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EUPAN Survey on IT Management

Final results - December 2025

Agency for Public Finance and Management

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Survey background and method

- **Background**: Digitalization is a key priority for the European Commission and most EU member states, but it is often characterized by high costs, complexity, and risks. Effective governance and professional IT management are therefore essential to successful government digitalization.
- **Purpose of study**: The purpose of this survey is to investigate the extent to which the management of existing IT systems, IT projects and existing digital infrastructure within ministries and government agencies is centralized, and how it is coordinated across the EUPAN member countries.
- **Survey themes**: Digital infrastructure, IT projects, existing IT systems, autonomy, shared information, and trends over time.
- **Collection period**: Data collected via online questionnaire from June to August 2025
- **Response rate**: 89,5%
  - 26 of 27 member states responded
  - 7 of 10 observer countries responded
  - The European Commission also responded

A Danish history of continuously improving public IT Management

- **1960-2000:** The Danish national administration began using computers as early as the early 1960s for tasks such as tax calculation, population registers, and statistics. The use of IT in the national administration steadily increased through the 1970s and 1980s, and by the early 2000s, use of IT was widespread in the national administration, which was then also relying on an established *digital infrastructure*. The development and use of IT systems were characterized by a high degree of decentralization, which led to many standalone IT systems and fragmented IT management.

- **2000-2015**: The development of use of IT in the national administration progressed faster than the authorities' maturity in the area. In the early 2000s, the administration was affected by a number of major failed IT projects. Partly for this reason, in 2011 a *model for IT projects* was developed, which, to this day, is mandatory for all major IT projects in the national administration. The *Governmental IT Council* was established to conduct risk assessments of all major IT projects in the national administration .

- **2015-now:** A series of investigations were conducted by the government into the management of the IT system portfolios by governmental authorities. The investigations revealed that many IT systems were in poor technical condition and did not provide a proper support of relevant processes. Based on this, a governmental *model for IT system portfolio management* was developed, and in 2018, the mandate of the *Governmental IT Council* was expanded to include reviews of authorities' management of system portfolios. Today we continually improve our governance models for public IT management.

Digital infrastructure → IT project management → IT portfolio management

Limitations of our study

- While we believe that the high response rate makes this study particularly useful in providing an overview of experiences, challenges and trends of the governance and management of government IT in the EU, we also note the following limitations of the study:
  - In the survey, we asked a set of general questions to examine structures and coordination mechanisms across very different types of government systems, traditions and structures. The general nature of our questions may homogenize the answers and thus hide smaller variances and nuances regarding countries' different approaches to IT management.
  - The general nature of the survey questions allows for interpretative flexibility, meaning that countries may interpret questions differently depending on individual and country specific perspectives.
  - With these limitations in mind, we argue that the data are appropriate for a general overview and discussion of experiences and trends in IT management across EUPAN member states.

There is an overall pattern of centralization in the governance of IT management across EUPAN countries

1. A clear majority of countries have some level of centrally provided **digital infrastructure** (88% or 29 of 33)
2. A clear majority of countries have a degree of central coordination of **management of IT projects** (79% or 27 of 34)
3. Two-thirds of countries have a degree of central **management of IT systems** (67% or 22 of 33)

- Central coordination is located in a specific ministry (Digitalization, Finance or other) or a specific digitalization agency.
- Most countries show a combination of both binding central regulations and standards/models for certain areas but also softer forms of coordination (white papers/guidance, dialogue) in other areas.

Definitions

Existing digital infrastructure	Digital infrastructure refers to the fundamental technological systems and services that enable electronic communication, data processing and storing, and information exchange within the national administration.
IT projects	An IT project is understood as a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a new IT system or a significant adaptation of an existing IT system. IT systems conceptually cover IT applications, IT solutions, IT infrastructure and the like.
Existing IT systems	Existing IT systems is understood as the total portfolio of IT systems or in other words the total collection of IT systems within a ministry, central governmental agency or other body at central government level. IT systems conceptually cover IT applications, IT solutions, IT infrastructure and the like.

There is a high level of centralization in coordination and provision of digital infrastructure in EUPAN countries

- Almost all countries support ministries and agencies by providing common public digital services for budgeting, accounting, payroll etc. and providing common standards, architecture and infrastructure for data exchange with some exceptions.
- Most countries has more than one ministry/agency providing digital infrastructure; eight countries have centralized this in one single ministry/agency.

Examples

Bulgaria: The Ministry of Electronic Governance (MEG) supports ministries and central governmental agencies by providing and coordinating common public digital services through several national-level IT systems, including:
Centralized budgeting, accounting, and payroll systems: These are managed in coordination with the Ministry of Finance and the National Revenue Agency, ensuring standardized financial operations across the public sector.
Unified payroll and social security contribution systems: Integrated with the National Social Security Institute (NSSI) and the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF), supporting automated pension and healthcare contributions.
Central e-Government portal (EGOV.BG): Serving as a single access point for citizens and businesses to request digital public services from all participating public bodies.
Unified System for Civil Registration and Administrative Services (GRAO): Supports personal data management and is used across all government levels for identification and validation.
Electronic Identification and Authentication (eID): MEG maintains and regulates national electronic authentication services used across all public-facing systems.
Interoperability platform (RegiX): Ensures secure data exchange among public sector entities, which is critical for integrated service delivery.

A clear majority of EUPAN countries are coordinating the approval and management of IT projects

- About half of all countries have binding regulations on how to manage IT projects and have project phase-gates for approval or review of IT projects.
- Regarding risk assessment and reporting of IT projects, binding regulations are less common, and we see a prevalence of recommended models and standards as key coordination mechanisms.
- Some countries combine both binding regulations and softer forms of coordination.
- A small number of countries do not have any central coordination for these four dimensions of IT project governance.

Examples

Luxembourg: Based on the organic law, the Government IT Centre (CTIE) defines the standards and methods according to which IT systems are developed and sets up the platforms on which they are deployed. IT projects are carried out according to the project management method Quapital IT, which is based on the Hermes method and specifically adapted to IT projects.

Norway: Norway has The State Project Model for large investments, which is mandatory for projects exceeding 300 million NOK.

Slovakia: Slovakia has regulation regarding the implementation of IT projects. This regulation comprises elements such as a process for verifying the validity and relevance of the IT project (including an assessment of costs and benefits), which prerequisites are to be fulfilled before IT projects are implemented, and the templates of the necessary documentation for IT projects.

EUPAN countries both have binding regulations and soft coordination for the management of existing central governance of IT systems

- A clear majority of EUPAN countries have binding regulations for IT finance and IT security. For application maintenance and especially the management of in- and outsourcing binding regulations are less common
- A little less than two thirds of all countries rely on softer coordination mechanisms for IT systems and one third neither regulate or support IT systems
- Some countries use a combination of both binding regulation/standards and soft coordination via dialogue and guidance

Examples

Czech Republic: By law ministries and public institutions are required to manage their information systems in a way that ensures security, continuity, interoperability, and efficiency. Ongoing maintenance is considered part of the system lifecycle, and any significant changes must be submitted to the Digital and Information Agency (DIA) for assessment. The Chief Architect of eGovernment (DIA) oversees system architecture and enforces compliance through the mandatory project approval process, which covers not only new projects but also substantial upgrades or reconfigurations, including those related to maintenance. By law public authorities are required to submit strategic and operational plans that include maintenance cycles, support mechanisms, and future development considerations. The Government ICT Strategy provides guidance on standard components, security models, lifecycle governance, and the reuse of digital infrastructure, which ministries are expected to follow.
Cooperation is also facilitated through regular coordination meetings, working groups, and bilateral dialogues between DIA and sectoral ministries.

There are strong country variations for IT coordination across government levels in EUPAN countries

- Central government coordination affects other government levels to different degrees.
- In only two countries, rules and standards for IT governance are also binding for other government levels.
- In most countries, central government coordination affects other government levels to a significant degree or partially.
- In about one-fifth of the countries, other government levels are not at all affected by central government coordination.

Examples

Greece: The Ministry of Digital Governance is the central authority for designing and implementing Greece's national digital transformation strategy. It oversees the development of digital public services, national registries, and digital identity systems. Greece has established centralized coordination mechanisms for managing IT systems across ministries and public agencies. The Ministry of Digital Governance and Artificial Intelligence is the central authority responsible for overseeing the digital transformation of the public sector. It ensures interoperability, standardization, and compliance with national digital policies. Additionally, the Cloud First Policy mandates that all new and existing public information systems (with specific exceptions) must be hosted on one of the three national public clouds. This policy enforces centralized infrastructure management and enhances coordination across government entities. Since 2025, it also includes the Special Secretariat for Artificial Intelligence and Data Governance, which coordinates AI-related initiatives and promotes the responsible use of data in the public sector.

