies have their standard NDAs, however, they may not meet the legal requirements of the beneficiary authorities. As a result, amendments of the NDAs are needed, which is perceived as a length process (e.g. Latvia, Poland, Croatia). For instance, the Polish beneficiary authority spent half a year negotiating the legal terms and conditions before their technical support providers could even start the job. Because of these concerns over data protection, a few beneficiary authorities reported a preference to work with technical support providers beyond consultancies (e.g. the Austrian beneficiary authorities reported that they feel more comfortable working with academics). Nonetheless, one beneficiary authority that did work with a consultancy reported that once the issues around data protection were solved, they were happy with the technical support provider (Latvia).

In contrast, four beneficiary authorities (Finland, Poland, Cyprus and Greece) were very happy with their technical support providers. For example, the Finnish beneficiary authority described their technical support providers as really good; the Polish beneficiary authority praised their technical support providers expertise in behavioural insights. In Cyprus, the beneficiary authority suggested their own experts, whom they had worked with before, and were happy with.

On the other hand, representatives of beneficiary authorities noted that **consultations with the Commission before the implementation stage** were especially useful to ensure the proper execution of the project. Moreover, they recommended having a consultation meeting with the Commission before the submission of the project as well, so that the expectations of both sides in terms of topical scope could be aligned.

In terms of the **delivery method, participants elaborated on the suitability of different methods for different project aims and tasks**. For instance, public procurement was reported to be a suitable delivery method for the projects which provided very specific, technical support in a particular subfield as local consultants are typically the most familiar with the context or have a very specific technical knowledge that is necessary for the project. In addition, the use of TAIEX was praised, especially in combination with public procurement (e.g. Finland, Poland, Belgium). Beneficiaries who worked with international organisations were satisfied with the level of expertise, especially in terms of contributing to more strategic, broader questions (Estonia, Sweden). However, some of the beneficiaries noted that a step-by-step action plan that would guide them in implementing the reforms further would be needed (Greece).

Other comments

A few beneficiary authorities noted **that flagship requests for support allows the needs of the technical support to be focused and clarifies the priorities of the Commission**. On the other hand, some beneficiary authorities (e.g. Poland, Austria) perceived flagship **requests of support as potentially limiting the flexibility of the TSI** in terms of tailoring the projects to the needs of Member States.

The approach towards multi-country projects was not univocal as well. Among the **key benefits of multi-country projects**, efficiency to serve the needs of multiple countries at the same time and cost-effective way to provide technical support was mentioned. Furthermore, networking between beneficiary authorities from multiple Member States was perceived as valuable in and of itself. However, **some drawbacks were mentioned as well.** First, it was pointed that the design of a multi-country project may not be sufficiently tied to the needs of one specific country, compared to stand-alone projects. Second, if different countries have slightly different needs, it will be more difficult for the technical support provider to meet the needs of each beneficiary authority. Third, the administrative burden for the beneficiary authority is higher than it is in the case of a stand-alone project. This is because multi-country projects will involve a need to coordinate with other beneficiary authorities, as well as with the technical support provider and DG REFORM.

Measures for the improvement in the future

Focus group participants shared a number of suggestions for measures that could improve the TSI in the future, including:

- **Allowing beneficiary authorities a role in choosing the technical support providers, and in shaping their work throughout the process;**
- **Providing more support at the implementation stage**: while representatives of beneficiary authorities are generally content with the level and procedure of expertise

provided, they also highlight the need for more technical support during the current stage of implementation of the TSI recommendations;

- **Involving different-level authorities in the project implementation**: some participants of the focus group discussion emphasised that, based on their experience, involving regional, local, and national authorities (especially in multi-regional projects) alongside the Commission in the exchanges with the technical support providers could be beneficial for the implementation of projects;

- **Sharing of knowledge and expertise:** the TSI succeeds in creating high-quality, high-demand outputs (recommendations, analyses, methodologies, etc.), which may be opened and communicated to other stakeholders. Participants of all focus group discussions emphasised that accessing the experience of other Member States/regions or re-using already created deliverables could allow countries to learn from already existing instead of creating new knowledge;

- **Technical support for green and digital transition**: among different policy areas, green transition and digitalisation were mentioned as the most relevant for the future;

- **Combining of the TSI with other EU instruments:** the TSI may be a great instrument to build capacity in multiple areas, including IT and digitalisation. However, in order to push digitalisation one also needs an IT infrastructure. Here, it would be helpful to combine the TSI's support with an additional EU programme or instrument that would provide funds for this purpose.