23rd Meeting Informal Expert Group RRF

Berlaymont building, Brussels
24 November 2023

Preparation and submission of payment requests

Presentation by RRP's Coordinating Body in Portugal
Task Force "Recover Portugal"

RECUPERAR PORTUGAL

PRR
Plano de Recuperação
e Resiliência

REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA

Financiado pela
União Europeia
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Agenda

1 **The Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan**

2 **Payment Requests: Requirements and Formal Steps until Disbursement**

3 **Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment**

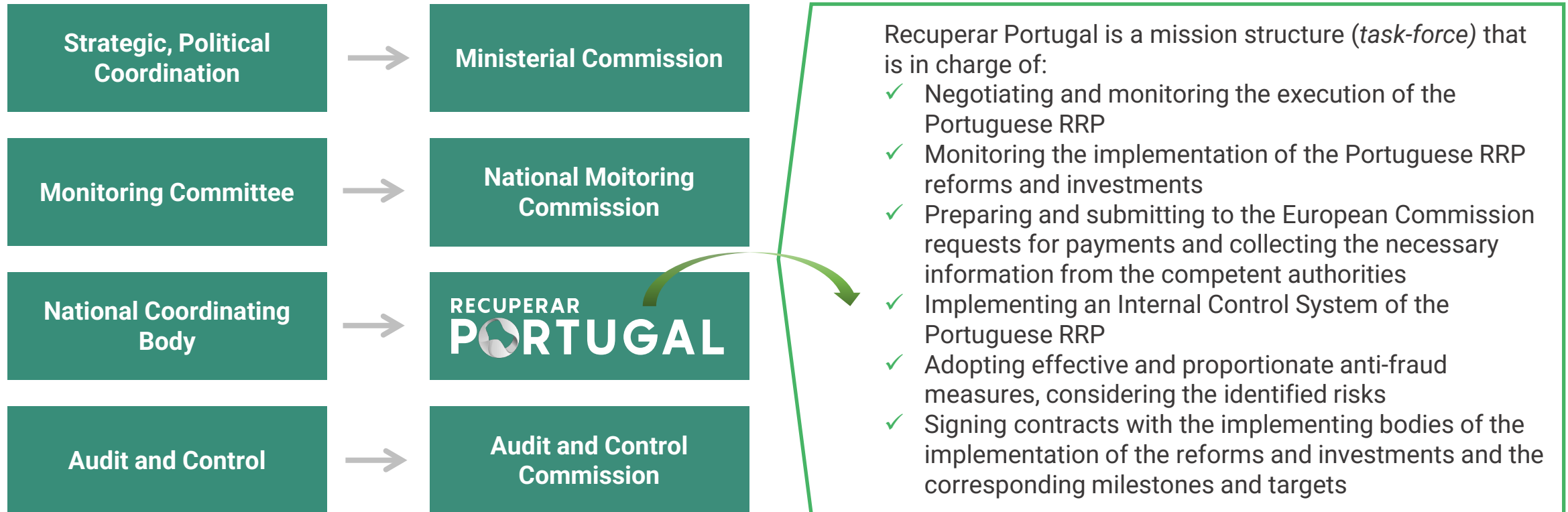| i) Preparing the payment request submission | ii) Payment request submission | iii) During payment request assessment |

1

The Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan

Governance Model

Strategic, Political Coordination	→	**Ministerial Commission**
Monitoring Committee	→	**National Moitoring Commission**
National Coordinating Body	→	**RECUPERAR PORTUGAL**
Audit and Control	→	**Audit and Control Commission**

Recuperar Portugal is a mission structure (*task-force*) that is in charge of:

✓ Negotiating and monitoring the execution of the Portuguese RRP
✓ Monitoring the implementation of the Portuguese RRP reforms and investments
✓ Preparing and submitting to the European Commission requests for payments and collecting the necessary information from the competent authorities
✓ Implementing an Internal Control System of the Portuguese RRP
✓ Adopting effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures, considering the identified risks
✓ Signing contracts with the implementing bodies of the implementation of the reforms and investments and the corresponding milestones and targets

Implementation Agents and Process

RECUPERAR PORTUGAL

DIRECT BENEFICIARIES (implementing body)

Public entities responsible for implementation of a RRP reform or investment, including its **physical and financial execution**. To that effect, they receive **financing** from Recuperar Portugal.

INTERMEDIARY BENEFICIARIES (implementing body)

Public entities responsible for implementation of a RRP reform or investment, through the selection of third-party entities for its execution, the Final Beneficiaries.

FINAL BENEFICIARIES

Public or Private entity responsible for the physical and financial execution of an RRP project, selected by an Intermediary Beneficiary. To that effect, they receive financing from their Intermediary Beneficiary.

