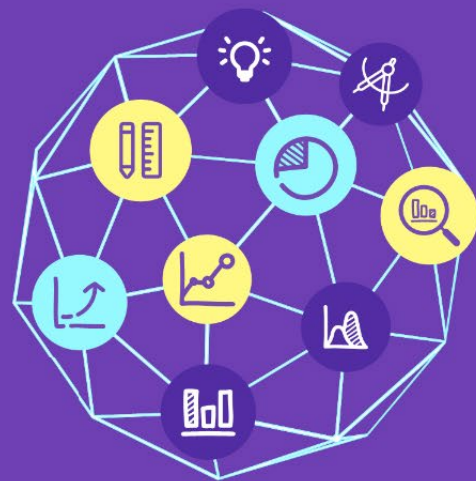# Building capacity for evidence-informed policymaking in governance and public administration in a post-pandemic Europe

*Overall Project
Inception Report*

Contents

1 Context and purpose of this report

The project on "*Building capacity for evidence informed policymaking in governance and public administration in post-pandemic Europe*" is a Technical Support Instrument (TSI) multi-country project supported by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support (DG REFORM) and co-implemented by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

This project supports seven European Union (EU) member states in building capacity to improve the effectiveness of their public administrations, through greater capacity for supply and uptake of scientific knowledge, evaluation, and evidence in policymaking. The participating EU member states are: **Greece, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands**.

The **expected long-term effect** of this Project (impact) is the **reinforced institutional integration of the use of evidence, science and evaluation for policymaking**. Therefore, the project is expected to produce the following short/medium term effects (outcomes) through concrete activities (Figure 1):

— **Outcome A:** Improved capacity for evidence-informed policymaking in governance and public administration in a post-pandemic Europe. To achieve this, there will be:

   o **Country-specific analysis**, with a national kick-off event, a country inception report (*output 1*) a diagnostic assessment of the current use of evidence (*output 2*), a needs and gaps assessment of the beneficiary organisations in regards to their preferred goals in implementing evidence-informed policymaking (*output 3*), a recollection of country recommendations with an implementation roadmap (*output 4*), and a section in the final report (*output 5*).

   o **International capacity-building workshops** to build professional competences in scientists, policymakers, and knowledge brokers for evidence-informed policymaking.

— **Outcome B:** Increased awareness, recognition and understanding at the political level, and in the scientific communities, of the actions and investments that are required for science and evidence to be able to fully contribute to well-informed policymaking. To achieve this, there will be:

   o **International mutual learning exercises or thematic symposia**, bringing together leading practitioners from the European Commission, the OECD, and participating EU member states around specific topics and practices in evidence-informed policymaking.

This ***overall project inception report*** provides the first framing for the multi-country project, is a general project management tool with general insights about the initial steps of the project implementation, the methodological approach to be followed, the governance model, and the timeline of the implementation of the project. The report offers an overview of the project objectives and general timeline for implementation and explanation on each specific activities. As such, the following sections will focus on the general information about the project overall kick-off and national kick-off events, the basic information about the country-specific analysis, capacity-building workshops and mutual learning exercises, with some early findings.

In addition to this overall project inception report, there will be seven country inception reports focused on each participating EU member state to explain the specificities of the project and its analysis when contextualised to a particular country.

2   Overview of project objectives and timeline for TSI-7 EU member states

The general objective of this Project is to support participating EU member states in their efforts to implement reforms, which could encourage investment, increase competitiveness and assist in achieving sustainable economic and social convergence, resilience and recovery. This should also strengthen their institutional and administrative capacity, including at regional and local levels, to facilitate socially inclusive, green and digital transitions, to address the challenges identified in the country-specific recommendations.

Figure 1. Project overview with outcomes, specific objectives and activities.
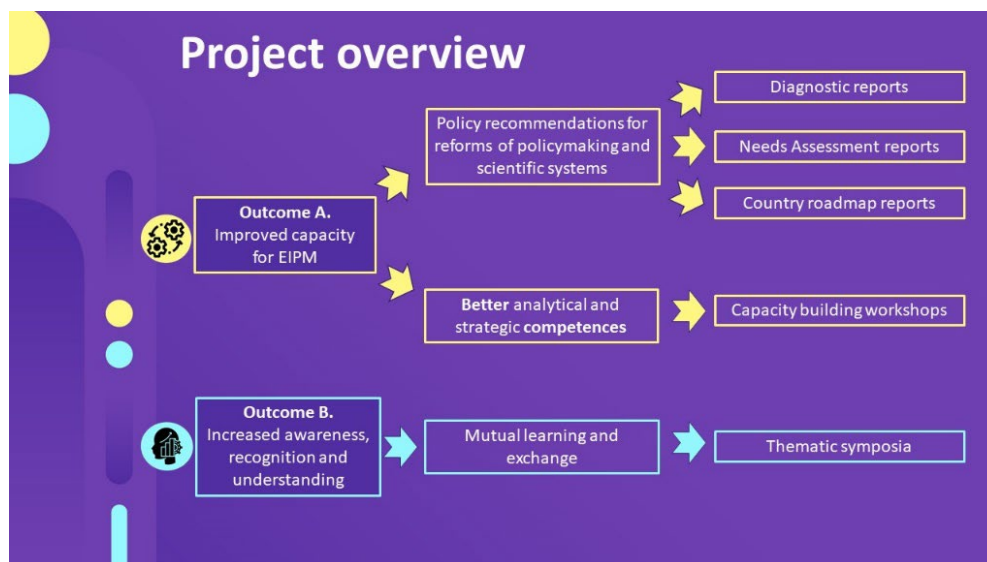
Source: own elaboration.

