

Project Summary

General Technical Support for the Implementation of Ireland's Recovery and Resilience Plan

Service ID: REFORM/SC2021/134

Basic Information

Date of contract signature: 17th December 2021

Length of the project implementation: 14 months

Beneficiary: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)

Contracting Authority: DG REFORM

Contractor: IBF International Consulting

Technical Lead: Teched Consulting Services Ltd.

the RRF was the first performance instrument – a programme where project execution is verified via evidence of completion of Milestones and Targets (M&T) rather than through the presentation of vouched receipts - rolled out by the EC to Member States.

Summary

The TSI support provided analytical reports and capacity building workshops to Ireland's Implementing Body for the NRRP, as well as to the Project Leads (Accountable Departments and Agencies) running individual projects, and the Independent Audit Body (IAB) within DPER, to help enhance their monitoring, control, audit and reporting functions.

Support Delivered

Through desk research, meetings and workshops, the processes and procedures for the monitoring, control, auditing and reporting of Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) were examined. A series of reports were prepared containing recommendations. Measures, including support to the configuration, testing and



Project Background and Context

Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) proposal was submitted in June 2021 to the EC's Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) - established to assist recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly for women and the disadvantaged, through green, digital and social investments and reforms.

Following approval of the NRRP, Ireland submitted an application to DG REFORM under the EC's Technical Support Instrument (TSI). Technical support to Ireland's Implementing Body within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) was critically needed, as

About TSI

The support in this project was provided through the Technical Support Instrument (TSI). The goal of TSI is to support Member States' efforts to design and implement resilience-enhancing reforms, thereby contributing to the EU's recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, improving the quality of public services and getting back on the path of sustainable and inclusive growth.

List of project results

1. *Monitoring Report prepared, with analysis of, and recommendations for improving Ireland's RRF monitoring mechanisms – including development of the 'RRF Rubric';*
2. *Control Report prepared, with analysis of, and recommendations for improving Ireland's RRF control frameworks – including development of a 'Control Chart';*
3. *Audit Report prepared, to support an update of the IAB's Audit Strategy;*
4. *Reporting Report prepared, with analysis of, and recommendations for improving Ireland's RRF reporting mechanisms;*
5. *Support provided to the design, configuration and implementation of Ireland's RRF Information System (Repository System), including requirements definition and User Acceptance Testing (UAT);*
6. *Groundwork carried out in support of a Workload Analysis, to confirm Ireland's administrative capacity for the RRF;*
7. *Training Needs Assessment (TNA) carried out;*
8. *Capacity Building delivered in areas such as monitoring, control, audit of M&T, audit to safeguard the Financial Interests of the Union (FIU), fraud prevention, detection and investigation, including conflict of interest, Do No Significant Harm (DNSH), RRF-related ICT systems (FENIX, ARACHNE, Repository System), and Data Protection.*



Technical support was provided to Ireland during the process of establishment of a repository system to be used for monitoring the implementation of the RRF, according to the requirements included in the Ireland's NRRP Milestone #108

roll-out of the RRF Information System (Repository System), workload analysis, and targeted capacity building (through workshops) were implemented to drive functional improvements.

Results Achieved

The technical support provided to Ireland ensured that the RRF Information System was ready for operation in October 2022, which will enable the Implementing Body to meet its monitoring and reporting obligations for the National Recovery and Resilience Plan.

Going forwards, the use of this system will greatly improve the way in which the Implementing Body manages the Project Leads, collects and controls project data, reports via the FENIX Reporting Tool, and interacts with the ARACHNE Risk Scoring Tool.

The provided support enabled Milestones on fitness for purpose of the Repository System (#108) and administrative capacity (#109) – important precursors for the submission of Ireland's first Payment Request under the RRF - to be completed.

The RRF Rubric

To successfully deliver a project under RRF, which is a Performance Instrument, Accountable Departments should follow **the RRF Rubric (FLAG – ASSERT – TEST – DECONSTRUCT and TELL A STORY)**:

- 1) **FLAG** potential problem areas to the Implementing Body early and often;
- 2) Use every opportunity to **ASSERT** your position on justifications proposed for future submissions for e.g. Milestone and Target (M&T) completion, the verification evidence, delay mitigation, common indicator methodologies, redaction of personal data, etc., to **TEST** the EC's reaction;
- 3) Forensically **DECONSTRUCT** the Verification Mechanisms associated with each of the M&T of your Project(s), understand precisely what is being asked for, and ensure that the evidence provided is exactly in line;
- 4) **TELL A STORY**: Accompany the verification evidence with a convincing and sequenced narrative of how that evidence proves your case for M&T full compliance.

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