Implementing Bodies

Direct Beneficiaries

Intermediary Beneficiaries

Public Tenders

Calls

Contractors

Final Beneficiaries

Final Recipients
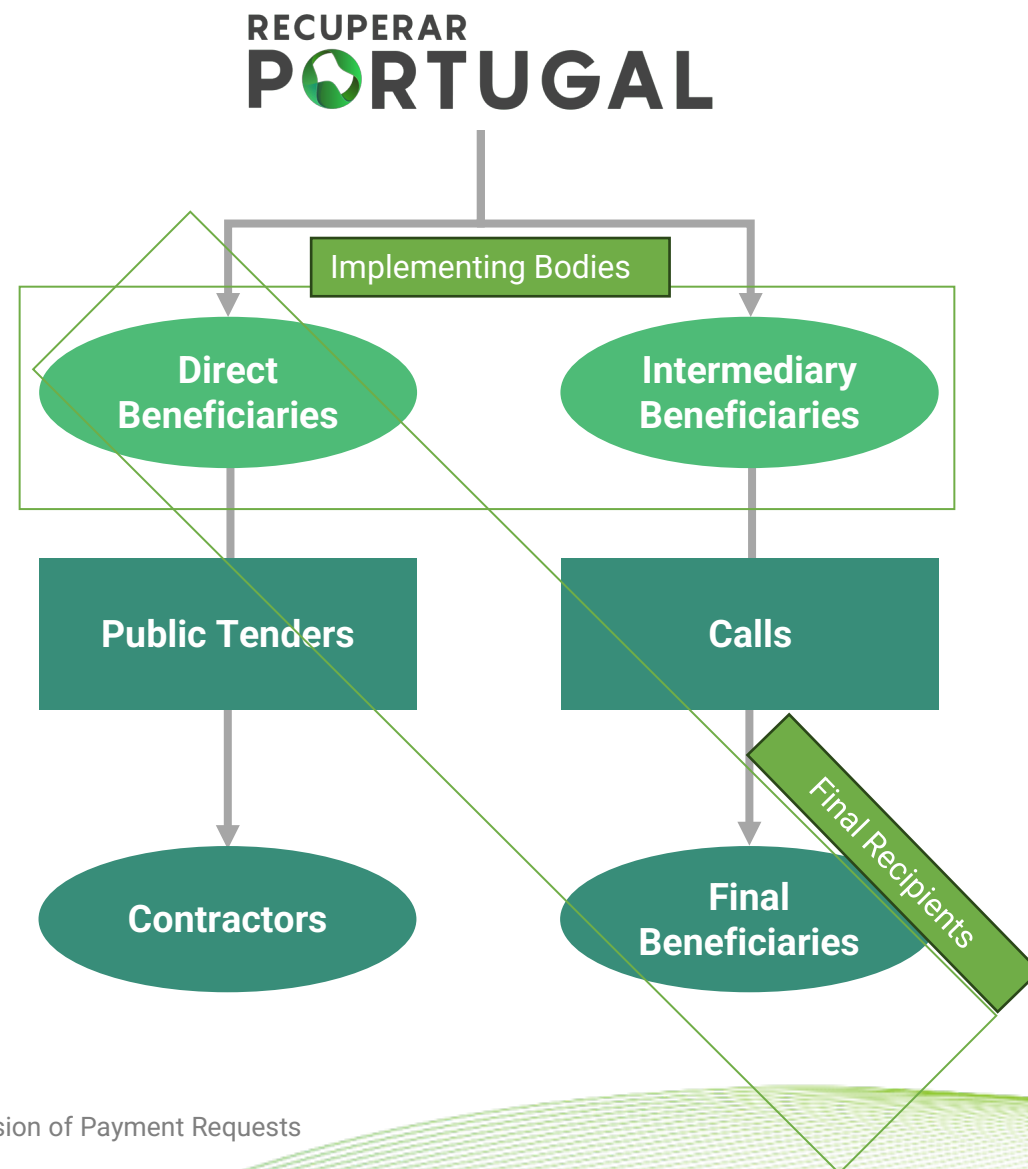
IT systems - SIPRR - SAM

1 The Taskforce "Recuperar Portugal" contracts the investments and reforms to Direct and Intermediary Beneficiaries

2 The Direct and Intermediary Beneficiaries become responsible for reporting the progress on the achievement of milestones and targets, final beneficiaries and projects, as well as financial and controlling information.

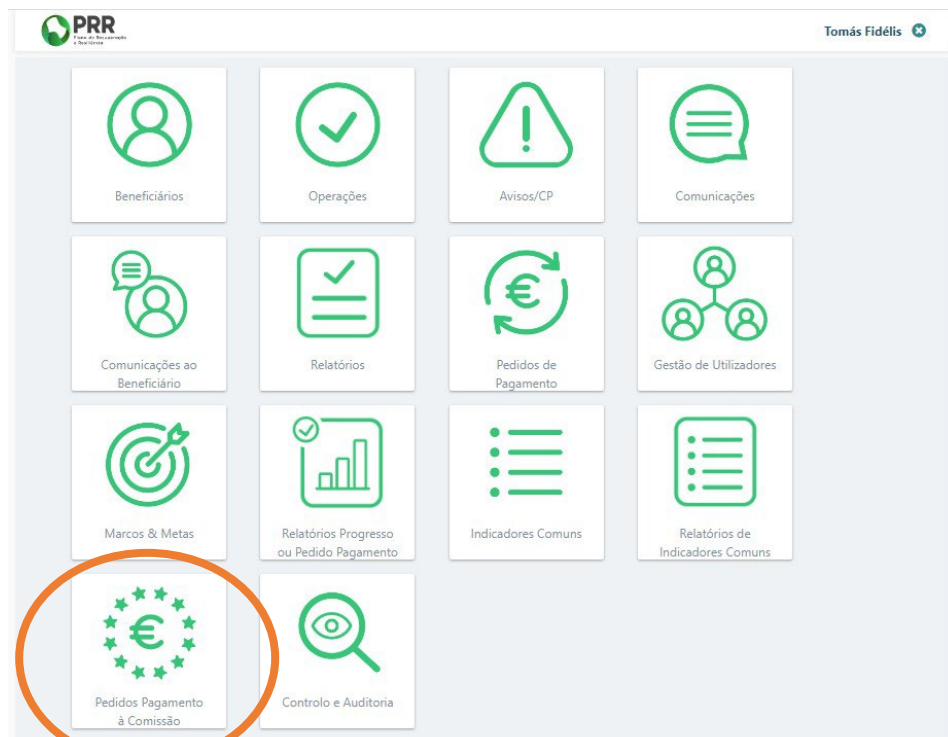**3** That information is gathered and uploaded into the Information Management System (SGI) which is a part of the SIPRR.

