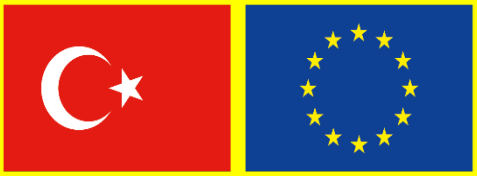

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Technical Assistance for Product Safety in E-Commerce

Project Identification No: NEAR/ANK/2022/EA-RP/0213

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Needs Analysis Report

Activity 1.3. Needs Analysis

Final

15.08.2025

Ankara, TÜRKİYE

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PROJECT INFORMATION FORM

Project Title	**Technical Assistance for Product Safety in E-Commerce**
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Project Value:	2.090.221,00 Euros
Starting Date:	09 September 2024
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Submitted on:	15.08.2025

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
AI	Artificial Intelligence
API	Application Programming Interface
CE	Conformité Européenne (European Conformity)
CFCU	Central Finance and Contracts Unit
CİMER	Communication Centre of the Presidency
DSA	Digital Services Act (Regulation (EU) 2022/2065)
DG	Directorate General
e-MS	Market Surveillance in e-commerce
EU	European Union
ETBIS	Electronic Trade Information System
ESBIS	Tradesmen and Craftsmen Information System
GPSD	General Product Safety Directive (2001/95/EC)
GPSR	General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988
ICSMS	Information and Communication System for Market Surveillance
IT	Information Technology
KKDIK	Turkish REACH Regulation (Kimyasalların Kaydı, Değerlendirilmesi, Kısıtlanması hakkında Yönetmelik)
MoT	Ministry of Trade
MS	Market Surveillance
MSA	Market Surveillance Authority
NLF	New Legislative Framework
PGDBIS	Market Surveillance Information System
PGDKK	Market Surveillance Coordination Board
QR	Quick Response (code)
RAPEX	Rapid Alert System for Dangerous Non-Food Products (New Safety Gate)
REACH	Regulation Concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals
REM / KEP	Registered Electronic Mail (Kayıtlı Elektronik Posta)
SAPR	Strategy and Action Plan Report

SCCS	Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety
SSI	Social Security Institution
TAREKS	Foreign Trade Risk-Based Import Control System
UI	User Interface
ÜTS	Product Tracking System (Ürün Takip Sistemi)

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this document, the terms below shall have the following meaning:

- “online platforms”: Electronic commerce intermediary service providers / Electronic commerce service provider, online marketplace
- “digital commerce or digital market”: e-commerce
- "electronic commerce”: All kinds of economic and commercial activities carried out online in electronic environment without physical confrontation

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Summary assessment of the main elements of the analysis

This report has been prepared within the scope of the ***'Technical Assistance for Product Safety in E-Commerce' Project financed by the European Union (EU).*** The rapid increase in e-commerce volume and the digitalizing trade structure in Türkiye challenge the sustainability of the current market surveillance (MS) system using traditional methods, thereby necessitating the digital transformation of the system. The main objective of the report is to ***assess the current state of the MS structure in Türkiye, its adaption to this transformation, to identify structural and implementation-related problems encountered and to develop solution proposals***.

The report provides a comprehensive analysis of key areas such as the legal and institutional framework, digital infrastructures, human resource capacity, risk analysis models, cooperation with platforms, consumer complaint mechanisms and training-awareness activities. The identified needs and deficiencies have been structured into actionable items for the Strategy and Action Plan Report (SAPR).

In the preparation process of the report, desk-based reviews of legislation and policy, the outputs of training events held during the project and the findings of the multi-stakeholder Needs Analysis Workshop held in Ankara in June 2025 have been the main sources. Within the scope of the workshop, thematic groups consisting of MS Authorities (MSAs), e-commerce platforms, consumer organizations and relevant sector representatives were formed and implementation-oriented problems and solution proposals were discussed together.

The resulting analysis has revealed a series of structural weaknesses such as the need for updates in legislation, ambiguities in institutional task definitions and authority sharing, lack of sustainable data exchange with platforms, regional disparities in digital infrastructure capacity and the need for development of an AI-supported MS mechanism. On the other hand, the proposed solutions focus on the establishment of a national risk analysis model, development of systems that allow digital analysis of complaints and creation of structured cooperation protocols with platforms.