Through the achievement of specific outcomes to improved capacity for evidence-informed policymaking and increased awareness, recognition and understanding of its practice (Figure 1), this project aims to be relevant also to the national priorities. Briefly, these EU member states have promoted reforms for evidence-informed policymaking in recent years such as (for more extended information, consult the country inception report):

— In Greece, application of executive state law (4622/2019) foresees a new way of designing public policy, coordination of the government work, monitoring and evaluation of public policies and a new approach to regulatory impact assessments.
— In Belgium, the implementation of Spending Reviews and the steps taken in the promotion of policy evaluations at the federal level.
— In Czechia, the Public Administration Reform (PAR) Strategy "Client-oriented Public Administration 2030" aims at improving the effectiveness and capabilities of the public administration, and helping it take more a citizen-centric approach, including through greater use of evidence for decision-making; and may support the implementation of the BETA2 programme of public procurement in research for public bodies to contract universities and companies to conduct research for them.
— In Estonia, the action plan Estonia 2035 promotes a knowledge-based and high-quality policy-making of the country, including implementing co-creative policy-making and implementation of evidence-based policy-making (including development and implementation of the organisation and coordination of national R&D and its budgeting and monitoring system).
— In Latvia, the National Development Plan 2021-27 envisages promoting a proactive approach, implementing evidence-based solutions, and facilitating cross-sectoral cooperation through innovative methods.
— In Lithuania, the government programme's section 2 promotes decisions that are based on the recommendations given by impartially informed scientific and research groups.
— In the Netherlands, the Project can support the reform programme Werk aan Uitvoering (WAU) of the public administration.

The duration of the overall project is 24 months and a series of activities are envisioned to reach the desired project outcomes (Table 1).

Table 1. Tentative timeline for project implementation.

Activities		Nov'22	Dec'22	Jan'23	Feb'23	Mar'23	Apr'23	May'23	Jun'23	Jul'23	Aug'23	Sept'23	Oct'23	Nov'23	Dec'23	Jan'24	Feb'24	Mar'24	Apr'24	May'24	Jun'24	Jul'24	Aug'24	Sep'24	Oct'24
Project overall kick-off event		👥																							
Inception report and country inception report			▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓																	
Country analysis for policy recommendations	Round of national kick-off events			▓	▓	▓																			
	Diagnosis report						▓	▓	▓																
	Needs assessment report											▓	▓			▓									
	Roadmap report																▓	▓	▓	▓					
Capacity-building workshops	For scientists						▓	▓	👥	👥	▓	👥													
	For policymakers									▓	▓	▓	▓	👥	▓	▓	👥								
	For knowledge brokers															▓	▓	▓	▓	▓	👥				
Mutual learning exercises	1st thematic symposia									▓	▓	▓	👥												
	2nd thematic symposia													▓	▓	▓	👥								
	3rd thematic symposia																	▓	▓	▓	👥				
Project final report and video output																							▓	▓	▓
Project final conference																									👥

Source : own elaboration.

3   Project governance

DG REFORM, the JRC and the OECD have a close communication during the whole process of implementation of this multi-country project.

DG REFORM is the Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support with the responsibility to coordinate and provide tailor-made technical support to EU Member States, in cooperation with the relevant Commission services. This support is exclusively provided through the Technical Support Instrument (TSI).

— For this TSI project, DG REFORM funds and oversees the overall project implementation and provides feedback and input to all country analyses.

The JRC is the science and knowledge service of the European Commission and collaborates with European institutions and agencies, research and policy organisations in the EU Member States, and others, to provide independent and evidence-based knowledge and science in support of policies to positively impact societies.

— For this TSI project, the JRC's "Science for democracy and evidence-informed policymaking" unit ensures overall project coordination and is directly responsible for the country analysis of five EU member states: Greece, Czechia, Estonia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands.

The OECD is an international organisation that together with governments, policymakers and citizens, works on establishing evidence-based international standards and finding solutions to a range of social, economic and environmental challenges

— For this TSI project, the OECD's Directorate in Public Governance co-implements the project overall activities and is directly responsible for the country analysis of two EU member states: Belgium and Latvia.

To ensure coordination, participation, and implementation of the project amongst DG REFORM, the JRC, and the OECD, with all beneficiary Member States, there is one project advisory group and seven national coordinating groups.

3.1   The project advisory group

This project advisory group (PAG) is composed by representatives of DG REFORM, the JRC, and the OECD, and the main beneficiaries per EU Member State. The objective of the PAG is to advise on the multi-country Project with the view to ensure consistency of approach among the beneficiary EU Member States.

Greece, Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands have appointed core representatives per EU Member State as members of the PAG.

The PAG convenes on a quarterly basis to take stock of the status of activities, review output progression and advise on the implementation of the Project. Three meetings have been held up to date:

- **8th November 2022. 1st Project Advisory Group Meeting in Brussels**. Presentation of the multi-country project following the overall project kick-off meeting and agreements on national kick-off meetings.
- **15th February 2023. 2nd Project Advisory Group Meeting online**. Presentation of the analytical framework for country analysis, information for selection criteria for trainees for the capacity-building workshops for scientists, and introduction to the survey to select preferred topics for the thematic mutual learning exercises.
- **11th May 2023. 3rd Project Advisory Group Meeting online**. Presentation of preliminary insights from all national kick-off meetings, additional information on capacity-building workshops for scientists and introduction to the basis of capacity-building workshops for policymakers, and discussion on the final selected topics for the mutual learning exercises.

3.2   National coordination groups

Greece, Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and the Netherlands set up their own National Coordination Groups, including representatives of all the beneficiary organisations at national level which have been identified by the authorities of the respective Member States.

The purpose of these groups is to ensure coordinated communication and consultation with DG REFORM, the JRC and its groups of national experts, and the OECD, and the production of deliverables and

recommendations, which are customised and targeted to the local and legal context aiming at sustainability of the results of the project.

The national coordination groups convene on a bi-monthly basis or as the project needs arise to ensure close coordination and communication to take stock of the advancement of the project.

The composition of these national coordination groups is fully described in the specific country inception report.

4 Project launch

To start the implementation of this multi-country project, the JRC organised a high level kick-off event in Brussels that introduced the project objectives and highlighted the political goals and challenges, mobilising the main beneficiaries and stakeholders in the participating EU member states. Likewise, national kick-off meetings with the EU member states' beneficiaries, relevant national stakeholders and interested international parties, have been held to launch the project in each of the seven EU member states. Five of these national kick-off meetings were launched under the responsibility of the JRC and the other two ones were under the responsibility of the OECD, but with mutual participation in all events.