The RRP Information System (SIPRR) consists of a Information Management System (SGI), a Monitoring and Follow-Up System (SAM) and interface with the Beneficiaries.
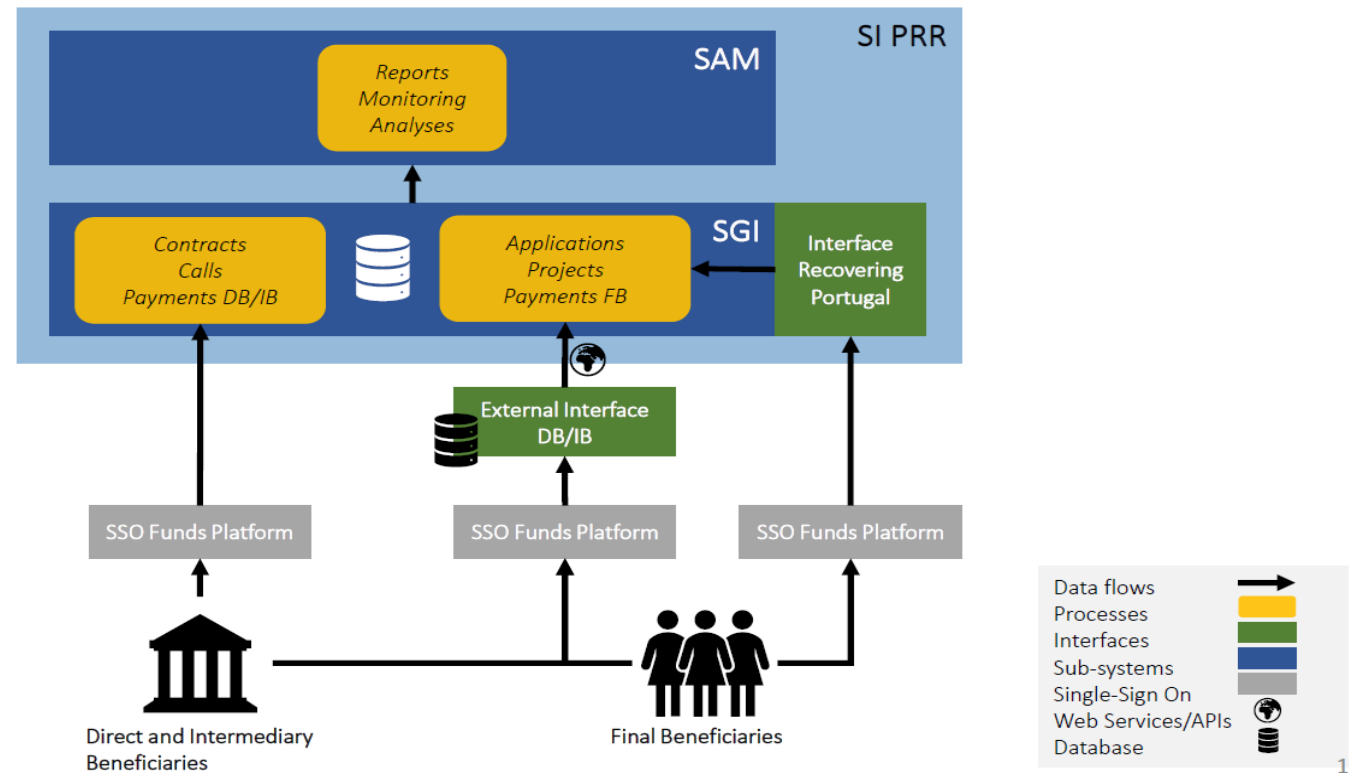
IT systems

Information Management (SGI)