From the perspective of legislative alignment, it has been identified that full compliance has not yet been achieved with new EU regulations such as the General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988 and the Digital Services Act (EU) 2022/2065. In particular, the current legislative framework needs to be strengthened regarding responsibilities of online platforms, online sampling, traceability, establishment of a link with complaint mechanisms, data sharing and cooperation with competent authorities. In this context, it is necessary to enact regulations that provide clarity at the secondary legislation level, to clarify protocols regulating inter-

institutional cooperation and to legally safeguard the tools that define the intervention capacity of competent authorities in the e-MS environment.

This analysis has been designed as a fundamental basis for Türkiye's transition towards a more EU-aligned, digitally based and systematically functioning MS system in the field of e-commerce. The findings and recommendations developed within the scope of the study are intended to serve as a guide for both short-term institutional capacity development and medium-term planning of digital transformation.

1.2 Key findings

Among the main challenges encountered in the digital transformation of the MS system in Türkiye are the limitations in the quantity and quality of human resources and regional capacity differences. Many institutions have limited access to the technical knowledge and infrastructure specific to digital inspection. Moreover, existing inspection tools are not adapted to the e-commerce environment, which makes effective product safety surveillance difficult.

Reviews show that various ambiguities and overlaps exist in the distribution of powers and responsibilities among institutions. This situation especially complicates the effective structuring of processes such as cooperation and data sharing with e-platforms. Additionally, the low level of consumer awareness and the fragmented structure of complaint mechanisms prevent the integration of complaints into risk assessment systems.

During the workshop and consultation process, both MSAs and representatives from the sector and e-platforms expressed that ***the development of e-MS tools, clarification of job descriptions and clear definition of inter-institutional data sharing mechanisms are the priority needs***. Furthermore, the necessity for platforms to make a structural contribution to the e-MS system and to benefit from the data to be obtained was also emphasized.

The cross-border dimension of e-commerce leads to situations that fall outside the jurisdiction of existing MS mechanisms. In this context, issues such as the operating model of platforms and the impact of algorithms on product ranking and visibility make it necessary to expand the scope of digital surveillance. Moreover, the fact that AI-supported risk analysis systems have not yet been developed limits a preventive and targeted inspection structure.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Context and Background

The rapid growth of e-commerce in Türkiye over the last five years has significantly reshaped the consumer goods landscape, posing both regulatory challenges and opportunities for innovation in MS.

E-commerce volume surged from USD 23.94 billion in 2019 to USD 89.58 billion in 2024[1]—an increase of 274% over the five-year period. In 2024 alone, the sector expanded by 15% compared to the previous year, representing 19.1% of total trade[2]. Approximately 6,800 businesses engaged in e-commerce activities in 2024, with the food sector (21.63%), clothing and accessories (15.64%), electronics (12.24%) and home and decoration (11.12%) being the most represented sectors[3].

This transformation has brought forward new challenges in ensuring that products sold online comply with safety regulations and consumer protection standards. This has created a critical need for MSAs to develop and institutionalize digital product oversight practices, including risk-based monitoring, traceability and compliance verification within digital platforms.

While Türkiye has made consistent efforts to align its product safety and market surveillance legislation with the EU acquis—especially within the framework of the EU-Türkiye Customs Union—its regulatory infrastructure remains primarily oriented toward traditional, physical market surveillance. The fast pace of digital trade expansion has exposed critical gaps in enforcement practices, legal coverage and institutional preparedness. New product categories, dynamic seller behaviors and transboundary sales models complicate the effectiveness of traditional inspection regimes. These challenges have spurred renewed attention toward modernizing Türkiye's legal and technical infrastructure for digital product oversight.