Ireland: The Digital Government Oversight Unit (DGOU) of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer is responsible for the oversight of new digital/ICT-related initiatives proposed by Civil and Public Service bodies to ensure alignment with Government policy, associated strategies and demonstrate good governance structures and practice. The DGOU has a particular focus on ensuring that digital and ICT related initiatives are appropriately aligned with all relevant government policies and the strategies that support them, and that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to assure their successful delivery.

There is a rather high autonomy of ministries and agencies in EUPAN countries

- Despite the substantial degree of central coordination efforts, the autonomy of individual ministries and agencies regarding IT management is still rather high. Most countries report full autonomy in decisions on procurement and on software licenses for IT systems. Autonomy is somewhat lower for IT security and IT system development, where partial autonomy is more common.
- There is a positive, though not strong, correlation between the level of central coordination and the level of shared information and transparency: the more central coordination, the higher the level of shared information and transparency.

Examples

Germany: The Federal Government initiated the consolidation of the Federal Administration's IT by cabinet resolution in 2015. The benefits of synergy and scaling effects can be achieved by combining and standardizing IT services. A predominant goal is to continue to ensure information security while the complexity is ever increasing. This project affects around 168 federal authorities with up to 276,000 employees.

Sweden: Agencies have full autonomy to decide on the development of new IT systems within their budget limits. This is in line with the Swedish administrative model, where each agency is responsible for its internal organisation and operations.

IT coordination goes along with the need for higher transparency in EUPAN countries

- About 70% of EUPAN countries have information on the number of existing IT systems and running IT projects as well as their budgets and expenses across the national administration. Five countries report fully centralized information, whereas in most other countries partially centralized information is available.
- There is almost no correlation between the level of central coordination on existing IT systems and IT projects and the level of autonomy for management of IT systems in ministries and government agencies.

Examples

The Netherlands: All larger IT-projects are published on a governance website (https://www.rijksictdashboard.nl). That way it is easy to follow the execution of the IT-project (budget, objective, duration, etc.). The data is provided by the individual departments. The process is managed by CIO Rijk who is responsible for rules and standards for policy on digitalisation. CIO Rijk is part of the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations.

Spain: A central platform provides a unified and common inventory for the entire administration of the public entities, their associated offices, and economic-budget management units, facilitating the distributed and responsible maintenance of information. Also, when an Autonomous Community or local entity joins a common platform, the General State Administration (AGE) is aware of its level of use. Future investment in IT projects is usually part of the regional digital agendas, sectoral strategic plans, or public tenders. Administrations must share planning and execution with the AGE in the case of co-financed projects. This aims to strengthen transparency in public administration by promoting data sharing and open data models for public information exchange. This is part of the effort to optimize operational efficiency and decision-making quality using emerging technologies.

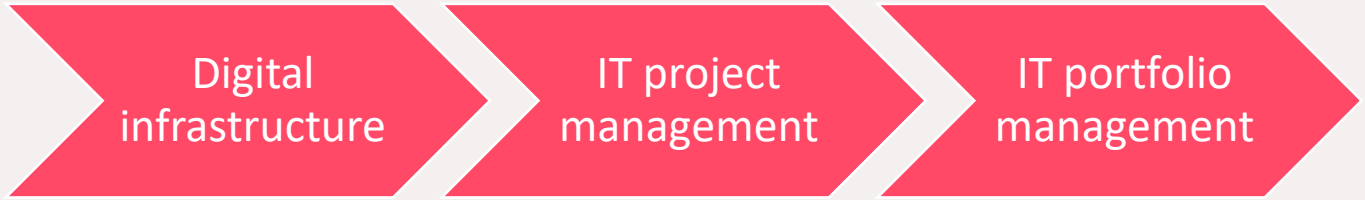
Hungary: Centralized reporting mechanisms are established to monitor the status and progress of IT projects, ensuring transparency and accountability. There is specific calculations and numbers available for the upkeep of the whole digitalization ecosystem, but there is no central and complete database on all of the operation and maintenance costs of every existing AI systems.

Perspective on the future of IT management in EUPAN

- EUPAN countries tend toward similar forms of ICT governance overall, perhaps more so than would be expected in other fields of national administration , making digitalization a more centrally coordinated policy area.
- Overall, there are substantial country variations, with some having a rather decentralized governance of IT, and other countries being more centralized.
- The survey confirms a clear tendency toward increasing centralization of IT governance expected over the next five years (87,5% or 28/32 of respondents expect that IT governance in their country will be increasingly centralized during the next five years).
- Nearly all countries agree that IT governance will become a greater priority in the future and will lead to higher transparency based on information on existing IT systems, running IT projects, and IT expenses across the national administration (100% or 31/31 of respondents expect that IT governance in their country will be more transparent with information across the national administration during the next five years).

Final thoughts from a Danish perspective

- Our study shows that EUPAN countries have a more centralized coordination of digital infrastructure than of IT projects and even to a lesser degree of the portfolio of IT systems.
- From a Danish perspective, we have experienced the professionalization of ICT governance as a journey starting with the digital infrastructure, leading to focus on managing the development of new IT projects, to finally focus more on the overall portfolio of existing as well as emerging IT systems.
- We do not expect countries to go through this process step by step, but we see evidence suggesting EUPAN countries generally agree on the destination. However, there may still be significant differences regarding the length of the journey ahead and challenges along the path.



Acknowledgements

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Copenhagen Business School

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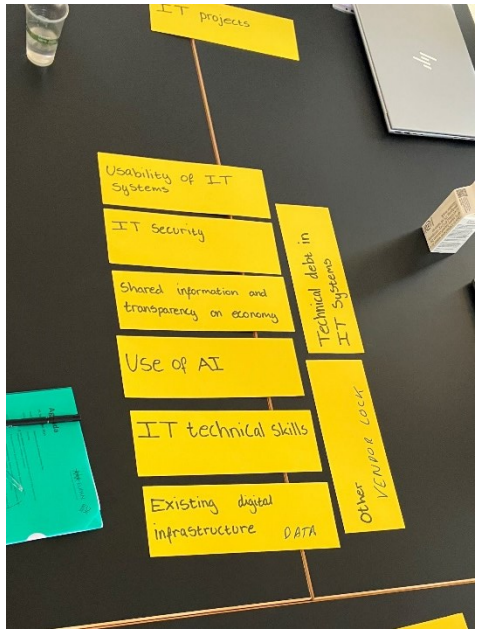
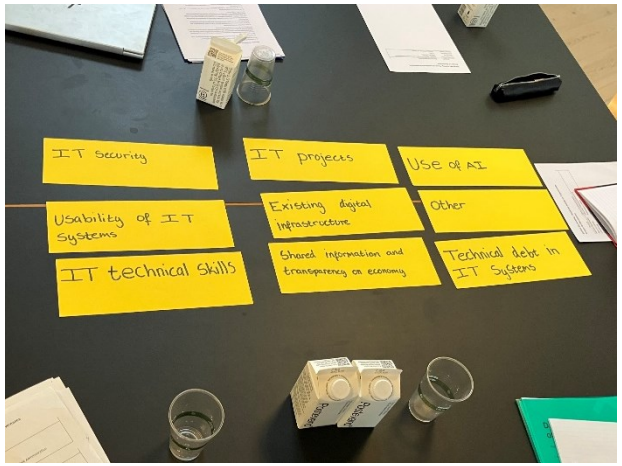
Agency for Public Finance and Management

Appendix A: Reflections from WL and DG breakout sessions

Reflections from WL breakout session in September 2025

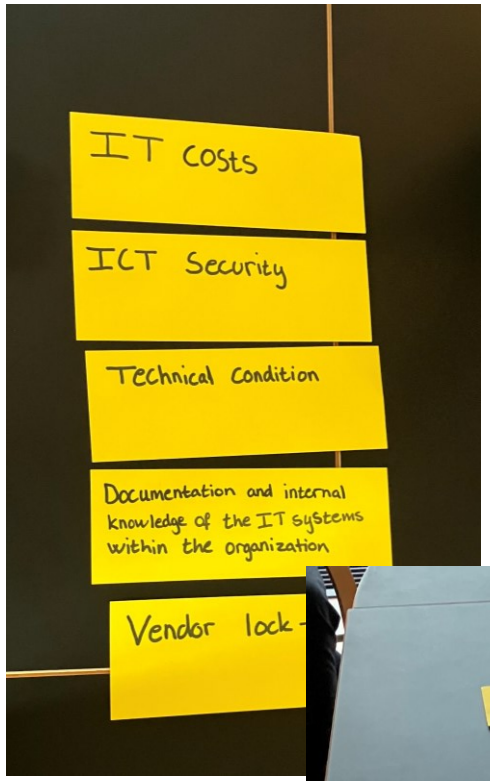
- In the break-out session at the WL Meeting, participants discussed the different dimensions an organization must consider when managing an IT portfolio of existing IT systems. Participants prioritized different dimensions and discussed why they valued some elements above others.
- Output
  - ‘Usability of IT systems’ and ‘IT security’ were highest priority
  - ‘Technical debt of existing IT systems’ were low priority
  - Both groups mentioned that vendor locking was an important dimension that they wanted to add to the prioritization exercise.