Monitoring System (SAM)
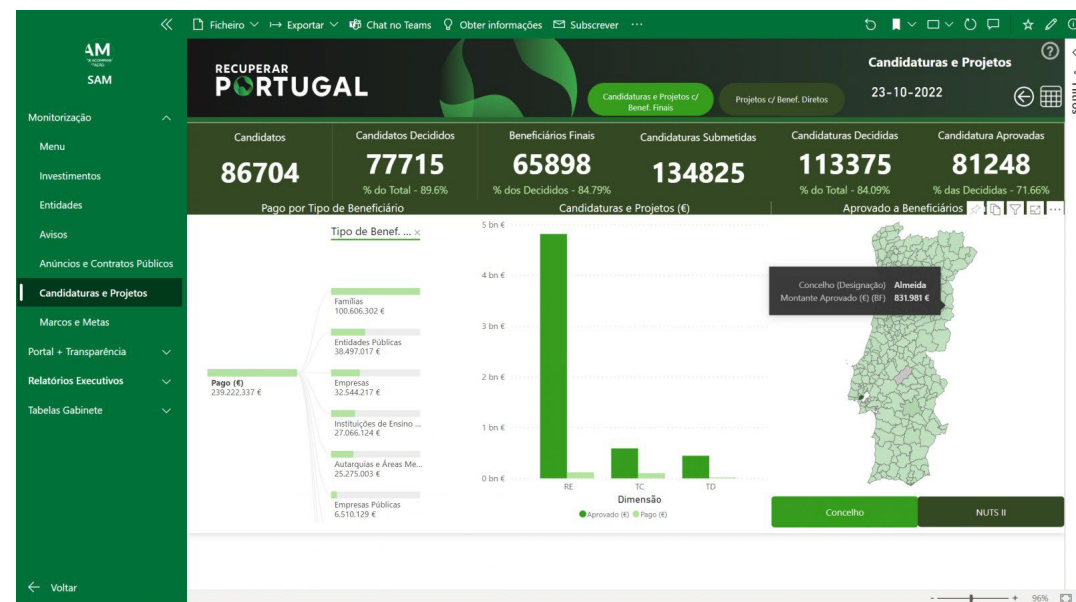
Portuguese RRP Overview - Updated

5.891 M€ loans

22.216 M€

16.325 M€ Grants

3 Dimensions	21 Components	161 Measures	463 Milestones and Targets
	RESILIENCE		
	C1. National Health Service — 1 689 M€		
	C2. Housing — 3 228 M€		
	C3. Social Interventions — 1 045 M€		
	C4. Culture — 319 M€		
	C5. Capitalization and Business Innovation — 4 944 M€		
	C6. Qualifications and Competences — 1 959 M€		
	C7. Infrastructure — 790 M€		
	C8. Forests — 615 M€		
	C9. Water Management — 561 M€		
	15 051 M€		
	CLIMATE TRANSITION	**44 Reforms and 117 Investments**	**463 Milestones and Targets**
	C10. Sea — 389 M€		
	C11. Industry Decarbonisation — 837 M€		
	C12. Sustainable Bioeconomy — 145 M€		
	C13. Energy Efficiency of Buildings — 824 M€		
	C14. Hydrogen and Renewables — 661 M€		
	C15. Sustainable Mobility — 1 499 M€		
	C21. REPowerEU — 855 M€		
	4 355 M€		
	DIGITAL TRANSITION		
	C16. Companies 4.0 — 763 M€		
	C17. Quality in Public Finances — 406 M€		
	C18. Economic Justice & Business Environ — 267 M€		
	C19. More Efficient Public Administration — 684 M€		
	C20. Digital School — 674 M€		
	2 794 M€		

European Union Payments Profile

Gross Amounts to be received by Portugal for each Payment Request

Values in Millions of Euros

Positively Assessed

Under Assessment

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Grants	636	1.967	2.010	937	1.878	1.502	2.023	1.057	2.285	2.031
Loans	700	125	379	235	1.313	366	689	235	939	908