In parallel, the EU has responded to the digitalization of commerce by introducing a new generation of legislation specifically tailored for the online environment. The General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988 and the Digital Services Act (EU) 2022/2065 are landmark instruments designed to address risks emerging from digital marketplaces. These frameworks introduce new responsibilities for online platforms and economic operators, enhance product

[1] https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/681a16de13b8762dd8da6b66/T%C4%B0CARET%20BAKANLI%C4%9EI%20T%C3%9CRK%C4%B0YE'DE%20E%20-%20T%C4%B0CARET%C4%B0N%20G%C3%96R%C3%9CN%C3%9CM%C3%9C%20RAPORU.pdf , 6 May 2025
[2] Ibid,Report, 6 May 2025
[3] Ibid, Report 6 May 2025

and economic operator traceability and mandate structured cooperation with MSAs. In this evolving legislative landscape, Türkiye's alignment with EU standards necessitates not only legal harmonization but also the development of technical infrastructure and institutional capacity.

The Needs Analysis Report has been prepared as part of the broader Technical Assistance for Product Safety in E-Commerce Project, launched under IPA III funding. The project supports Türkiye's efforts to enhance the efficiency, transparency and responsiveness of product safety enforcement in online marketplaces. The findings from this analysis will inform the design of a Strategy and Action Plan and contribute to strengthening Türkiye's institutional readiness for digital market surveillance in line with EU best practices[4].

While Türkiye currently operates with a multi-agency surveillance model, forthcoming reforms outlined in national policy documents—such as the planned establishment of a unified Market Surveillance Authority—may address coordination gaps and promote implementation consistency.[5]

2.2 Purpose of the Needs Analysis

The primary aim of this Needs Analysis ***is to identify structural and operational gaps and needs within Türkiye's market surveillance system, particularly in relation to electronic commerce and online product safety***. The analysis focuses on legal frameworks, institutional mandates, inspection practices, digital infrastructure, risk evaluation methodologies, stakeholder engagement mechanisms and the role of online service providers as key actors in the electronic commerce. It seeks to map the current status, evaluate readiness for digital surveillance and pinpoint areas requiring urgent intervention or capacity enhancement, including strengthened cooperation with online electronic commerce service providers for more effective enforcement and compliance monitoring.

The assessment supports the development of evidence-based strategies for institutional transformation, ensuring that the e-MS system is capable of addressing challenges posed by anonymous online traders, rapid product turnover, cross-border e-commerce and the rise of unsafe products in digital channels. It further aims to create a shared understanding among regulatory authorities of the digital compliance environment and to promote data-informed policymaking.

[4] Study Visit reports and Best Practice report will be cited in the SAPR when realized.
[5] The 2025 Presidential Annual Programme and the 2025–2027 Medium-Term Programme both outline the plan to establish a centralized Market Surveillance and Inspection Authority

Moreover, the analysis is designed to increase the value and impact of the broader technical assistance project by generating detailed insights into the needs of competent authorities and stakeholders. This enables a targeted approach in delivering future outputs such as training programs, regulatory updates, IT tools and inter-agency coordination mechanisms, while also enhancing consumer protection and trust in online transactions.

2.3 Scope and Target Audience

This Needs Analysis focuses on supporting of the operational needs of Türkiye's central and regional MSAs, particularly units within the Ministry of Trade and affiliated agencies that are directly responsible for monitoring e-commerce activities. It also covers IT units that support digital transformation, regulatory departments involved in transposing EU law and personnel responsible for consumer protection and product safety communication.

The scope extends to evaluating the operational interface between public authorities and electronic commerce service providers or online platforms, including national systems such as ETBIS, ESBIS, MERSİS and PGDBIS and analyzing current practices of cooperation with private sector e-commerce stakeholders. The assessment addresses both internal institutional capabilities and the external ecosystem of enforcement, such as complaint channels, consumer engagement and cooperation frameworks with platform operators.

Key target audiences of this report include policymakers, operational staff in MSAs, IT system developers, legal and regulatory experts, training coordinators and civil society actors. By capturing a multidimensional view of Türkiye's e-MS system, the report aims to guide both national reform efforts and harmonization with EU policies, ensuring that product safety enforcement is fit for purpose in the digital economy.

3 METHODOLOGY USED FOR THE NEEDS ANALYSIS

3.1 Data Sources and Collection Methods

This Needs Analysis study is primarily based on a comprehensive review of existing documentation generated throughout the inception and early implementation phases of the project. Key sources included the Current Status Report[6], training workshop materials from April 2025, discussions from the Market Surveillance Coordination Board (PGDKK), annual market surveillance reports from the Ministry of Trade[7] and national policy documents[8]. Additionally, legislative texts, regulatory frameworks and technical standards were reviewed to assess alignment with EU requirements, including the General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988 and the Digital Services Act (EU) 2022/2065[9].