4.1 The kick-off event in Brussels

The kick-off of the project was held in Brussels on 8th November 2022 with representatives from DG REFORM, the JRC, the OECD, and the seven EU Member States that are part of this multi-country project. Different public authorities and representatives from the beneficiary organisations reflected on how building better relationships between scientific evidence and policymaking can help reinforce democracy and public trust. The event gathered around 40 people, with over 160 online attendees.

The event discussed how public reforms that are well-informed by high-quality evidence can boost country's economy and democratic resilience. After Director-General of Structural Reform Support Mario Nava officially opened the event, then **Greek Minister of State for the Coordination of Government Policies Akis Skertsos** gave a list of Greek examples of successful evidence-informed policies useful to tackle the Covid-19 pandemics and other crises. The minister elaborated the good numbers of reforms taking place in Greece under the Recovery and Resilience Funds. Minister Skertsos also said: "Trusting science, using data to document public policies, and constantly evaluating their effectiveness do not diminish the role of politics or politicians in a democracy. On the contrary, they strengthen the political process and bridge the trust gap between citizens and governments and the asymmetry of information that often exists in managing complex problems and crises". Lastly, he asked the Commission to take "a leading role in helping in the institutionalisation of evidence-informed policymaking".

Director-General Mario Nava referred to the feedback from his visits to Member States: public administrations are requesting reinforcement of their analytical capacity and support for embedding strategic foresight. This project comes timely "to tackle potential deficiencies in governance, structures (by institutionalising the interaction between science and policy) and skills of scientists and policymakers". Nava highlighted this project is inextricably linked to the mission of DG REFORM "to support meaningful reforms in the Member States" using evidence and analysis, but also "bringing European added value" with the capacity of bringing such a coalition of seven EU Member States willing to undertake common reforms. He also incardinated this project within a larger effort in the Commission to mainstream evidence-informed policymaking, such as the Commission's Expert Group on Public Administration and Governance and the Staff Working Documents on "Supporting and connecting policymaking in the Member States with scientific research" and "Supporting public administrations in the EU Member States to deliver reforms and prepare for the future". Nava expected "to have a common space of science to measure, consult, design, and act together. We want to do it through established structures in a systematic way, institutionalising existing channels of communications between science and policy, but also with the political commitment and support to achieve these reforms and make them remain. Scientists need to feel at ease to speak truth to power".

Next, representatives of the two organisations specialised in science for policy and reforms in public administrations—the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)—took the floor. First, **Director General of the European Commission's JRC Stephen Quest** stressed that "science and strong evidence is needed not only for Covid-19 but for all the policy challenges that we have at the moment. I cannot think of a single area of policy that does not require science and strong evidence to be successful". Quest made a reference to the JRC's series of workshops for "Strengthening and connecting science-for-policy ecosystems across the EU" and the Staff Working Document which identified as challenges: weak coordination of actors, missing professional competences and issues around the governance of evidence use of policymaking. He ended his intervention by saying that "At the JRC, we help anticipate, integrate, and ensure impact. With this project, we hope to achieve anticipation by building capacity in the Member States with country-specific recommendations to address science-for-policy needs, we seek to integrate by bringing together different actors in the government, and create impact by bringing concrete outcomes and roadmaps tailored to each participating EU member state and share them widely".

Elsa Pilichowski, Director for Public Governance in the OECD, linked this project to other works of the OECD on evidence-informed policymaking, public trust in government and reinforcing democracy, with the need to shape a response to the increasingly complex information systems, to address mis- and disinformation, and to mobilise policy evaluation in light of the OECD Instrument in this area.. At the beginning of her speech, Pilichowski underlined the role of evidence in the Covid-19 crisis and how the OECD has assessed the variety of government responses. For instance, she referred to lessons from Luxembourg's government response to COVID-19, where the OECD recommended "to institutionalise scientific advice at the centre of government to increase preparedness and democratic resilience in the future".

The first panel roundtable was moderated by **Stéphane Jacobzone, from the OECD,** and was focused on different actors at the heart of public administration that require scientific evidence. **Vladislavs Vesperis**, Deputy Head of the Cross-Sectoral Coordination Centre in Latvia, elaborated on the crucial dialogue between politicians, scientists, civil servants, and society. While politicians are democratically elected and have the public legitimacy for taking decisions, scientists need to be able to provide scientific information during any deliberation, and civil servants have to create and shape different policy options. Vesperis highlighted the role of transparency jn policy design and open discussion with society at large, as the general public would be then become more aware of the rational of policy decisions taken. **Daiva Žaromskytė-Rastenė**, Head of the Strategic Governance Group, Office of the Government, Lithuania, underlined how during the planning of legislative agenda, governments can foresee different points of entry for scientific evidence such as regulatory impact assessment, call for evidence, policy evaluations, etc. Žaromskytė-Rastenė stressed the role of intermediaries between science and policymaking; as such she referred to how Lithuania has established a small team of policy analysts across ministries to develop reform projects and legislative drafts, and help establish how evidence should be collected. **Ben Smeets**, Director General Recruitment and Development, FPS Policy and Support, BOSA, Belgium, referred to the need to provide scientific information to all political groups. Smeets pointed out the need for a cultural change to strengthen science-for-policy ecosystems, where actors and stakeholders are well defined and information is much more accessible and structured, with objectives defined both at the short and long-term. Smeets remarked that this multi-country project will help set international standards to promote national reforms.