■ **Loans**   ■ **Grants**

MILESTONES AND TARGETS

38	20	33	12	42	30	47	21	133	85
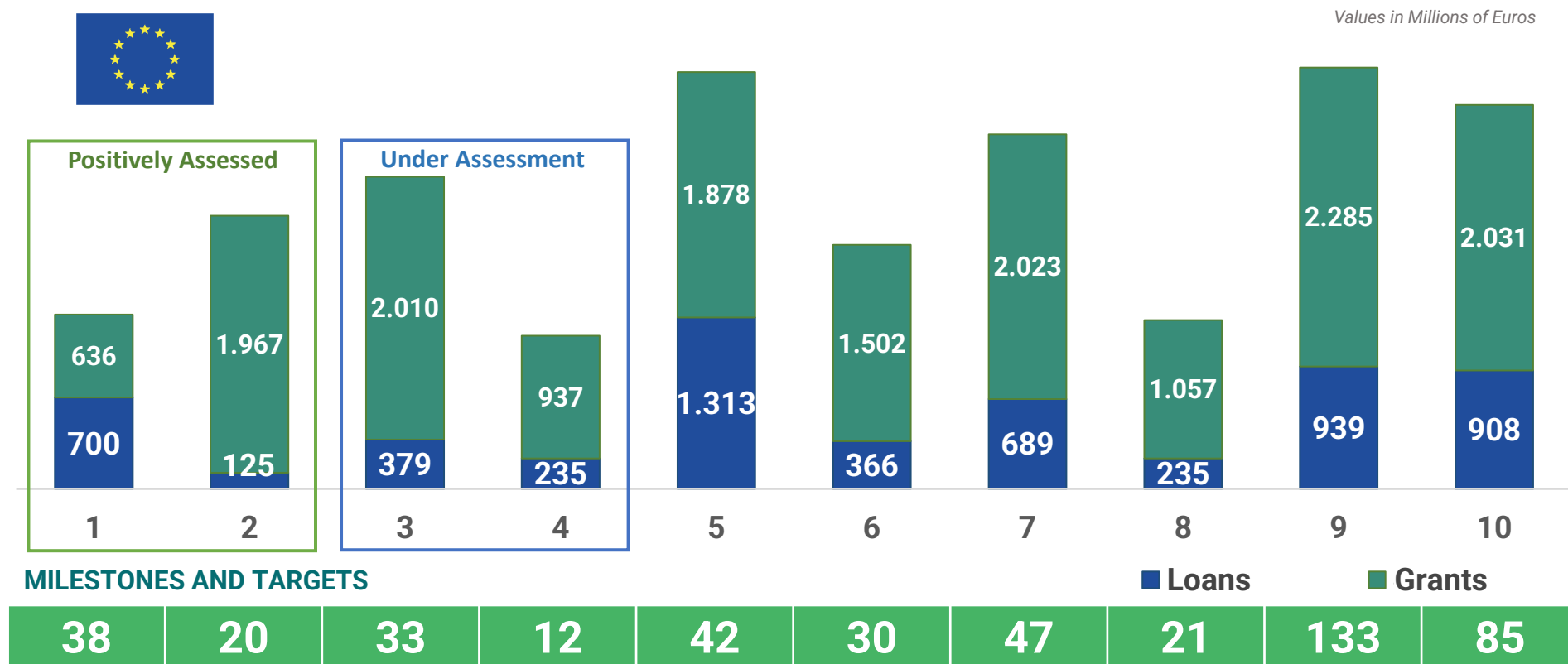
The **execution of the RRP** is measured through the **achievement of milestones and targets** and submitted in payment requests to the European Union, so that Portugal receives the amounts agreed with the EU.

2

Payment Requests: Requirements and Formal Steps until Disbursement

Requirements for Payment Request Submission

EUROPEAN

▶ **Request for payment** – in relation to the respective instalment up to the maximum amount set out in the Council Implementing Decision.

▶ **Cover notes** for all associated milestones and targets – providing justification of the satisfactory fulfilment of the relevant milestones and targets.

▶ **Evidence** for all associated milestones and targets – demonstrating the total costs carried to achieve the milestones and targets.

▶ **Management Declaration** – declaring i) the funds were used for its intended purpose, ii) the information submitted is complete, accurate and reliable, iii) the control systems ensure the funds were managed in accordance with all applicable rules.

▶ **Summary of audits** – including weaknesses identified and any corrective actions taken.

PORTUGUESE

▶ **Report from the Audit and Control Committee** – including Finance General Inspectorate – Audit Authority and Agency for Development and Cohesion – structural funds managing entity, included in the Summary of Audits.

Formal Steps until Disbursement

As provided for in Article 24 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/241 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 February 2021 establishing the Recovery and Resilience Facility, as well as Article 6 of the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agreement between the Commission and the Portuguese Republic, the process until disbursement is as follows:

Upon completion of the relevant agreed milestones and targets indicated in the recovery and resilience plan:
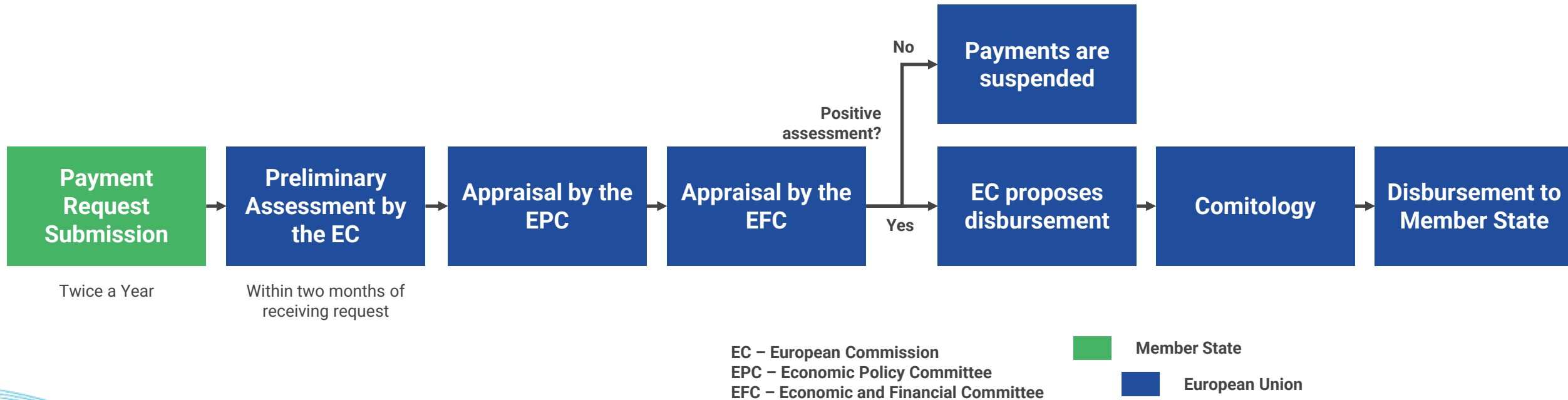
Payment Request Submission

Twice a Year

Preliminary Assessment by the EC

Within two months of receiving request

Appraisal by the EPC

Appraisal by the EFC

Positive assessment?