Desk research also included in-depth analysis of EU-level documentation relevant to digital product safety enforcement. In particular, two recent Commission documents—COM (2025) 37 final[10], "A comprehensive EU toolbox for safe and sustainable e-commerce", and COM (2025) 63 final[11], the Implementation Report on Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020—were instrumental in shaping the assessment.

The toolbox communication outlines forward-looking measures to enhance safety, sustainability and enforcement in cross-border e-commerce, offering relevant strategic context for Türkiye's alignment efforts. The implementation report, meanwhile, provided insight into how EU Member States operationalize the responsible economic operator obligation under Article 4, revealing key enforcement challenges in online marketplaces. These references served as benchmarks for identifying regulatory and procedural gaps in Türkiye's system, particularly regarding mystery shopping, traceability and economic operator responsibilities in the digital domain.

Publicly available information from institutional websites (such as Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Ministry of Industry and Technology etc.), national legislation databases[12] and sectoral strategies also contributed to the mapping of procedural and technical elements of the current system. These sources helped substantiate findings and build a robust

[6] https://eticaretteurunguvenligi.org/yayinlar/
[7] https://ticaret.gov.tr/urun-guvenligi/piyasa-gozetimi-ve-denetimi/izleme-ve-raporlama/yillik-veriler
[8] Strategy documents and policies
[9] Legislative Framework Report
[10] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/e-commerce-communication-comprehensive-eu-toolbox-safe-and-sustainable-e-commerce
[11] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0063
[12] https://urunkurallari.ticaret.gov.tr/

foundation for the analysis of Türkiye's readiness in transitioning to a digital market surveillance model.

3.2 Stakeholder Engagement Tools

Stakeholder input was integrated primarily through structured interactions that occurred during key project events and bilateral technical exchanges. The April 2025 training program, which brought together central and provincial MSAs, served as an important platform for collecting stakeholder views on current enforcement challenges, legal uncertainties and training needs in the context of e-commerce. These sessions offered spontaneous yet thematically relevant insights from participants and supported the relevance of desk research findings.

Additionally, thematic interviews and exchanges with officials from the Ministry of Trade's different departments allowed for deeper reflection on institutional mandates, digital surveillance constraints and evolving enforcement roles. These discussions helped surface critical issues such as the absence of mystery shopping protocols, insufficient automation in inspection processes and coordination gaps between national platforms and international digital actors.

Furthermore, internal coordination among project experts—spanning legal, IT and regulatory domains—played a significant role in synthesizing and interpreting stakeholder perspectives. Though no formal engagement tools such as questionnaires or surveys were utilized at this stage, qualitative feedback from the questionnaires of the current status report, the workshops, capacity-building events and targeted expert dialogues ensured that stakeholder needs and system realities were adequately reflected in the analysis.

In addition to the structured interactions, the Needs Assessment Workshop performed mid-June 2025 served as a key validation platform for the findings and preliminary recommendations outlined in this report. The workshop will convened representatives from nine MSAs and relevant central authorities to collectively review the outcomes of the analysis, test their applicability and identify any gaps or oversights. This participatory process was designed to ensure that the Needs Analysis remains grounded in institutional realities and benefits from multi-actor consensus before transitioning to the Strategic Action Planning phase.

The "Needs Analysis Workshop" mentioned above was held in Ankara between 18–20 June 2025 and provided an opportunity to evaluate the draft findings developed in the Needs Analysis Report within a multi-stakeholder setting. The findings of the Workshop, presented by adding a new section to this Report, have both allowed for the validation of the current analysis and directly contributed to the Strategy and Action Plan Report (SAPR) to be prepared.

3.3 Limitations and Considerations

Despite the comprehensive scope and methodological planning behind this Needs Analysis, several limitations must be acknowledged, primarily linked to project sequencing, stakeholder engagement dynamics and the evolving regulatory landscape.