After the first panel roundtable, there was a keynote intervention by **Deputy Minister for European Affairs Marek Havrda in the Czech Republic**, who participated not only as one of the beneficiary EU member states, but also as a representative of the Czech Presidency of the Council of the European Union. In his keynote, Havrda highlighted the role of scientific evidence across different stages of the policy cycle: involving problem definition, qualitative criteria of success, impact assessments, and foresight exercises. Havrda referred to existing reforms in Czechia, which has put "evidence-informed policymaking high on the agenda". The government has established a central analysis unit as part of VLADA, the office of government, with the aim to support ministries in the design of policies with rigorous impact assessments and guidelines to collect scientific information. The unit will deploy and manage a network of analysts across ministries to ensure building capacity and inter-ministerial coordination. His wish for the project was for it "to help develop a blueprint for cooperation from public administrations with the scientific community, support capacity-building of the actors at the interface between evidence and policymaking, and create a network of international like-minded people to share our insights and concerns and share the best approaches".

The second panel roundtable was moderated by **David Mair, from the JRC,** with representatives from governmental bodies and boundary organisations that are helping to feed policymaking with scientific information. **Anu Noorma**, Director General, Estonian Research Council, Estonia, supported science as a source of information based on its long-tested methodology that helps understand better reality, but at the same time scientific data always needs to deal with levels of uncertainty which are difficult to communicate to the public. Noorma explained the work of the network of science advisers to ministries, which has increased capacity in government and promote inter-ministerial coordination, and inspired by that, Estonia has also launched a network of development advisors to link ministries with industry associations. **Frans Brom**, Director of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), the Netherlands, distinguished the role of science to help establish regulatory standards (such as in the use of chemical substances) and to build scenarios and long-term strategic vision (such as what to do with the rise of sea levels). Brom also explained that at the interface between science and policy it is necessary to translate scientific data into meaningful information for policymakers, and also to design a scientific process by which we collect all types of information, and not only scientific one, from all the stakeholders involved in a policy issue (citizens, companies, NGOs, etc.). The Dutch expert lastly referred to the timing, as it is crucial for science to interact and influence during problem definition and narrative framework of any issue. Brom highlighted that "boundary organisations and much intermediary work is needed to create the community of people to develop

competences together and it is crucial to build up a science-for-policy ecosystem to cooperate on this issue".
Šimon Vydra, Head of the Czech Government Analytical Unit, Czech Republic, signalled the mismatch between the policy and research cycles and timings, and stressed the importance of their analysts to support governmental action and help make sense of reality. Vydra described the role of such analysts as key to support policy problem definition, and to provide different policy options for its solution, checking at what type of intervention would likely be able to provide the desired goal. Questions around incentives, scientific independence, and integrity were shared, Brom highlighted that "institutional safeguards help establish boundaries to remain independent, but independence is not only about the advice given but also about challenging the policy question".

To close the event, **Athanasios Kontogeorgis, Secretary General of Coordination in the Presidency of the Government in Greece,** as a representative of the coordinating EU member state, linked the need of collaboration between scientists and policymakers in order to implement the United Nations' Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDGs). Kontogeorgis looked forward for the series of national kick-off meetings which will promote cultural change for stronger cooperation between all governmental actors to embed evidence in policymaking.

Lastly, **Daniele Dotto, DG REFORM's Head of the Governance and Public Administration Unit**, illustrated the importance of scientific evidence with practical challenges, such as those of the mad cow disease decades ago and other "super-wicked" problems such as climate crisis. Dotto underlined that this project will promote education at two levels: "education in the schools to listening to science", and a bilateral education in the scientific community and politicians and civil servants to understand each other and find cooperative ways of working together. Dotto reminded about the need for "concrete and actionable results" for participating Member States, but also for non-participating ones, so that this "game-changing" project helps strengthen an interconnected European science-for-policy ecosystem. In his words, "Evidence-informed policymaking is needed across all government levels, not only at the centre of government, but also at the local and regional level. This is a joint responsibility to build a science-for-policy ecosystem that connects all the dots, promotes the cultural change, and institutionalises common deliberative and co-creative spaces to bring policymakers, scientists, and citizens at large".

The event is available via the Streaming Service of the European Commission in the following link: and the streaming video is available here. Some photos are available here.

4.2   The national kick-off events

To promote the engagement with EU member states' beneficiaries, key national stakeholders and interested international actors, the JRC and the OECD organised national kick-off events in each of the participating EU member states with a variety of formats, depending on the beneficiaries' preference. For the preparation of these meetings, the JRC and the OECD closely collaborated with the EU member states' beneficiaries to co-create and agree on the agenda, the main purposes, the target audience, the event format… As a result, some events were public with high-level participation of ministers and deputy ministers to raise awareness and increase visibility (for instance in Czechia), whilst other events were organised following an only-by-invitation approach to ensure a reduced audience and trustful environment (for instance in the Netherlands or Latvia).

These national kick-off meetings were also used to organise the first national coordination group meetings (Belgium, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania, and the Netherlands) or to conduct a fact-finding mission back to back to the event with interviews to key stakeholders in the system (in the case of Latvia).

A complete summary of the programme and the main highlights of these national kick-off events can be found in the specific country inception reports, and in the links below:

- 16th February 2023, Belgium.
- 26th February 2023, Greece.
- 7th March 2023, the Netherlands.
- 10th March 2023, Czechia.
- 27th March 2023, Latvia.
- 30th March 2023, Estonia.
- 3rd April 2023, Lithuania.

5 Country analyses of evidence-informed policymaking

Each participating EU member state will be subject of a comprehensive analysis to understand the variety of actors and organisations present in both the evidence-demand and evidence-supply sides, as well as of the processes that promote the demand- and supply-sides meet. This analysis will seek the management of change of behaviours and cultures in the public administration and in the science and innovation system during the course of its implementation, through a series of co-creation exercises and engagement activities.

The JRC will take the lead of the analysis for the following EU member states: Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania and the Netherlands, in collaboration with a group of national experts to be able to understand better the national context and conduct activities in the local language, as well as with input from the OECD to ensure alignment and synergies across the project. For Belgium and Latvia, the OECD will be leading the country analysis with input from the JRC to ensure alignment and synergies.