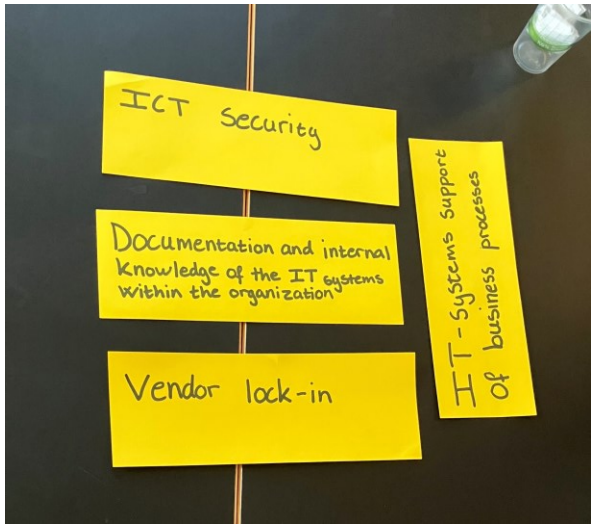


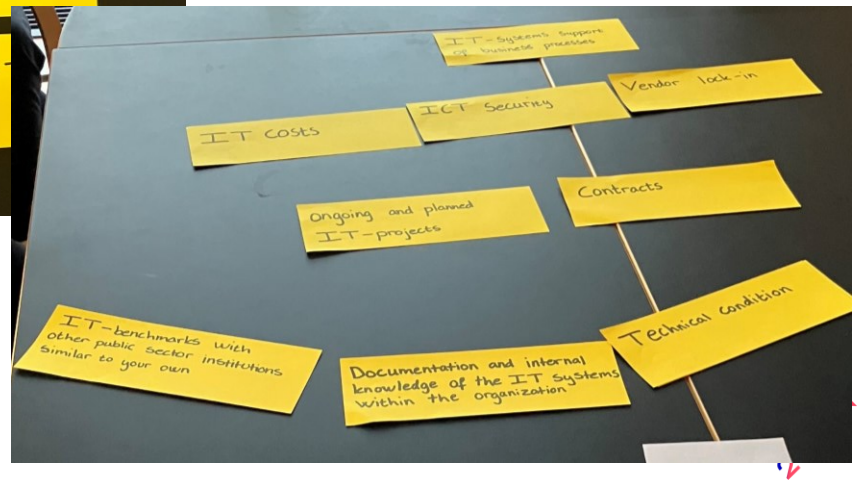


Reflections from DG breakout session in December 2025

- In the break-out session at the DG Meeting, participants continued the discussion about important dimensions an organization must consider when managing an IT portfolio of existing IT systems. The categories where slightly revised from WL meeting.
- Output
  - ‘IT System support of business process’ was seen as fundamental to strategic decisions about the IT portfolio of existing systems.
  - The dimensions ‘IT security’, ‘IT cost’ and ‘Vendor lock-In’ was thought of as practical necessities.
  - ‘Documentation and internal knowledge of IT Systems in the organization’ as well as ‘Technical condition’ was seen as important to some and less so to others depending on country specific IT challenges.
  - ‘IT benchmarking’ was less of a priority.