A key limitation is the absence of international study visits and first-hand observation of EU Member State best practices**,** which were initially foreseen under Activity 1.2. These field activities, designed to enable immersive benchmarking of operational systems, had not yet been conducted at the time of this report. As a result, the analysis draws primarily on desk-based research, legal and policy documents and stakeholder feedback gathered through the April 2025 training sessions and bilateral consultations. While these sources offered valuable insights, the lack of in-person comparative exposure limits the operational granularity of the findings. Future updates, informed by study visits and peer-to-peer exchanges, are expected to provide deeper validation of the recommendations. However, since one of the main purposes for developing this report is to prepare a foundation for the Strategy and Action Plan Report (SAPR) to be prepared by the end of 2025, it is foreseen that at least one study visit is organized before the finalization of the SAPR.

As a partial mitigation to the absence of international benchmarking visits and comprehensive regional outreach, the Needs Analysis Workshop held on 18-20 June 2025 provided an important opportunity to validate and refine the preliminary findings of this report. Indeed, by engaging institutional stakeholders in a structured review of the draft analysis report, the reliability and functional relevance of the final recommendations were reinforced through the workshop.

Secondly, quantitative data availability remains limited. While the analysis is based on expert input and institutional feedback, the absence of systematically collected indicators—such as performance indicators specific to online marketplaces, e-MS frequency or trend-based risk classification- has been identified. The main reason for this appears to be the perception of e-MS activities as a sub-component of traditional MS by the competent authorities. In other words, the institutional culture required for the establishment of e-MS practices has not yet been fully developed. This has constrained the assessment of MSA operational maturity in empirical terms, necessitating a reliance on qualitative analysis and expert judgment.

Thirdly, stakeholder representation varied, particularly across regions and levels of authority. While central-level authorities participated actively in consultations, inputs from some provincial MSAs were more limited, potentially leading to underrepresentation of local surveillance practices or resource constraints. As such, the findings may reflect stronger perspectives from better-resourced or more engaged institutions.

Fourth, the dynamic nature of the EU legislative landscape introduces inherent challenges in defining fixed benchmarks for legal alignment. Although recent EU communications—including the Commission's February 2025 Communication and the March 2025 Implementation Report on Article 4 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1020—have been incorporated into the analysis, upcoming policy instruments such as the Digital Product Passport and revised customs legislation may further influence Türkiye's compliance trajectory. In addition, while many regulations on digital trade have recently been implemented by the EU, it is seen that it includes some provisions on product safety and market surveillance even if it is not directly related with product safety and market surveillance. These developments should be continuously monitored and reflected in updated planning outputs.

Finally, constraints related to the summer period, variable MSA preparedness and the evolving national digital enforcement framework also posed risks to the uniformity and depth of collected inputs.

3.3.1 Mitigation Measures

To safeguard the objectivity and relevance of the analysis, several mitigation strategies have been adopted:

- **Structured Early Drafting**: The report was developed using a predefined analytical framework and populated with reliable inputs from verified desk research and institutional interviews, allowing early drafting even in the absence of completed study visits.
- **Confirmation Across Sources**: Findings were validated using multiple data types—national legislation, EU-level texts (e.g. the Blue Guide, GPSR, DSA), prior project outputs and targeted consultations—to increase robustness.
- **Contingency Measures for Missing Inputs**: In the absence of field missions, the team conducted bilateral consultations, leveraged April 2025 training discussions and used preparatory templates to supplement primary data.
- **Needs Analysis Workshop**: A dedicated workshop with representative stakeholder participation was organized to further validate the findings, fill participation gaps and incorporate diverse perspectives.
- **Dynamic Updating of the Report**: This document is considered a living product. Following the feedback received during the Workshop held in June 2025, the Needs Analysis Report has been reviewed and necessary amendments have been incorporated. Upon completion of the study visits, the relevant information will likewise be reflected in the SAPR.

- **Risk Monitoring and Adaptation**: As outlined in "*Annex 09 – Assumptions and Risks"* of the First Interim Report, the project integrates structured risk tracking and mitigation, including proactive engagement with stakeholders and buffer planning for deliverables.
- **Decoupling Activities**: To avoid cascading delays, activities such as training design and SAPR preparation were intentionally sequenced to proceed independently of the implementation of other activities.