5.1 Country reports

During the country analysis, five different outputs will be produced: country inception reports (for the outline of country initial specificities), diagnostic report (for describing the as-is situation), needs assessment report (for identifying existing gaps to reach desired goals by beneficiary organisations), country roadmap report (for outlining a roadmap with a series of country-specific recommendations to reach the desired goals), and the final report (a summary with country subsections). For the specific content and analytical tools used for the preparation of these outputs, see Table 2.

Table 2. Country reports to be produced during the course of this multi-country project

Output	Name	Content	Analytical tools	Publication
1	**Country inception reports**	Summary of the main specificities, challenges, and lessons learned of this multi-country project from a specific country	National kick-off meeting Coordination group meetings Early lessons from questionnaires and fact finding missions	Q2 2023
2	**Diagnostic reports**	Assessing the current capacities for evidence-informed policy making of the beneficiary organisations, associated networks, and the wider science-for-policy ecosystem in each country, identifying strengths and weaknesses of their structures, organisations, legal framework, processes and resources, and competences of scientists and policymakers	Desk research Questionnaires and induction sessions Interviews	Q3 2023
3	**Needs assessment reports**	Listing the beneficiary requirements (i.e. the conditions or capacity required to solve the identified issues and to achieve the objectives of the beneficiary) in evidence-informed policymaking including good international practices	Questionnaires Interviews Focus groups Consultation dialogues	Q4 2023
4	**Country roadmap reports**	Roadmap with concrete recommendations about how to strengthen evidence-informed policymaking, with a focus on governance structures, processes, and resources leading to design and implementation of public policies and on narrowing the competence gaps of scientists and policymakers. Recommendations will be tailored to each beneficiary organisation and their potential involvement in policy changes, ensuring a mid- to long-term policy impact based on their future implementation. Each report will be country-specific.	Interviews Focus groups Consultation dialogues Participatory workshop	Q1-Q2 2024
5	**Final report**	Summary of all activities implemented in the project with subsections summing up the key findings and recommendations for each participating country: key messages, conclusions, good practices, lessons learnt and action plans for reinforcing evidence-informed policy making that can be of general application and beyond the country specific advice provided under the project.	Consultation dialogue	Q3 2024

Source: own elaboration.

The country reports will focus on four key areas of intervention to provide in depth analysis and specific recommendations: individual skills, organisational capacity, inter-organisation coordinating capacity, and policy frameworks, following an agreed analytical framework between the JRC and the OECD.

Besides these country reports, there will be additional reports summarising the capacity building activities envisaged including the international capacity-building workshops (see section 6) and mutual learning exercises (see section 7).

5.2 Methodology I: Analytical framework

The JRC and the OECD, building on their years of experience on working in evidence-informed policymaking, have created a framework for the country-specific analysis. This analytical framework aims to develop an understanding of the situation of evidence-informed policymaking in the EU member state as analytical foundations for country-tailored policy recommendations and an implementation roadmap.

While the JRC and the OECD recognise that mobilising, translating, synthesising, absorbing, and using scientific knowledge, analysis and evidence are supported by a large number of organisations, processes, and networks, this project will focus on building capacity in national government from whole of government perspective. Yet, since expertise and knowledge brokerage capacity is situated both inside and at arms' length from government as well as in academia, it is critical to also examine the connections to science supply/intermediary organisations, and to academic institutions.

Given the available resources, the analytical work will select in each participating EU member state a range of five to six line ministries, to highlight the concrete challenges to implementing evidence-informed policymaking covering broadly a set of economic, social, and green oriented areas. . In addition, the project does systematically consider core beneficiary organisations with transversal functions in this area (Prime Minister Office, Chancellery, Coordinating Secretariat, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Public Administration, Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation or Higher Education, Statistical Offices, Research Councils...). It will also address a selection of academic and scientific institutions relevant in these areas. The implementation is closely coordinated within each of the national coordination groups, and the analysis is is to be relevant and tailored to countries' needs.

To collect data, a wide range of instruments will be used involving desk research, questionnaires and surveys, interviews, fact-finding missions, in a first stage, and also co-creation participatory workshops, consultation dialogues in a second stage when preliminary drafts have been prepared, etc.

The analytical framework is divided in three sections (evidence-supply, evidence-demand, and making supply and demand meet) and four analytical dimensions (individual, organisational, inter-organisational, system) to check different sides of the science-for-policy ecosystems (Table 3).

Table 3. Analytical framework for country-specific analyses of evidence-informed policymaking

Analytical dimension	Supply of science and evidence	Demand of science and evidence	Practices where supply and demand meet
Individual	- Professional and team competences - Incentives to engage in science for policy - Career profiles, mobility programmes and challenges		- Better regulation, regulatory impact assessments, budgetary planning, foresight, knowledge valorisation, policy evaluation, science advice, strategic planning, research commissioning - Impact of European commitments and processes such as Structural Funds, Green and Digital Transition, Recovery and Resilience Plans, Horizon Europe, European Research Area, etc.
Organisational	- Mandates and missions - Dedicated structures, processes, and support for science for policy	- Role of civil service in policymaking - Resources and staff suitable for evidence-informed policymaking	
Inter-organisational	- Coordination mechanisms and boundary organisations for policy engagement - Role and functions of scientific councils, academies, etc.	- Inter-institutional coordination (e.g. knowledge sharing mechanisms) - Boundary organisations and actors to engage with scientific community and knowledge	
Systems/Policy	- Policies on research assessment, inter-sectoral mobility, research funding, etc. promoting a culture of evidence-informed policymaking and values	- Policies, processes, and norms promoting a culture for evidence-informed policymaking, public trust, and coordination across branches of public administration	

Source: own elaboration.

5.2.1 Assessment of the supply of science and evidence for decision-making

This section focuses on how knowledge and data are generated, mobilised, and translated into evidence for policymaking. This involves government institutions (departments; agencies), intermediary organisations, and research institutions.

At the individual level, there will be an assessment of the competences for policy engagement present in the supply side with special attention to what kind of training and incentives exist, and whether there are mechanisms for policy engagement and inter-sectoral mobility such as placement schemes, fellowships, pairing programmes, and other instruments that facilitate interaction between academia and other research performing organisations and the public administration.