No → **Payments are suspended**

Yes → **EC proposes disbursement**

Comitology

Disbursement to Member State

EC – European Commission
EPC – Economic Policy Committee
EFC – Economic and Financial Committee

Member State
European Union

3 Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

i) Preparing the payment request submission

ii) Payment request submission

iii) During payment request assessment

3 Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

⚙ Main activities

1 National RRP Information System and Relation with Investments and Reforms

2 Weekly meetings with COM to go over all milestones and targets on both sides, including presentation with latest status

3 Early meetings with implementing bodies when deemed necessary to ensure alignment of CID interpretation and verification mechanisms between all parties (COM, Coordinating Body – EMRP, Implementing Body)

4 Bilateral contacts between technical staff at COM (DG ECFIN and SG RECOVER) and Coordinators of the Coordinating Body (EMRP) to sort out technical issues that may arise

5 Drafting of Cover Notes

6 Pre-sharing of evidence and Cover Notes with multiple iterations to stabilize all supporting documentation as early as possible

7 Submission in FENIX of evidence and Cover Notes beforehand, as the supporting documentation is stabilized
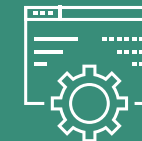
Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

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Weekly meeting between the Taskforce and the European Commission

The following topics are discussed in the weekly meetings between EMRP and COM:

a) All milestones and targets which will be part of the following 2 payment requests

b) State of play for each Milestone or Target

c) Color-coded based on their completion and *stabilisation* of Cover Notes and evidence requirements from the COM

3rd Payment Request (III/IV)

Components 08-16

Legenda
- CN estabilizada pela COM
- Cover Note Enviada

#	Measure	M/T	Name	Details
8.18	RE-C08-r20	M	Land Cover Monitoring System (SMOS)	Cover Note and evidence submitted in FENIX. Regarding r20, **all the legal acts were approved and published. Revised CN and evidence will be submitted in FENIX.**
12.6	TC-C12-r25	M	Entry into force of the revised National Strategy for Green Public Procurement	New Cover Note and evidence submitted in FENIX (5th October). **The RCM will be discussed in Council of Ministers in the 19th October.**
15.12	TC-C15-i05	M	Contract signed for the purchase of clean buses under the Public Transport Decarbonisation Programme	Revised CN sent on February 10th with no more comments.
16.7	TD-C16-i02	T	Test Beds selected for the National Test Beds Network	Two comments from COM (26/9). **Preparing new version of CN with new evidence from IAPMEI**

3

Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

National RRP Information System

When developing the national RRP internal management and control system we have tried to replicate the FENIX Portal fields. The information is uploaded into the SGI and then manually submitted in FENIX.

FENIX

SGI

3

Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

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FENIX

SGI

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FENIX

SGI

i) Preparing the payment request submission	ii) Payment request submission	iii) During payment request assessment

National RRP Information System

SGI

- Similar interface for the implementing bodies and the Coordinating body to ensure alignment of requirements and easy validation and conversion

- High number of iterations on Cover Notes and evidences with the European Commission registered in the system

- All sampling registered also in the system

- In development new FENIX folder structure for easier evidence uploading

Preparation and Submission of Payment Requests

3 Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

i) Preparing the payment request submission

📖 **Cover Notes**

▶ **Measure** [text]

▶ **Milestone/Target** [text, including verification mechanism from the Operational Arrangement]

▶ **Evidence** [list]
- Numbered, with the same numbering of the files to be submitted via FENIX
- For evidences with many files, all are sub-numbered (e.g. 1.1, 1.2)

▶ **Detailed Justification**
- Short introduction to contextualise to the measure and the milestone or target
- Justification should provide explanation to **every assertion of the measure text and the milestone/target text**
- Justifications should refer to the relevant evidence number, including page number of documents or other details to make verification easier

▶ **Date of Completion** of Milestone or Target

Heading, Date and Milestone/Target Reference

Measure CID text transcribed

CID milestone/target text transcribed

Evidence list, numbered

Justification

Date of Completion

RECUPERAR PORTUGAL

16/10/2023
Estrutura de Missão Recuperar Portugal
Meta PT-C[C20]-I[i02-RAA]-T[20.10]
Cursos em linha abertos a todos para pais e professores na RAA

Texto da CID - C20-i02-RAA - Educação digital (Açores)

Esta medida tem como objetivos garantir o acesso à utilização de tecnologias digitais, promover a igualdade de oportunidades e induzir melhorias significativas nos meios de aprendizagem, em consonância com o Plano de Ação para a Educação Digital da União Europeia.