Through these measures, the Needs Analysis maintains both analytical integrity and adaptive capacity, ensuring that the current findings are both credible and capable of refinement as new data emerges.

4 NEEDS ANALYSIS

4.1 General View

This section presents a detailed assessment of the current state of Türkiye's market surveillance system within the context of e-commerce, with a specific focus on identifying gaps, challenges and development needs. It is structured around the key functional and institutional areas that influence the effectiveness of product safety enforcement - namely legal alignment, organizational structure, institutional capacity, digital infrastructure, risk-based monitoring, trend analysis, cooperation with electronic commerce service providers and consumer engagement. The analysis is grounded in desk research, project documentation, EU-level policy frameworks and practical insights gathered through workshops and expert consultations during the early stages of project implementation.

The Needs Analysis does not aim to offer exhaustive solutions but rather provides an evidence-based diagnosis of the core elements that must be addressed to modernize and digitalize Türkiye's present product safety governance system in alignment with EU best practices. Each subsection highlights the current state, pinpoints structural and procedural deficiencies and lays the groundwork for policy and operational reforms. These findings will feed directly into the design of the Strategy and Action Plan and form the basis for tailored interventions in subsequent project activities, including further development of the training plan and awareness raising seminars. The findings of the Needs Analysis will also provide critical input to the development of the e-MS software, an important tool to be used by MSAs for ensuring the safety of products traded online.

By addressing the full ecosystem of e-commerce market surveillance—from legislative foundations to field-level practices—the analysis aims to guide both short-term improvements and long-term institutional transformation. It reflects Türkiye's strategic goal of maintaining consumer protection in the digital economy while ensuring compliance with its obligations under the EU–Türkiye Customs Union and EU Accession Partnership frameworks.

4.2 Legal And Regulatory Framework

4.2.1 Overview of National Legislation

Türkiye's legal infrastructure for product safety and market surveillance has evolved over decades through progressive alignment with EU legislation, particularly since the establishment of the EU–Türkiye Customs Union. The foundational elements of this framework—such as Law No. 7223 on Product Safety and Technical Regulations and its implementing regulations—form the legal basis for ensuring that only compliant, safe products are placed on the market.

These legislations define the institutional roles, inspection mechanisms, conformity requirements and enforcement powers across competent authorities.

However, the rapid shift to digital commerce has created new enforcement scenarios that exceed the capacities and legal definitions of traditional market surveillance. The current legal framework, while robust for physical product oversight, presents notable limitations in addressing key components of digital product safety enforcement. These include platform accountability, cross-border traceability, algorithm-driven risk assessment and non-traditional sampling models.

This subsection provides a general overview of Türkiye's legal alignment and regulatory environment as it relates to market surveillance and product safety. Specific legal issues linked to enforcement tools, IT systems, platform cooperation and risk analytics are discussed in the respective thematic sections of this report.

4.2.2 EU Alignment and Transposition Status

The EU's approach to product safety and market surveillance has evolved to address the complexities of modern trade, particularly the rise of e-commerce. The 2022 edition of the "Blue Guide[13]" provides comprehensive guidance on the implementation of EU product rules, emphasizing the importance of a cohesive and adaptable regulatory framework.

4.2.2.1 Evolution of EU Product Safety Framework

- **Historical Context**: Initially, product safety was managed through disparate national regulations, leading to inconsistencies and trade barriers. The EU's efforts to harmonize these rules began with the introduction of the "New Approach" directives, focusing on essential safety requirements and standardization[14].
- **New Legislative Framework (NLF)**: The NLF, established in 2008 to enhance the internal market's functioning, introduced key elements such as:
    - Clear delineation of responsibilities for economic operators (manufacturers, importers, distributors).
    - Enhanced conformity assessment procedures.
    - Strengthened market surveillance mechanisms.
    - Emphasis on CE marking as a declaration of conformity.
- **Market Surveillance Regulation (EU) 2019/1020**: This regulation reinforced the NLF by:

[13] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2022:247:FULL
[14] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:C:2022:247:FULL

- Mandating the presence of an EU-based economic operator for products entering the EU market.
- Enhancing cooperation between market surveillance authorities and customs.
- Introducing obligations for online marketplaces to cooperate with authorities in suspending non-compliant products.

