Special Report 4/2025

Public sector projects: Are they treated as investments with a life cycle horizon, or as short-term interventions without long-term planning?

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Hellenic Court of Audit examined the extent to which public authorities treat public projects as long-term investments, ensuring their operation and availability throughout their lifecycle.

The audit identified the following findings:

1. The lack of a comprehensive system for the overall management of the utilisation of projects throughout their life cycle. The obligation to assess the feasibility and sustainability of projects and the substantive consultation with the public are neither provided for in a uniform and complete regulation at the regulatory framework level nor are they regularly carried out by the authorities.

2. Difficulties in seeking ways of making use of certain property, constructed for the purposes of the Olympic and Paralympic Games 2004. The absence of relevant long-term planning, as well as the successive ownership transfers, hence, the successive transfer of the relevant competence.

3. The fact that no system of overall continuous monitoring of the maintenance of projects has been put into operation. Maintenance and regular inspections are generally not scheduled; works for repairing and/or maintaining public property are carried out following eventual reports by their users or emergency failures.

4. Performance indicators in significant categories of projects have not been established; the authorities do not define such indicators in the individual projects they implement, thus leading to a difficulty in evaluating their effectiveness.

5. While preparing studies, risks such as extreme weather events, geotechnical and environmental factors are not adequately assessed.

6. Sufficient guarantees for the exercise of substantive supervision are not provided, due to the fact that technical services are understaffed; the audit identified several cases of deficiencies in keeping logs and summary reports, limited presence of supervisors, inadequate documentation of quality controls, and not making use of the possibility of outsourcing supervision to external entities.