Este investimento consistirá na promoção do desenvolvimento de competências digitais da comunidade educativa, visando estudantes, pais e professores, e incluirá ações direcionadas nos seguintes domínios:

– equipamentos: 31 900 novos equipamentos informáticos móveis para o ensino pré-escolar, primário e secundário, incluindo acompanhamento na modernização, bem como disponibilização de equipamento a nível das escolas com, pelo menos, 1 080 novos ecrãs interativos, 100 novos equipamentos laboratoriais especializados, 100 novas impressoras 3D e 150 novos robôs educativos;

– recursos educativos digitais: digitalização dos recursos educativos de modo a conseguir que 100 % dos alunos na Região Autónoma dos Açores utilizem manuais digitais;

– competências digitais: 24 módulos de formação dedicados a professores e pais;

– conectividade: ações para melhorar a conectividade das escolas na Região Autónoma dos Açores para, pelo menos, 1 Gbps. Compra e instalação de 1 500 switches e APS.

A implementação do investimento estará concluída até 31 de dezembro de 2025.

Meta: Cursos em linha abertos a todos para pais e professores na RAA

Número sequencial	Medida (reforma ou investimento)	Marco/Meta	Nome	Indicadores quantitativos (para as metas)			Calendário indicativo para a conclusão		Responsabilidade e de reporte e implementação	Descrição e definição clara de cada marco e meta	Mecanismo de Verificação (inglês)
				Unidade de medida	Base	Objetivo	Trimestre	Ano			
20.10	TD-C20-i02-RAA	Meta	Cursos em linha abertos a todos para pais e professores na RAA	Nº	0	4	4.º T	2022	Secretaria Regional da Educação e Cultura	Número de cursos em linha abertos a todos (MOOC) criados para promover o desenvolvimento de competências digitais para ensino em sala de aula e aprendizagem à distância, incluindo a disponibilização de tutoriais e de um Portal de Aquisição de Competências Digitais. Os MOOC estão disponíveis em linha e livremente acessíveis a professores e pais.	Summary document duly justifying how the target (including all the constitutive elements) was satisfactorily fulfilled. The document shall include as an Annex the following documentary evidence and elements: 1. Certificate of works completion signed by the contractor and the competent authority demonstrating that MOOCs have been completed and are operational, and links to the courses. 2. A brief description of the content provided.

Evidências anexas:

Evidência 1 – Contrato de Prestação de Serviços para o Desenvolvimento de MOOCs com o fornecedor NTT Data Portugal, S.A. assinado a 12.10.2022

Evidência 2 – Contrato de Prestação de Serviços para a Disponibilização da Plataforma LMS com o fornecedor Meo – Serviços de Comunicações e Multimédia, S.A. assinado a 23.11.2022

Evidência 3 – Printscreens comprovativos da disponibilização dos cursos online a 28/12/2022

Evidência 4 – Documentação com os conteúdos dos 4 cursos disponibilizados (slides e vídeos)

Evidência 4.1 – Breve descrição do conteúdo dos cursos disponibilizados

Evidência 5 – Certificado de conclusão dos trabalhos

Evidência 6 – Informação de divulgação dos cursos (abril.2023)

Justificação Detalhada:

Integrada na componente 20 "Escola Digital", foi estabelecido o investimento C20-i02-RAA: Educação digital (Açores) que tem como objetivos garantir o acesso à "sociedade de informação", promover a igualdade de oportunidades e induzir a melhorias significativas nos meios de aprendizagem, em consonância com o Plano de Ação para a Educação Digital da União Europeia, fomentando o desenvolvimento de competências digitais da comunidade educativa, no geral, e das novas gerações, em particular.

Ao promoverem a literacia digital, os MOOC's desempenham um papel importante na promoção da igualdade de oportunidades, devido ao seu acesso amplo e flexível. São cursos acessíveis a qualquer pessoa com uma ligação à internet, eliminando, assim, barreiras geográficas e financeiras. Isto significa que pessoas de todas as origens socioeconómicas podem participar, promovendo a igualdade de oportunidades de acesso à educação digital.

Os MOOCs promovem a autonomia na aprendizagem, o que configura um conte... aprendam no seu próprio ritmo e de acordo com suas próprias necessidades. Isto é... ou familiares, permitindo-lhes conciliar a aprendizagem com suas responsabilida...

Relativamente ao acesso à sociedade da informação, vários cursos têm como... conceitos básicos das tecnologias de informação e comunicação, como a compre... de segurança online. Isto ajuda as pessoas que podem ter pouca ou nenhuma ex...

Usually several pages long

Considera-se, assim, cumprida a **Meta 20.10**: "Cursos em linha abertos a todos para pais e professores na RAA".

Data de cumprimento do marco
28/12/2022

RECUPERAR PORTUGAL **PRR** Plano de Recuperação e Resiliência **REPÚBLICA PORTUGUESA** **Financiado pela União Europeia** NextGenerationEU

Preparation and Submission of Payment Requests

3

Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

i) Preparing the payment request submission

📖 Cover Notes

Some Lessons Learned

- Initiating work on Cover Notes months in advance helps clear up interpretation differences and highlight missed requirements from the CID

- Pre-filled Cover Notes work better than blank ones for the implementing bodies. In some cases this means also preparing a table that requires justification for each CID sentence

- To avoid too many iterations in FENIX, Cover Notes and evidence are usually "informally stabilised" with the Commission before submitting in FENIX

Labels (green boxes):

- Heading, Date and Milestone/ Target Reference
- Measure CID text transcribed
- CID milestone/ target text transcribed
- Evidence list, numbered
- Justification
- Date of Completion

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Data de cumprimento do marco
28/12/2022

> Usually several pages long

3 Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

| i) Preparing the payment request submission | ii) Payment request submission | iii) During payment request assessment |

Main activities – Some lessons learned

1
National RRP Information System and Relation with Investments and Reforms

Helps implementing bodies know who does what and when

2
Weekly meetings with COM to go over all milestones and targets on both sides, including presentation with latest status

Ensures COM and MS are aligned in status and challenges

3
Early meetings with implementing bodies when deemed necessary to ensure alignment of CID interpretation and verification mechanisms between COM, Coordinating Body and implementing bodies)

In some cases, helps anticipate challenges and unforeseen difficulties.