- **General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988 (GPSR)**: Is replacing the previous GPSD, and:
  - Addresses challenges posed by online sales and new technologies.
  - Introduces stricter rules for digital platforms.
  - Enhances product and economic operator traceability and recall procedures.
  - Clarifies responsibilities for online sellers.
- **Digital Services Act (EU) 2022/2065 (DSA)**: Is complementing the GPSR, and:
  - Establishes a framework for digital service providers, including electronic commerce service providers.
  - Imposes obligations to prevent the dissemination of illegal content, including unsafe products.
  - Enhances transparency and accountability mechanisms.

4.2.2.2 Türkiye's Alignment Status

Türkiye has undertaken significant legislative efforts to align with the EU's product safety framework, including:

- **Adoption of Key Legislations**:
  - **Law No. 7223 on Product Safety and Technical Regulations (2020)**: Establishes the general principles for product safety and market surveillance.
  - **General Product Safety Regulation (2021)**: Aligns with the EU's previous GPSD, setting safety requirements for consumer products.
  - **Framework Regulation on Market Surveillance of Products (2021)**: Details procedures for market surveillance activities.
  - **The Regulation on Market Surveillance of Products Placed on the Market Through Means of Distance Communication (2024)**: Addresses the conditions for placing products on the market sold through e-commerce channels and their surveillance, it imposes various obligations on intermediary service providers.
- **Ongoing Harmonization Efforts**:
  - **General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988**: The Ministry of Trade is actively working on aligning national legislation with the GPSR, focusing on enhancing product and economic operator traceability and platform responsibilities.

- **Digital Services Act (EU) 2022/2065**: The Directorate for EU Affairs is conducting studies to harmonize national laws with the DSA, aiming to establish clear obligations for digital service providers.

Despite these efforts, full alignment with the latest EU regulations, particularly those addressing the electronic commerce intermediary service providers, remains a work in progress. The interconnected nature of the GPSR and DSA presents challenges, as effective implementation requires a comprehensive approach that addresses all facets of the regulatory framework.

4.2.3 Identified Legal Gaps and Needs

The rapid expansion of e-commerce has created a highly fragmented and dynamic retail ecosystem involving a wide range of actors, high transaction volumes and often anonymous or difficult-to-trace sellers. This evolution challenges the effectiveness of traditional market surveillance approaches, which are largely inspection-based.

In response to these developments, the EU has progressively shifted from authority-led inspections toward **a proactive enforcement model** that emphasizes the responsibilities of economic operators and intermediary service providers, particularly in online marketplaces. This shift is reflected in the recently adopted GPSR and the DSA, both of which introduce additional obligations for platforms—especially large-scale ones—regarding product and economic operator traceability, suspension of unsafe content and structured cooperation with public authorities.

However, as of the drafting of this Needs Analysis, the timeline for completion and implementation of these legislative harmonisation processes remains uncertain. In the interim, the absence of fully aligned and enforceable provisions may limit Türkiye's capacity to deploy risk-based, digital-first market surveillance tools in line with EU best practices.

The analysis identifies the following legal gaps and operational constraints relevant to the successful implementation of a comprehensive e-MS system:

a. Platform Responsibilities and Structured Data Access

- Turkish legislation does not yet impose obligations on e-commerce platforms equivalent to those under the GPSR and DSA, particularly regarding data-sharing mechanisms, risk assessment, reporting, establishing complaint system, traceability of sellers, real-time notifications or mandatory cooperation protocols.
- Existing legislation enables surveillance but does not mandate platform interconnection and user-interface compliance (e.g. visibility of safety warnings).

b. Legal Basis for Automated Surveillance and Mystery Shopping

- There is no explicit legal provision enabling mystery shopping by MSAs under anonymous or simulated identities, which hinders operational effectiveness.
- The use of AI-powered tools, automated crawling/scraping technologies and risk-based algorithms is not clearly regulated, raising potential concerns regarding legal certainty, data protection and evidentiary use.

c. Gaps in Cross-Border Enforcement and Role of Economic Operators

- Türkiye has not yet introduced legal provisions equivalent to the EU-based Legal Representation requirement under DSA for e-platforms.
- There is no binding legal framework for the surveillance of products sold by third-country sellers into Türkiye via digital platforms.

d. Legal Fragmentation Across Institutions

- Although Law 7223 centralizes authority, overlapping responsibilities between market surveillance bodies and insufficient legal clarity in multi-agency coordination (especially concerning IT-based enforcement) persist.
- Without consolidated legal mandates, the integration of risk databases, cross-platform inspection tools and training protocols remain legally ambiguous.