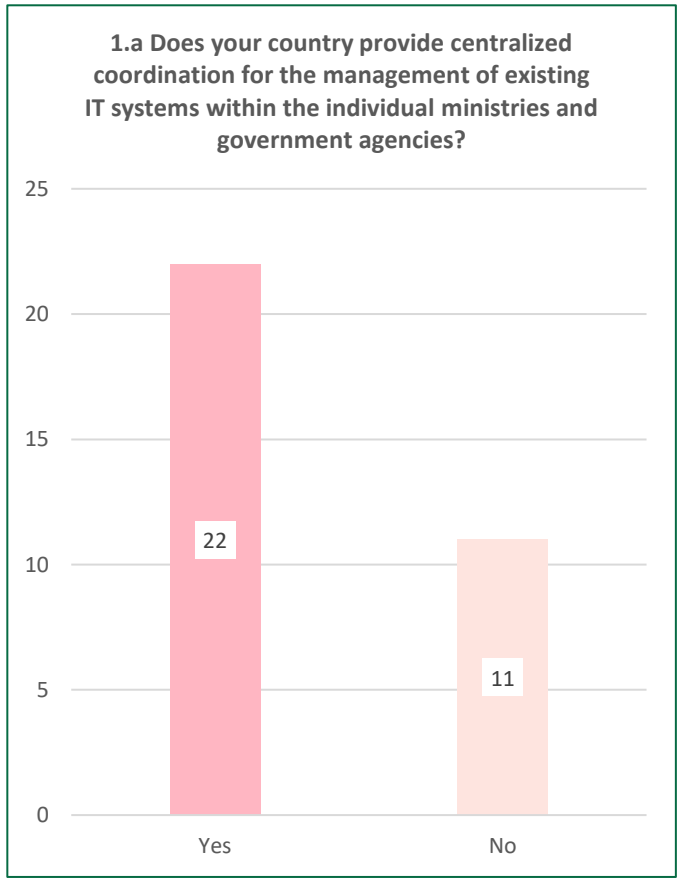


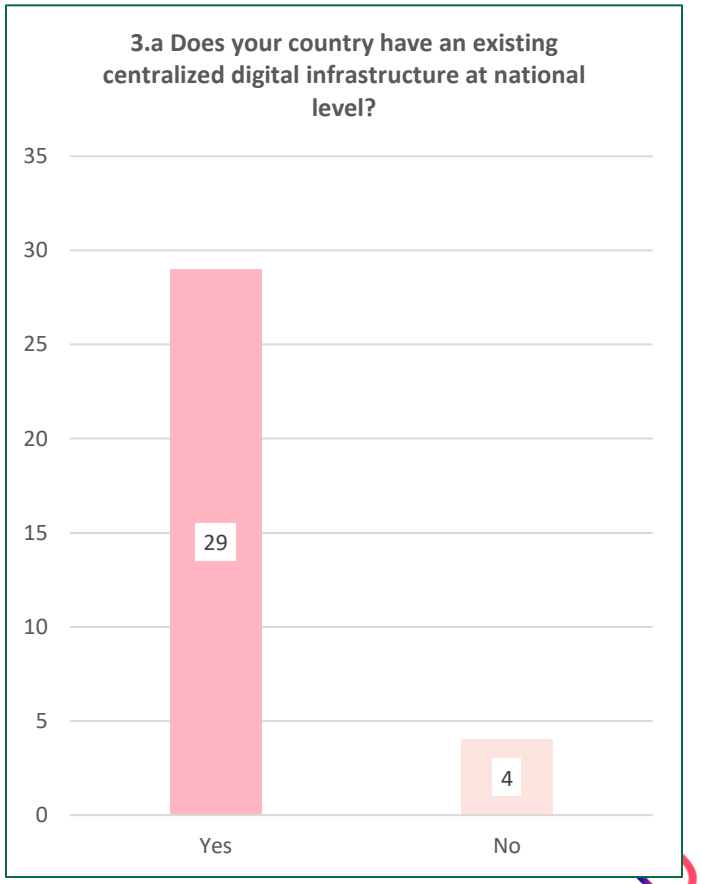




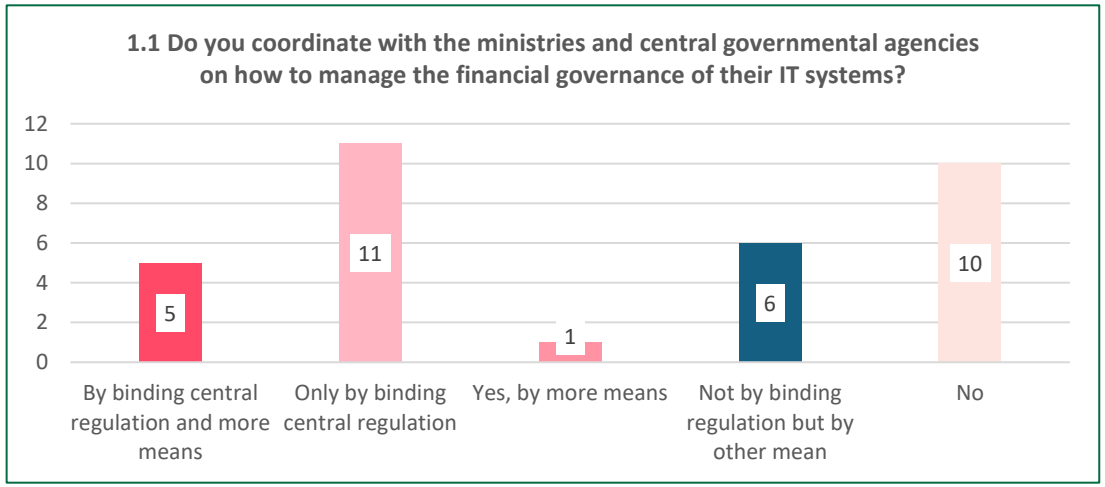
Appendix B: survey results

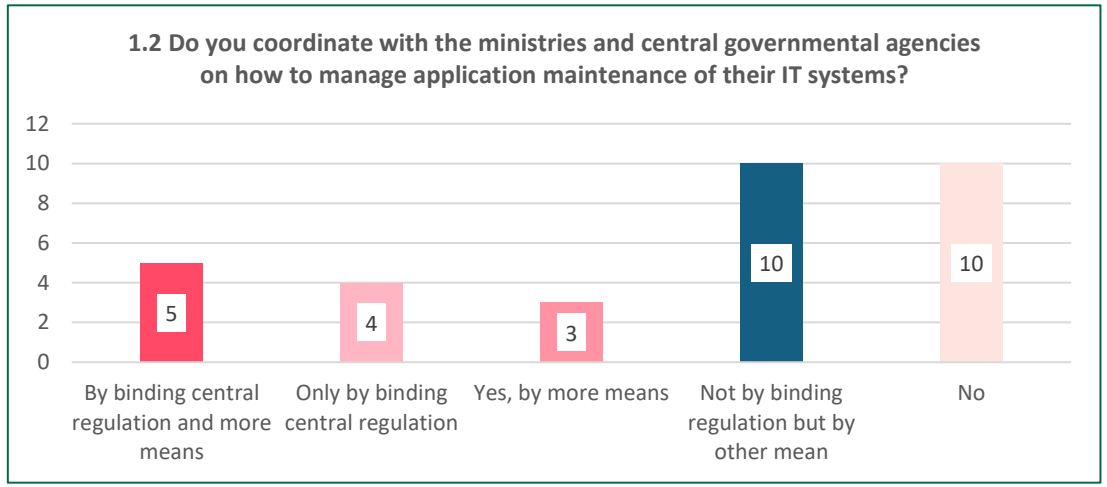
General questions regarding the centralization of IT Management