4
Bilateral contacts between technical staff at COM (DG ECFIN and SG RECOVER) and Coordinators of the Coordinating Body (EMRP) to sort out technical issues that may arise

Different meeting models help foster creative solutions

5
Drafting of Cover Notes

Guarantees the detailed CID requirements for imp. bodies are clear

6
Pre-sharing of evidence and Cover Notes with multiple iterations to stabilize all supporting documentation as early as possible

Anticipates feedback and issues that may be harder to fix during the payment request

7
Submission in FENIX of evidence and Cover Notes beforehand, as the supporting documentation is stabilized

Prevents unnecessary work

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Preparation and Submission of Payment Requests

i) Preparing the payment request submission   **ii) Payment request submission**   iii) During payment request assessment

Main activities

1

Pre-sharing of documentation submitted with the payment request, including management declarations and payment requests

2

Upload of documentation in FENIX and Formal Submission of Request for Payment

i) Preparing the payment request submission	ii) Payment request submission	iii) During payment request assessment

Documents to Submit

▶ **Request for payment** ➜ In accordance with Annex II of the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agreement between the Commission and the Portuguese Republic, sent via email

▶ **Justification of fulfilment of the respective milestones and targets** ➜ All documentation in FENIX previously submitted

▶ **Management Declaration** ➜ In accordance with Annex III of the Recovery and Resilience Facility Agreement between the Commission and the Portuguese Republic, uploadad in FENIX and sent via email
Among other sections, includes

▶ **Summary of audits** ➜

- Systematic analysis of double funding – the Agency for Development and Cohesion, I.P.

- Audit report – Inspectorate General of Finance (Audit Authority)

- Management Verifications covering all the milestones and targets related to the Payment request – Task Force «Recuperar Portugal»

▶ **Green Expenditure** ➜ Reporting in FENIX of total expenditure for measures with green tagging

▶ **Evidence list** ➜ Exported from FENIX, list with all submitted documents, to be sent via email with the payment request

3 Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

Main activities

1

Carry out sampling assessment

2

Weekly meeting with COM to go over all milestones and targets on both sides, including presentation with latest status

3 Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

→ → **iii) During payment request assessment**

Sampling

The documentation submitted on FENIX is validated through a sampling process which may have one or more phases depending on whether validation is successful or not

1 Submit an Excel list with all elements comprising the milestone/ target

2 Analysis of a sample of 60 elements

Are all elements compliant?

Yes → OK

No →

3 Analysis of a new sample of 228 elements

Some Lessons Learned

- Keep it simple – only absolutely necessary information in the Excel file
- Multiple layers of verification
- Flexibility of approach – sometimes there are easier ways to show the same result

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3 Payment Requests: Process for submission and assessment

| i) Preparing the payment request submission | ii) Payment request submission | **iii) During payment request assessment** |

Main activities – Some lessons learned

1

National RRP Information System and Relation with Investments and Reforms

Helps implementing bodies know who does what and when

2

Weekly meetings with COM to go over all milestones and targets on both sides, including presentation with latest status

Ensures COM and MS are aligned in status and challenges

3

Early meetings with implementing bodies when deemed necessary to ensure alignment of CID interpretation and verification mechanisms between COM, Coordinating Body and implementing bodies)

In some cases, helps anticipate challenges and unforeseen difficulties.

4

Bilateral contacts between technical staff at COM (DG ECFIN and SG RECOVER) and Coordinators of the Coordinating Body (EMRP) to sort out technical issues that may arise

Different meeting models help foster creative solutions

5

Drafting of Cover Notes

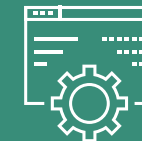**Guarantees the detailed CID requirements for imp. bodies are clear**

6

Pre-sharing of evidence and Cover Notes with multiple iterations to stabilize all supporting documentation as early as possible

Anticipates feedback and issues that may be harder to fix during the payment request

7

Submission in FENIX of evidence and Cover Notes beforehand, as the supporting documentation is stabilized

Prevents unnecessary work

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Q&A

Some questions for open discussion

How do we mitigate the risk from unreliable and incomplete information when we submit payment request?

How to ensure more efficient checks on M&T in a payment request, based on the specific risk linked to each of them?

How to balance the involvement of other relevant entities during the preparation and submission of an evidence-based payment request?

How to anticipate issues with milestones and targets months in advance?

Which lessons have been learned by Member States through their interaction with COM on payment requests procedure?

Which lessons have been learned by the Commission through their interaction with MS on payment requests procedure?

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Obrigado