At the organisational level, the analysis will produce an overview of key organisations involved in supplying evidence for policymaking, including those within government (e.g. analytical units and centres; science advisors; advisory bodies) but also the multitude of actors outside government (e.g. national academies; universities and research institutes). But it examines also specifically whether these organisations understand support for policymaking as their mission or have a specific mandate to this end, as well as whether there are dedicated structures, processes, and resources (staff, technologies, budget) at the disposal of these organisations to support different practices of evidence-informed policymaking, from science advise and foresight to policy evaluation and impact assessments.

With the inter-organisational level, the assessment casts a wider view, recognising the importance of a coordinated and networked response of evidence-supplying organisations to support responses to complex policy problems. Here, we analyse in particular the role and capacities of boundary organisations and mechanisms that facilitate cross-organisational knowledge synthesis and translation and support overall capacity for policy engagement of evidence producing organisations (e.g. role of academies in setting up multi-disciplinary advisory bodies; role of learned societies in diffusing good policy engagement practices).

The fourth analytical level looks at systems and policy frameworks that shape the engagement of evidence-supplying organisations with evidence-informed policymaking and the level of resources available for this. These include national policies setting out research assessment frameworks, research funding, inter-sectoral mobility, open science, and more.

5.2.2   Assessment of the demand for evidence and science for policy

This section focuses on how evidence is absorbed, presented, interpreted, and used to inform policymaking. Key actors are government institutions (centres of government; departments; agencies). Mirroring the supply side analysis, the examination will cover four levels, from the individual to the organisational, from the inter-organisational to the systems and policy framework level.

At the individual level, there will be an assessment of the competences for working with evidence present on the demand side. The analysis will focus in particular on support available to policymakers to acquire these competences (e.g. training in working with data and models), along with incentives (e.g. promotion and recruitment criteria) that encourage the development of them.

At the organisational level, the analysis will provide an overview of structures and entities in government that are involved in different practices of evidence-informed policymaking, as well as the processes, rules and guidance that shape the practices of these organisations. Questions about resources and staff available to absorb, present, interpret and use evidence for policymaking will be addressed. Moreover, this analysis will be put in the wider context of the role of the civil service in policymaking (e.g. compared to ministerial cabinets and policy advisors).

At the inter-institutional level, there will be an assessment of inter-institutional coordination mechanisms that facilitate knowledge sharing and exchange of good practice in evidence-informed policymaking within government, such as inter-ministerial networks or dedicated entities situated at the centre of government. Moreover, the analysis will also specifically look at boundary organisations within or at arm's length from government that engage with the scientific community and knowledge. These analyses will include the examination of political and administrative support for the coordination mechanisms and boundary organisations.

At the level of systems and policy frameworks, the analysis will revolve around whether policies, processes and norms shaping policymaking promote a culture for evidence-informed policymaking, better inter-ministerial coordination, and strengthen public trust in government. Questions will be raised, e.g. as regards the role of evidence in developing government programmes, the role of Parliament in strengthening demand for evidence-informed policymaking, the treatment of evidence by the media, and the overall perception of citizens of experts advising government.

5.2.3   Assessment of the processes to making supply and demand meet

This section focuses on processes and practices of evidence-informed policymaking where demand for and supply of evidence meet. These include domestic policymaking processes and those linked to European commitments.

The analysis examines to what extent these processes and practices are implemented and how they are supported in the participating Member States.

Among the domestic processes and practices examined more closely are the following:

- science advice processes including the contributions of government science advisors, advisory committees and councils;
- processes such as ex-ante impact assessments and ex-post policy evaluations associated with Better Regulation and Regulatory Impact Assessment;
- processes linked to the preparation of budgets and resource allocations; and
- processes linked to research policies concerned with knowledge valorisation by public administrations and feedback to policy from research programmes.

Among the European processes that the assessments will examine are the following:

- Evaluation of Structural Funds;
- Green and Digital transition;
- Recovery and resilience plans;
- EU funding programmes Horizon Europe; and
- New European Research Area.

5.3   Methodology II: questionnaires for data collection

To gather relevant information for the diagnostic report, the JRC and the OECD have prepared five questionnaires for five different types of organisations/stakeholders in the ecosystem (Table 4):

1. <u>Centre of government</u>: to cover institutions with overarching and cross-sectoral responsibilities such as the State Office or Government Office.

2. <u>Line ministries</u>: to cover specific policy areas that are also of the interest to the scientific beneficiary organisations, such as the Ministry of Environment.

3. <u>Research ministry and councils (funders)</u>: to cover those organisations in charge of research and innovation policies and funding for research and innovation, such as the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation or Higher Education, or the National Research Council (if it fulfils the role of science funder).

4. <u>Government networks and knowledge brokers</u>: to cover those advisory networks and bodies which aim is to promote evidence-informed policymaking with data, statistics and scientific expertise, such as networks of science advisers or officers across governmental departments, governmental scientific advisory councils, etc.

5. <u>Research performing organisations</u>: to cover research centres and/or universities which main aim is producing scientific research, but that are interested in increasing the impact of scientific evidence on policymaking.

A list with the target beneficiary organisations and other stakeholders by each type of questionnaire is provided in each country inception report.

5.4   Methodology III: interviews, focus groups and workshops

To achieve a complete understanding of the situation and potential solutions and for enhancing cooperation between the supply and the demand side of the ecosystem, the JRC and its groups of national experts, and the OECD will use qualitative techniques such as interviews, focus groups, participatory workshops, and other type of consultation dialogues. Through these techniques, the analysis will benefit from the point of view of beneficiary organisations and key stakeholders, leveraging on the input from public authorities and high-level decision-makers, senior civil servants, analysts, and other operational officers from the public administration as well as from leaders and representatives of the scientific community.

6   International capacity building workshops

To promote the acquisition and development of professional competences for evidence-informed policymaking, the multi-country project envisioned the delivery of capacity-building workshops tailored to different target audiences: scientists, policymakers, and knowledge brokers. In addition, to support the exchange of practices and mutual learning between participating EU member states, these workshops were meant to have an international dimension by bringing together trainees from all seven member states, rather than organising workshops just for each of them.