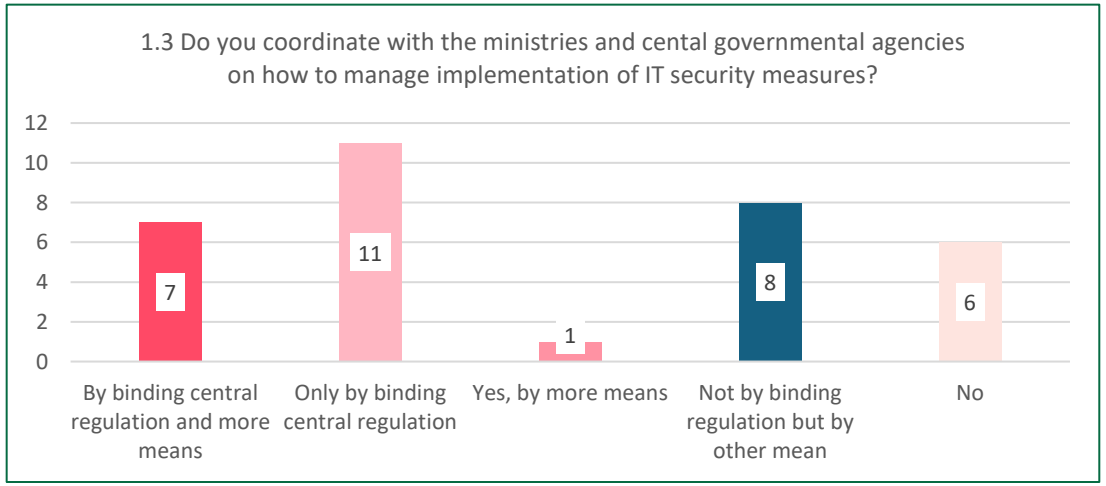


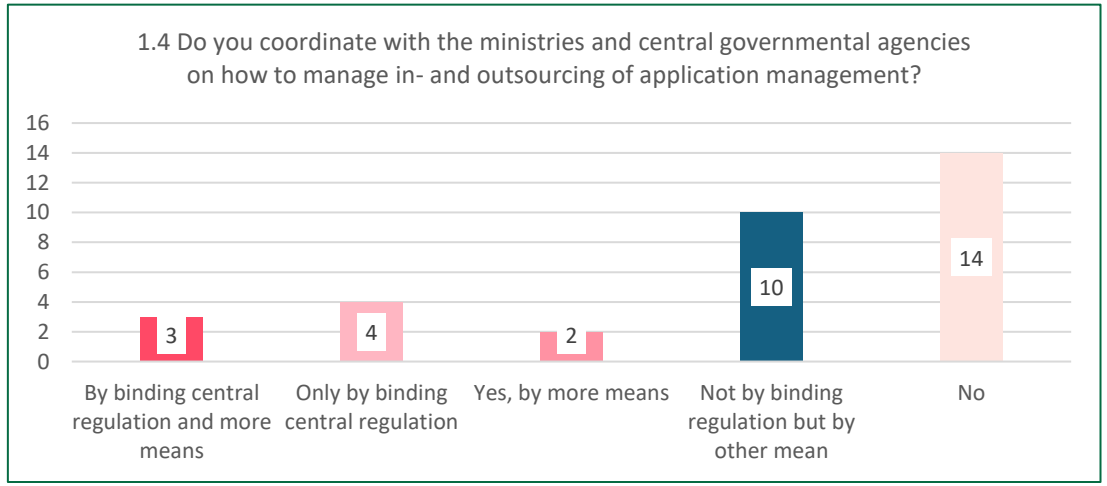


Management of Existing IT systems

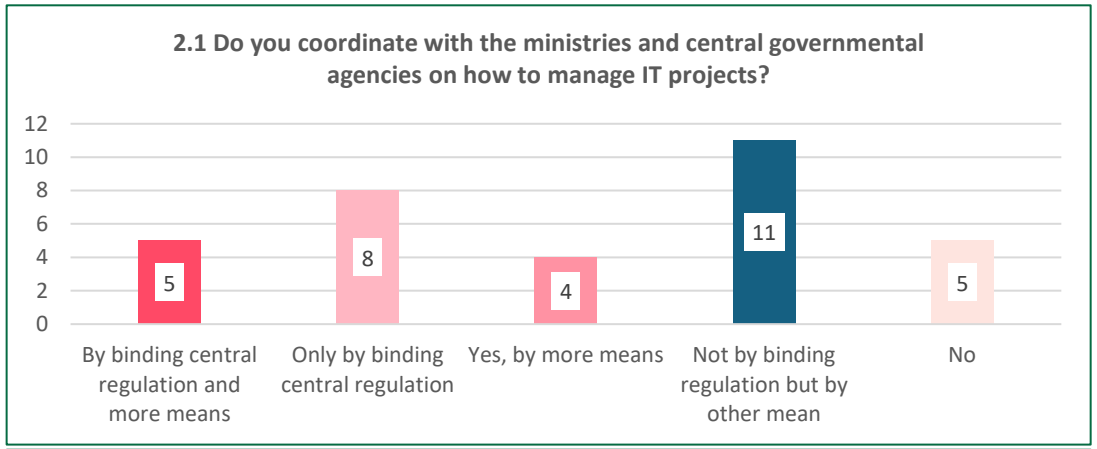


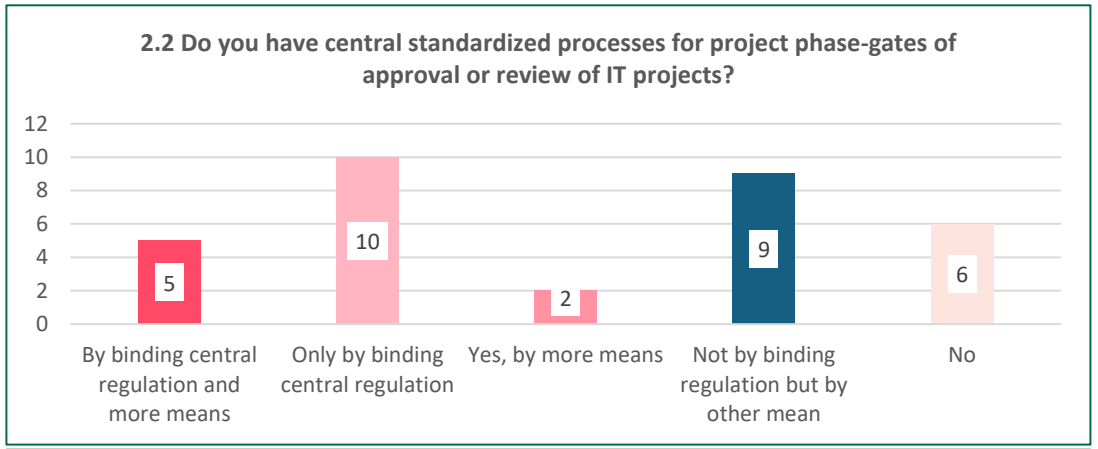


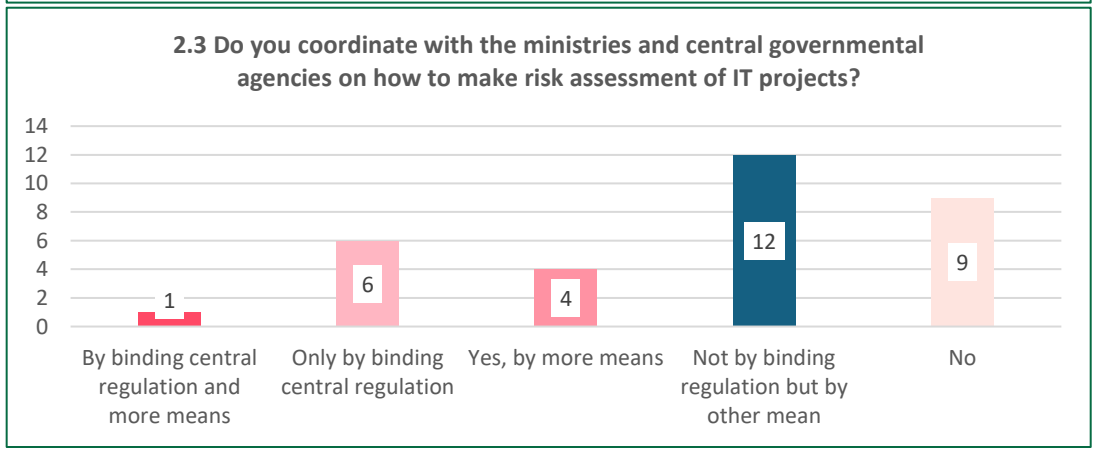


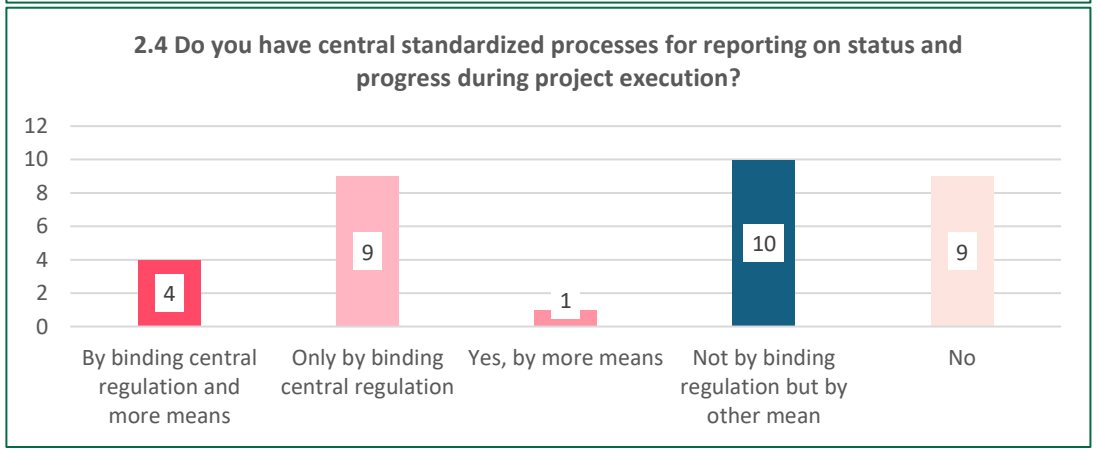


Management of IT projects

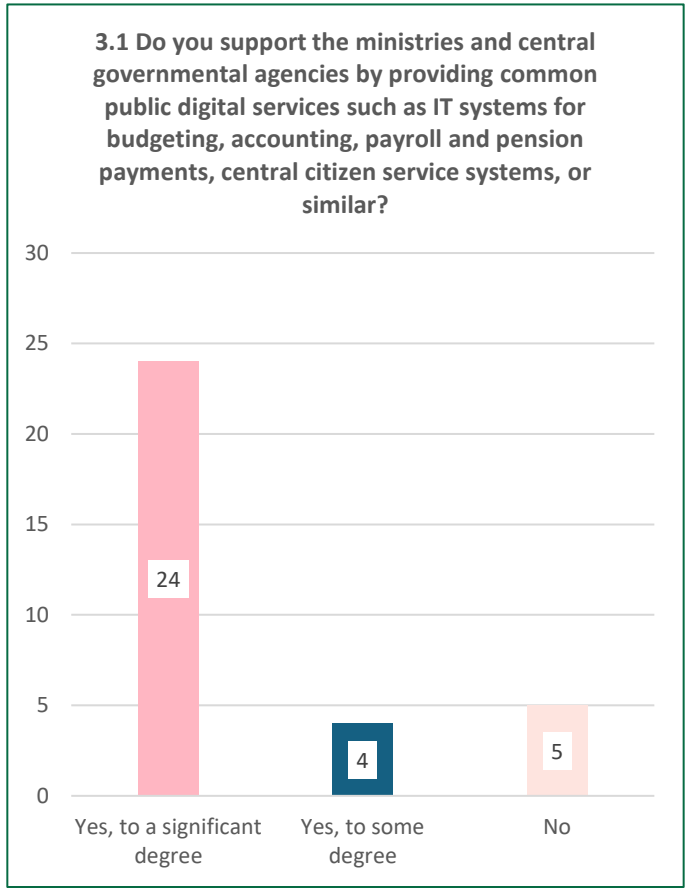