6.1   Capacity building workshops for scientists

The JRC will organise three in-person workshops on capacity building for staff from beneficiary organisations and/or selected personnel from stakeholder organisations across all beneficiary countries, to deliver training for scientists to maximise researchers' impact in evidence-informed policymaking processes. The main goal is to enable the selected scientists and trainers to offer and deliver training to the personnel, contractors, and advisers that provide scientific evidence to them, and the wider scientific community, to improve their competences for policy advice (e.g. better understanding the policy process; science communication; better understanding the framing of the policy discussion, etc).

These workshops will follow the same structure and content that the "Training of Trainers (ToT) – Evidence for policy course" already delivered by the JRC since 2021 to sixty-four scientists and facilitators across Europe.

The JRC has liaised with national beneficiary organisations from the seven participating Member States to identify relevant candidates based on a series of selection criteria to identify people with scientific backgrounds and people with facilitating/training skills (Table 4).

The three workshops will be conducted throughout four full days between 12-15 June (round 1), 26-29 June (round 2) and 11-14 September (round 3) (Table 1).

The rationale behind these exercises is that by improving the relevance/appropriateness of supplied science, evidence/knowledge, this can become better institutionally integrated into both the operations of beneficiary organisations and more widely in government and policymakers.

The training materials and the summary of the training delivered will be summarised in a report.

6.2   Capacity building workshops for policymakers

The JRC and the OECD will organise two in-person workshops on capacity building for policymakers for the seven Member States. These workshops will be geared towards strengthening capacity for evidence-informed policymaking, in terms of understanding, obtaining, interrogating and assessing, using and applying evidence, as well as engaging with stakeholders and evaluating in terms of the competence framework for innovative policymaking of the JRC, as well as drawing on the OECD skill set for evidence-informed policy making.

The content will be informed by the competence framework and associated course materials commissioned/developed by the JRC as well as by best practices drawn from relevant OECD work streams. It will also benefit from the participation of international experts and peers from other EU and OECD member states.

The approximate dates for these workshops are Q4 2023 and Q1 2024 (Table 1).

The training materials and the summary of the training delivered will be summarised in a report.

6.3   Capacity building workshops for knowledge brokers

The JRC and the OECD will organise one in-person workshop for knowledge mobilisation units (or "knowledge brokers") jointly with the OECD. The workshop will bring and mix science and policy practitioners from all participating Member States and will address challenges that knowledge brokers face to achieve impact in evidence-informed policymaking, to create new services and/or new knowledge brokers between science and policy in their institutional and national contexts. The workshop will offer an opportunity to benefit from experiences from peers across other EU and OECD member states. They will also offer an opportunity to discuss challenges related to implementation of the Recommendation papers and overcoming barriers at the national level, and it may also benefit from the participation of international experts from other established

knowledge mobilisation units inside public administration or scientific organisations, as well as peers from OECD member states.

The approximate dates for these workshops are late Q2 or early Q3 in 2024 (Table 1).

The training materials and the summary of the training delivered will be summarised in a report.

Table 4. Selected trainees from participating EU member states for the international capacity-building workshops for scientists

EU Member State	Full name of trainee	Organisation	Training Round
Belgium	Pieter Raymakers	KU Leuven	1 (12-15 June)
	Valerie de Waelheyns	KU Leuven	1 (12-15 June)
	Diana Borniotti	UC Louvain	2 (26-29 June)
	Caroline Amrom	UC Louvain	2 (26-29 June)
	Leonor Guariguata	Sciensano/KU Leuven	3 (11-14 Sept)
	Anna Ruelens	Sciensano/KU Leuven	3 (11-14 Sept)
Czechia	Petr Witz	Charles University	1 (12-15 June)
	Jakub Čihák	Government Analytical Unit, Office of the Government	1 (12-15 June)
	Martin Nekola	Chalres University	2 (26-29 June)
	Magdaléna Klimešová	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs	2 (26-29 June)
	Trainer to be identified		3 (11-14 Sept)
	Trainer to be identified		3 (11-14 Sept)
Estonia	Katrin Kiisler	Estonian Government Office	1 (12-15 June)
	Peeter Laas	Tartu University and Tallinn University of Technology	1 (12-15 June)
	Teet teinemaa	Tallinn University	2 (26-29 June)
	Mahendra Mahey	Tallinn University	2 (26-29 June)
	Urmo Kübar	Praxis Think Tank	3 (11-14 Sept)
	Kristiina Tönisson	Tartu University	3 (11-14 Sept)
Greece	Apostolos Christoudakis	General Secretariat for Fiscal Policy	1 (12-15 June)
	Stelios Karozis	National centre for scientific research Demokritos	1 (12-15 June)
	Malamatenia Katsomiti	General Secretariat for Coordination	2 (26-29 June)
	Magdalini Tsevreni	EKKE	2 (26-29 June)
	Sofia Tsellou	Ministry of Finance	3 (11-14 Sept)
	Nikolaus Rodousakis	KEPE	3 (11-14 Sept)
Latvia	Armands Auziņš	Riga Technical University	1 (12-15 June)
	Anna Broka	Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences	1 (12-15 June)
	Inesse Āboliņa	University of Latvia	2 (26-29 June)
	Iveta Reinholde	University of Latvia	2 (26-29 June)
	Dina Popluga	Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies	3 (11-14 Sept)
	Ivars Vanadziņš	Riga Stradiņš University	3 (11-14 Sept)
Lithuania	Vytenis Juozas Deimantas	Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences	1 (12-15 June)
	Salomėja Vanagienė	Research Council of Lithuania	1 (12-15 June)
	Živilė Ruželė	Research Council of Lithuania	2 (26-29 June)
	Akvilė Andrulytė	Research Council of Lithuania	2 (26-29 June)
	Veronika Urbonaitė-Barkauskienė	Vilnius University and Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas	3 (11-14 Sept)
	Jolanta Droždz	STRATA	3 (11-14 Sept)
The Netherlands	Federica Burla	Lorentz Center	1 (12-15 June)
	Sanne Willems	Leiden University	1 (12-15 June)
	Henriette Jensenius	Lorentz Center	2 (26-29 June)
	Trainer to be identified		2 (26-29 June)
	Anna Tudos	Lorentz Center	3 (11-14 Sept)
	Tamara Mardern	Utrecht University of Applied Sciences	3 (11-14 Sept)

Source: own elaboration.