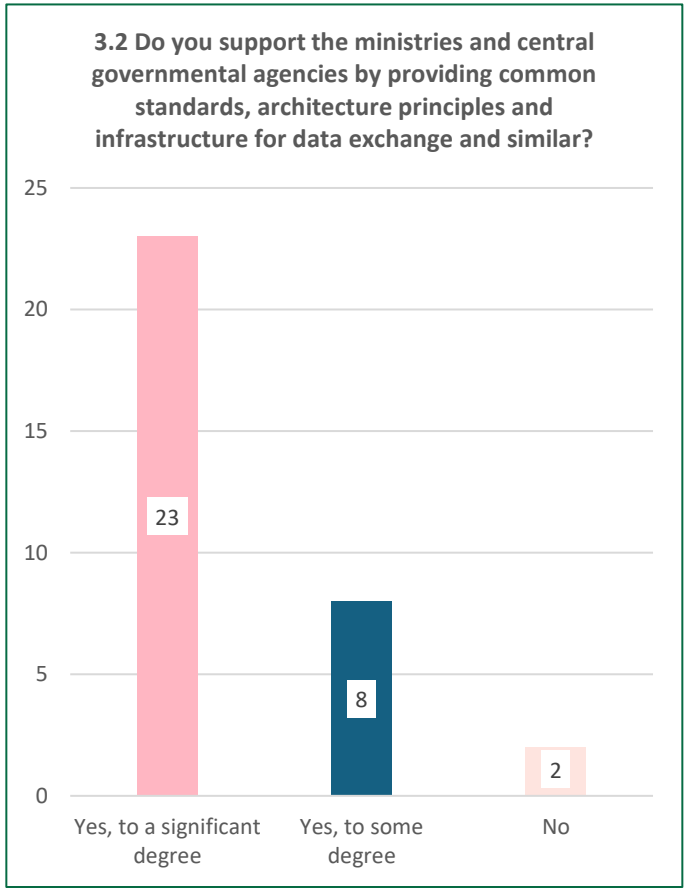


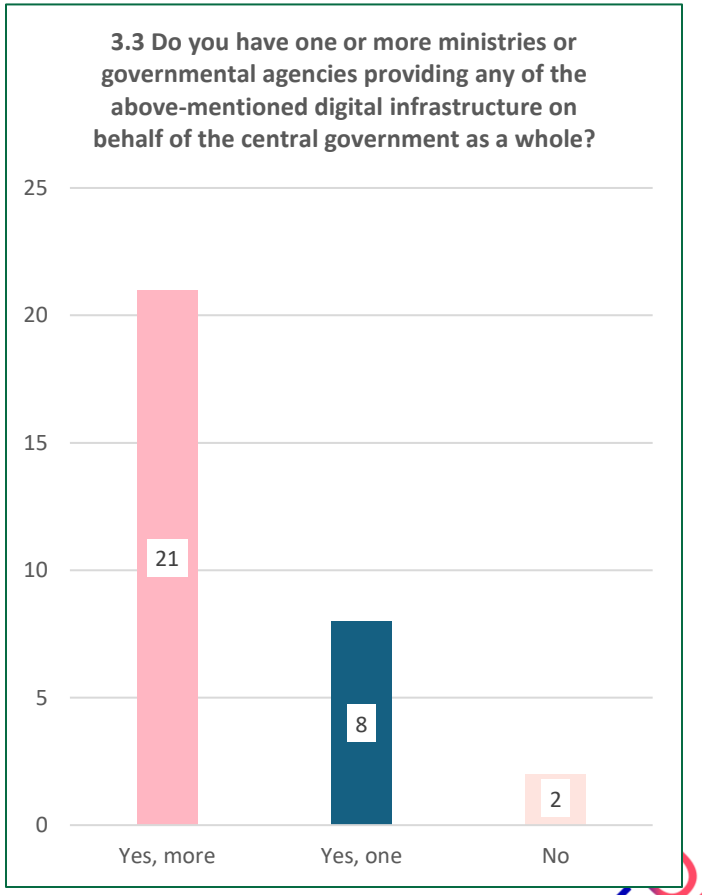




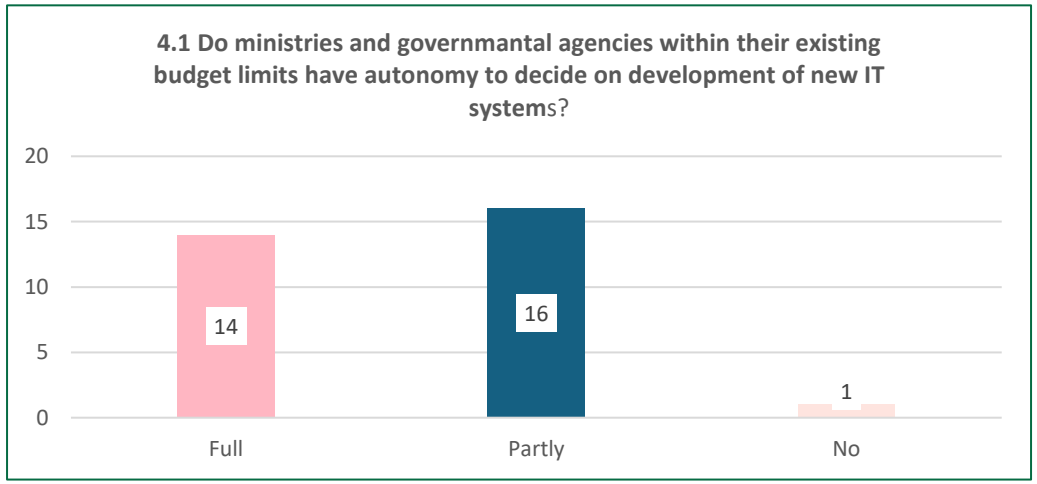
Existing digital infrastructure

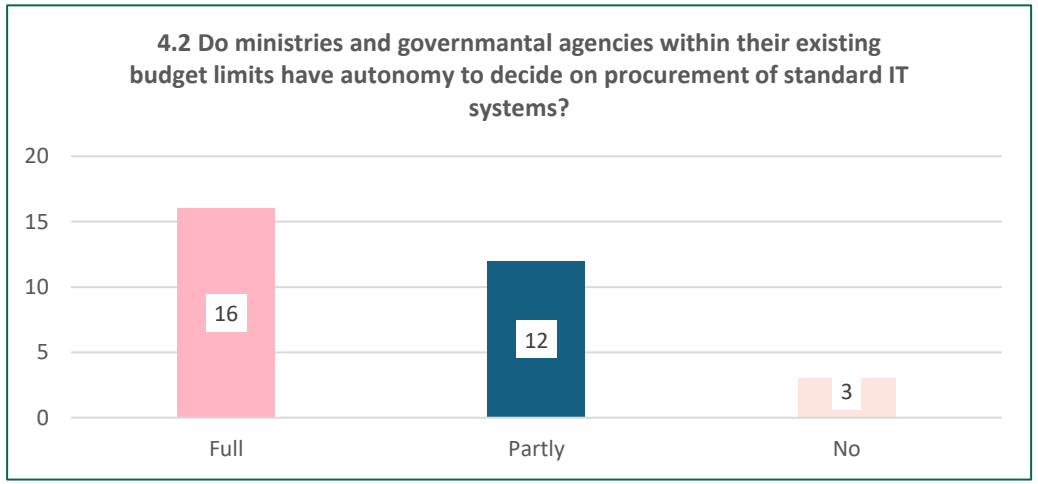


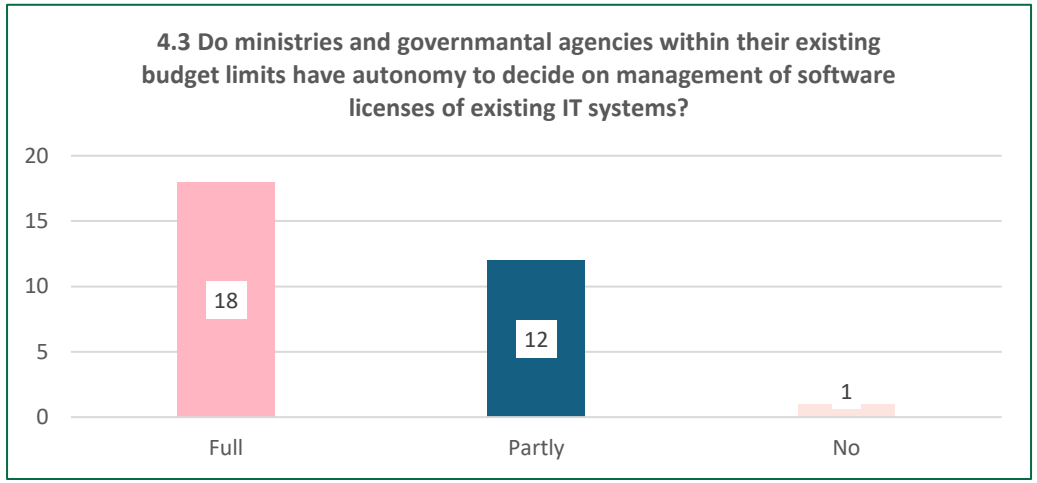


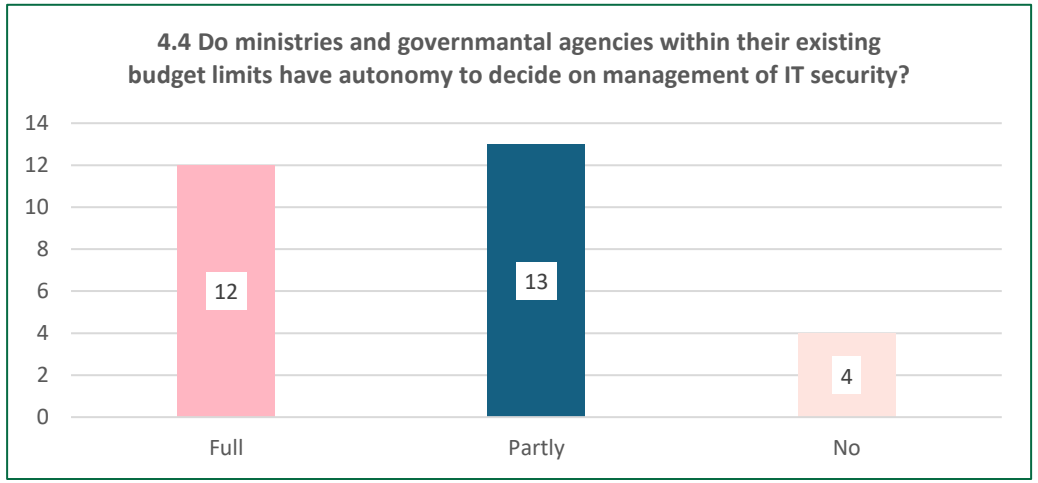


Central governance and autonomy of IT management (1 of 2)

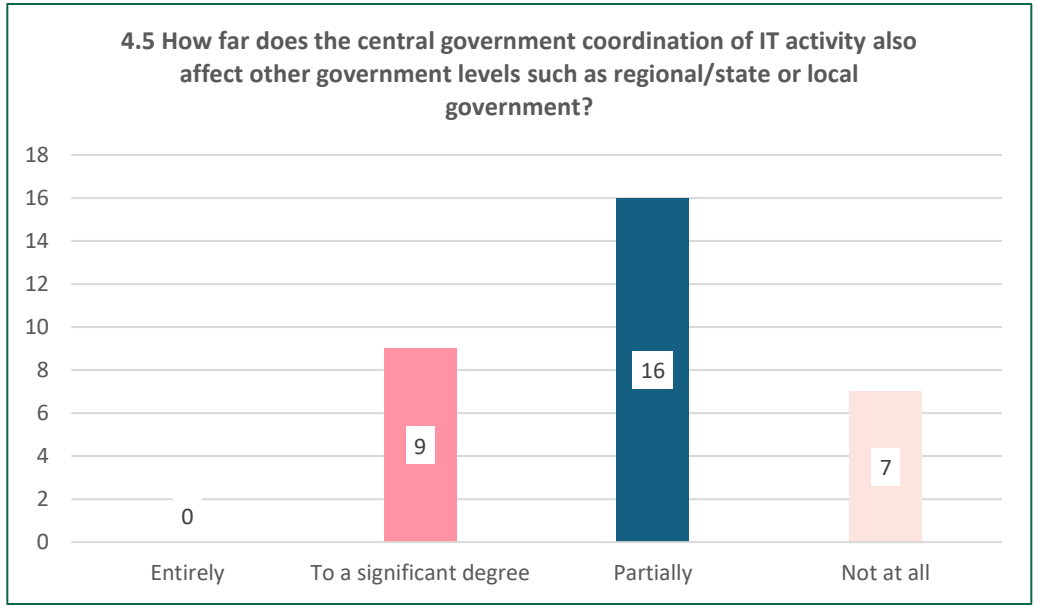


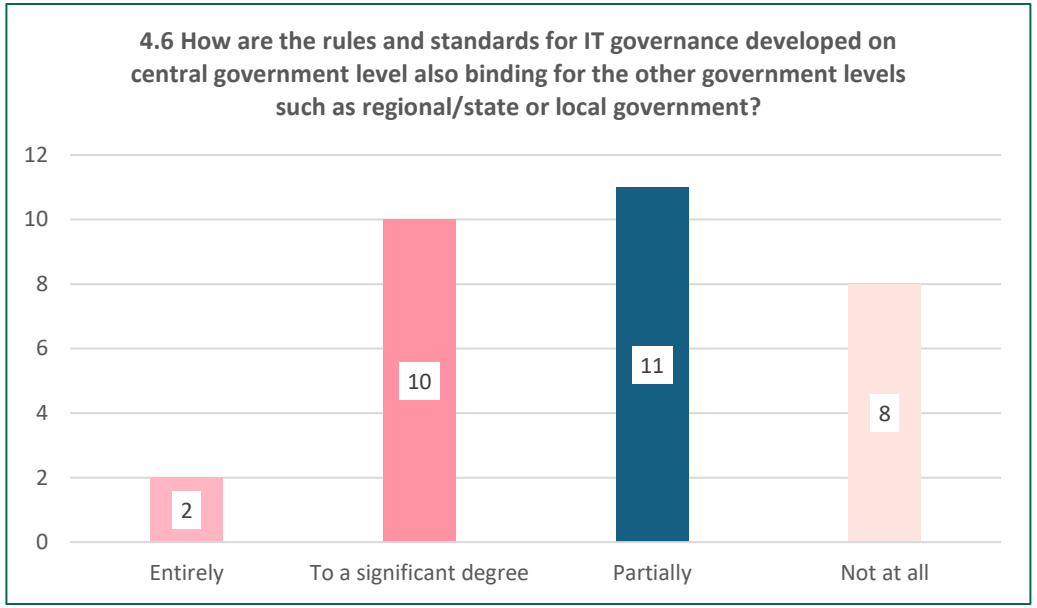




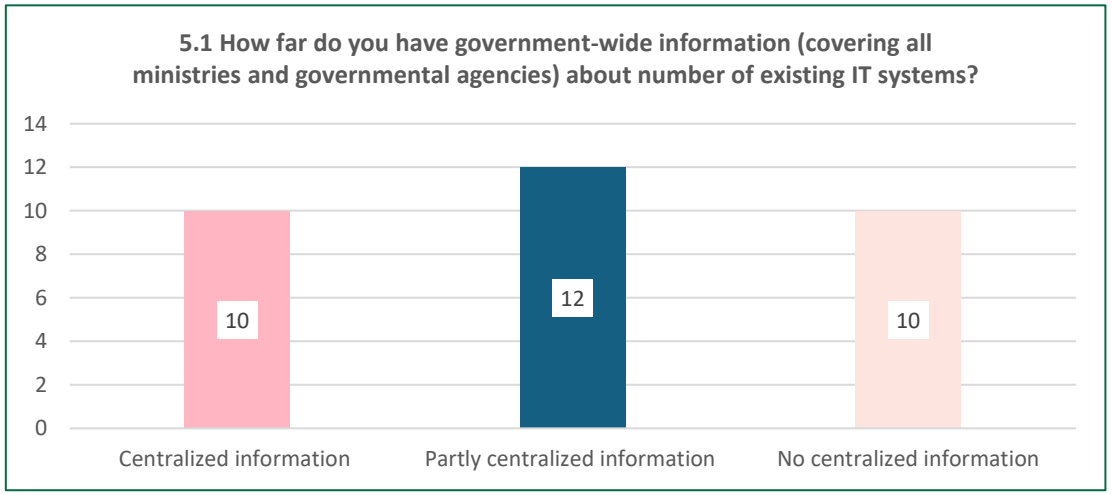


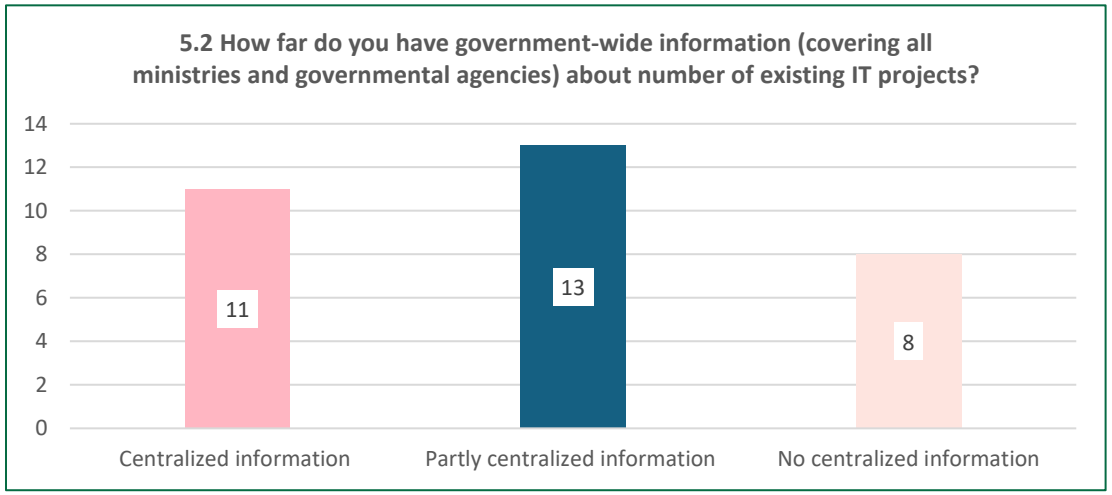
Central governance and autonomy of IT management (2 of 2)