7 International mutual learning exercises

This multi-country project also aims to promote networking and peer learning exchanges between different practitioners and experts across participating EU member states, together with leading actors from the European Commission and the OECD, to promote better practices in evidence-informed policymaking. Through these international exchanges, the aim is to help achieve increased awareness, recognition and understanding at the political levels and in the scientific communities of the actions and investments that are required for science and evidence to fully contribute to well-informed policy-making.

The JRC and the OECD will conduct three in-person or online mutual learning exercises or thematic symposia and work with the EU member states' beneficiary organisations to select the exact topics and help identify the appropriate invitees.

7.1 Initial list of topics

In agreement with the participating EU member states, the JRC and the OECD offered a list of different topics around evidence-informed policymaking to select from. These topics were shared with the project advisory group members with the request for EU member states' representatives to have an internal dialogue with the rest of national beneficiary organisations to rank the topics in preferential order. The shared document with the list contained extended abstract information and references to JRC and OECD reports and materials on the topic in question. The offered themes and the final ranking can be seen in Table 5. Given the adjusted results of the top-four themes, these were selected for follow-up discussions.

Table 5. List of topics offered for the international mutual learning exercises

Rank	Topic	Total score (points)
1	AI and data analysis for better informed policymaking	68
2	Using behavioural insights in public administrations	57
3	Policy evaluations in public administrations	55
4	Strategic foresight and anticipatory governance for public administrations	54
5	Citizen engagement and deliberative democratic processes for public administrations	41
6	Using evidence for crisis management	33
7	Mobilising evidence for the green deal	25
8	COVID-19 long term institutional implications	16
9	Any other topic	8

Source: own elaboration.

7.2 Selection of the three final topics

During the 3rd project advisory group meeting held on 11th May 2023, the top-four topics were discussed to identify the top-three preferences from each participating EU member state. Since a final agreement could not get reached, a new survey with only these four topics were shared with the members of the project advisory group with the option to allocate a total of 10 points among the four topics. In the end, AI and data analysis, strategic foresight, and policy evaluation were chosen (Table 6).

Table 6. List of final topics selected for mutual learning exercises

Rank	Topic	Total score (points)	Expected delivery
1	AI and data analysis for better informed policymaking	23	Q2 2024
2	Policy evaluations in public administrations	18	Q3 2023
3	Strategic foresight and anticipatory governance for public administrations	16	Q1 2024
4	Using behavioural insights in public administrations	13	

Source: own elaboration.

A summary report will be produced to cover the content, programme and lessons learned for all the three international mutual learning exercises.

8 Preliminary learnings from the project

During the early stages of implementation of this multi-country project, with the organisation of the project overall kick-off event, the series of national kick-off events, and the project advisory group meetings and national coordination group meetings, the JRC and the OECD have already taken some early lessons learned.

— **There is an appetite for increased capacity for evidence-informed policymaking among all participating EU member states**. To some extent, this was expected as these member states gathered together in this coalition to receive support from the TSI programme, but the interest from public authorities, senior civil servants, and scientific organisations has been tangible in the interactions up to date. The JRC and the OECD also noticed:

  o There have been recent reform projects of the public administration which can be supported by the European Commission, other European-level instruments, or domestic resources, to implement different practices and networks for evidence-informed policymaking. For instance, Belgium have used TSI before to implement regulatory ex-ante impact assessment and ex-post policy evaluation, Lithuania and Greece have used TSI to reinforce foresight practices, Estonia has used Structural Cohesion Funds to deploy a network of science advisers across governmental departments, and the last Public Governance Review in Czechia has provided venues to promote evidence-based policymaking.

  o There are other national initiatives to support evidence-informed policymaking, such as in the Netherlands a reform of the assessment of civil service and evaluation of the science-for-policy ecosystem undertaken by national actors.

  o There are ongoing reorganisations of key institutions in the EU member states to acquire wider competences in evidence-informed policymaking, such as the Research Council of Lithuania to acquire bigger presence in science for policy, or the Government Analytical Unit in Czechia to support policy evaluation across governmental departments.

  o In order to increase the understanding of the wider science-for-policy ecosystem, bringing in multiple perspectives from the public administration and the scientific and innovation sector, the group of beneficiary organisations in most participating EU member states have increased to include line ministries or scientific institutions that were not part of the original group of beneficiaries. Additionally, other key stakeholders that can be impacted by the project in the ecosystem will be consulted during the country analysis.

— **Contextualising future country recommendations will be critical**. Although all participating EU member states have interesting initiatives ongoing, have conducted previous reforms, and there are many interested actors promoting evidence-informed policymaking, each participating EU member state is in a very different situation. It will be crucial to actively engage with beneficiary organisations and key stakeholders during the country analysis to identify current strengths and weaknesses, and co-create a plan for change management that leads to policy impact, new practices and networks and institutionalisation that facilitates full mobilisation of evidence by policymakers and that nurtures positive cooperation between the scientific and academic community and decision makers in government. .

List of abbreviations and definitions

DG REFORM   Directorate-General for Structural Reform Support

ETAG   Estonian Research Council

JRC   The European Commission's Joint Research Centre

NGOs   Non-governmental organisations

OECD   The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PAG   Project advisory group

RRP   Recovery and resilience plans

SRSP   Structural Reform Support Programme

TSI   Technical Support Instrument

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The European Commission's science and knowledge service

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As the science and knowledge service of the European Commission, the Joint Research Centre's mission is to support EU policies with independent evidence throughout the whole policy cycle.

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