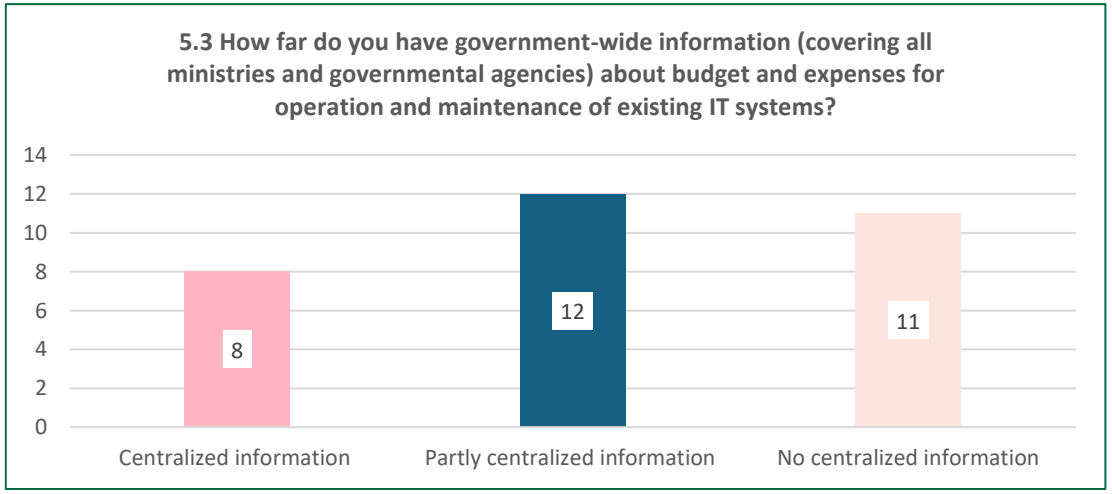


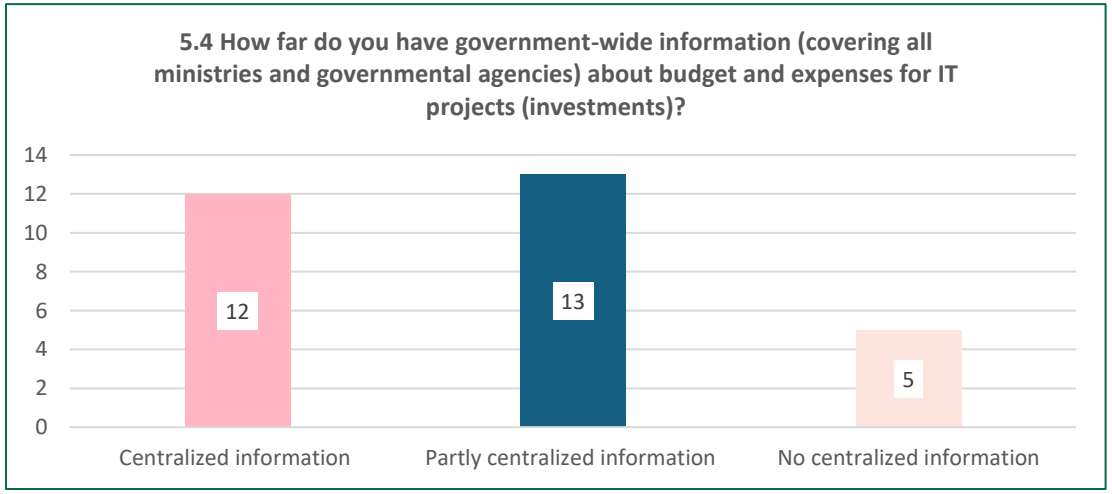


Shared information and transparency

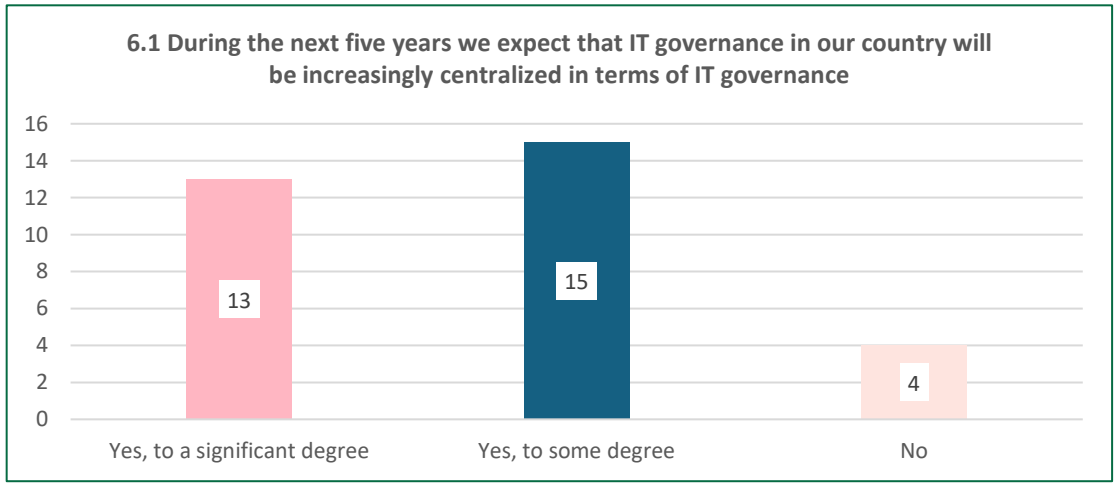


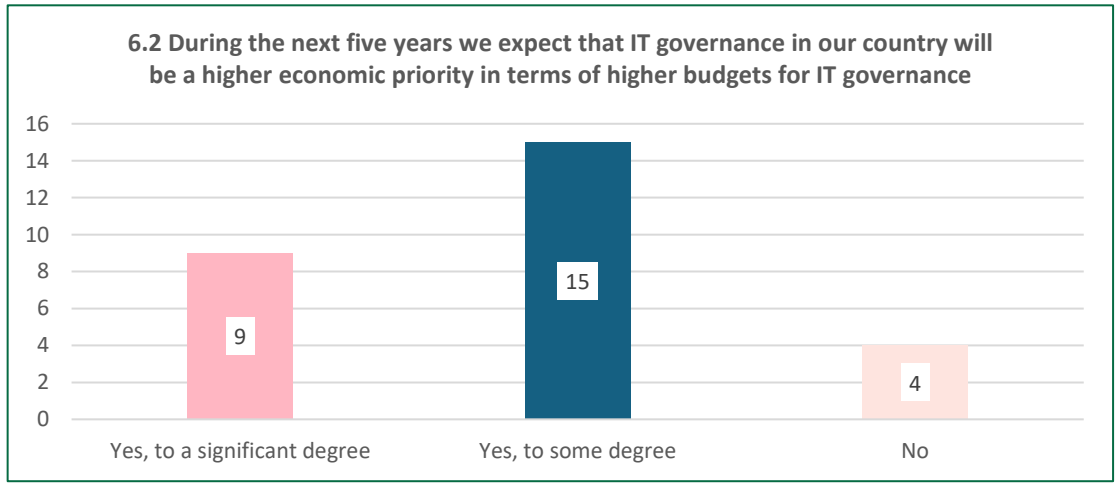


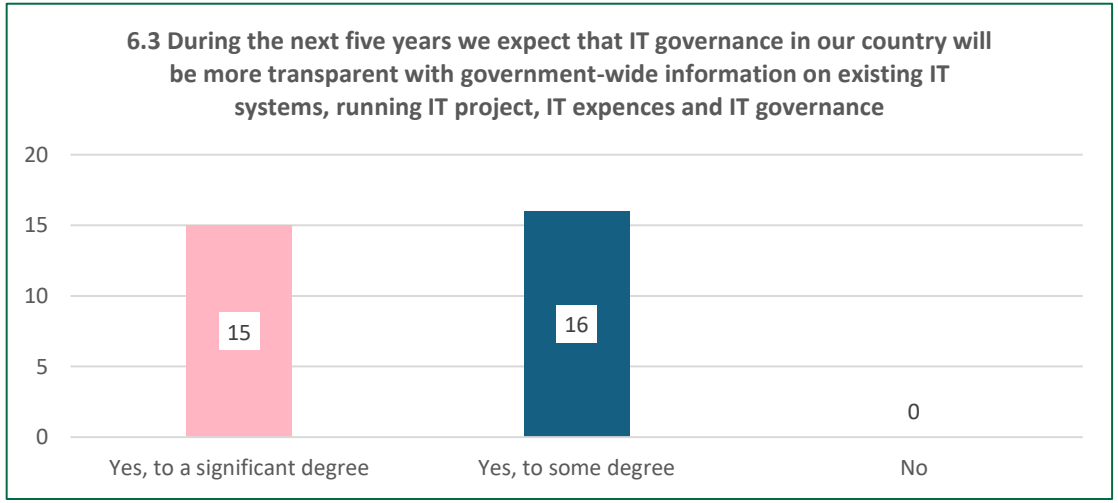


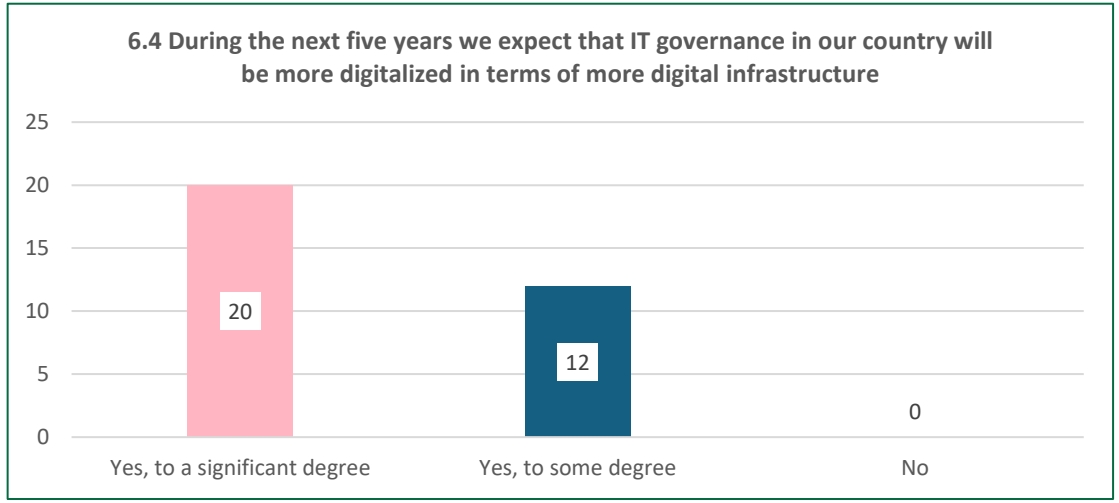


Trends over time









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