4.3 Organizational Structures and Human Resources

4.3.1 Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

The market surveillance landscape in Türkiye is currently characterized by a multi-institutional structure coordinated centrally by the Ministry of Trade. While the Ministry plays a leading role in both policy formulation and coordination, the actual inspection mandates are dispersed across several ministries and affiliated provincial units. Responsibilities related to physical and digital product inspections are shared, and at times, their operational mandates overlap—particularly when online product offers intersect technical regulation and consumer protection domains.

The Market Surveillance Coordination Board (PGDKK) serves as the principal inter-agency mechanism for technical harmonization and coordination across authorities. However, its functional capacity to lead on digital and cross-border surveillance issues—including the oversight of e-commerce platforms, algorithmic offers and AI-powered risk detection—is still limited.

Feedback gathered from the April 2025 training sessions and workshops revealed several institutional coordination challenges, particularly within the digital surveillance context. Many MSAs reported uncertainty regarding their mandates, especially in cases involving multiple regulatory domains, anonymous or foreign sellers or platform-based sales that blur the traditional boundaries between product compliance, customs control and consumer complaint handling.

To effectively respond to the complexity of the online marketplace, a streamlined institutional model is required—one that clearly defines responsibilities for:

- AI-supported monitoring and algorithmic manipulation detection,
- Platform compliance enforcement,
- Real-time alerts and data exchange mechanisms and
- Integrated product safety responses in digital environments.

However, it is important to note that institutional reform is already foreseen at the policy level. The "2025 Presidential Annual Programme" and the "2025–2027 Medium-Term Programme" both set out the objective of establishing a centralized and unified Market Surveillance Authority. This planned body is intended to:

- Consolidate fragmented surveillance responsibilities across public institutions,
- Eliminate overlapping mandates and inconsistencies in implementation, and
- Strengthen the national market surveillance system as a whole—not limited to e-commerce but across all product sectors and purchase modalities.

Although this new authority will not be exclusive to digital market surveillance, it is expected to significantly improve institutional clarity and operational cohesion and to provide a robust governance structure capable of absorbing and sustaining the digital innovations introduced by this project. By anchoring surveillance reforms within a unified institutional framework, Türkiye will be better positioned to implement EU-aligned practices and ensure long-term enforcement efficiency across both physical and digital markets.

4.3.2 Staffing Levels and Capacity Constraints

A recurring theme across project documentation and field feedback is the mismatch between the volume and complexity of digital market activity and the current staffing levels within MSAs. Most regional offices operate with limited personnel allocated to e-commerce surveillance, often adding these duties on top of traditional field inspection tasks. As a result, the ability to track, document and respond to online risks in real time is severely constrained.

Training feedback[15] revealed that some inspectors lacked the tools or digital skills required to detect unsafe products being sold online, particularly when listings are disguised, language-tailored or algorithmically rotated. While central units have made progress in developing digital dashboards and monitoring tools, their deployment across the network of MSAs remains uneven. This results in variable enforcement capacity between regions and weakens the deterrence effect of inspections on platforms and traders.

Moreover, the shift towards data-driven surveillance models—requiring not just inspection staff but also data analysts, IT coordinators and compliance experts—has not been reflected in the current human resource structures. There is an urgent need for dedicated staffing in areas such as digital risk screening, automated data collection, regulatory interpretation for digital contexts and proactive consumer engagement via online channels.

4.3.3 HR Development and Training Requirements

The April 2025 training workshops provided an initial step toward building digital enforcement capacity, however the identified needs go well beyond foundational awareness. A structured and continuous training program is required, tailored to different job profiles within the market surveillance system. These could include legal modules on e-commerce-specific product rules, technical modules on digital tool usage and procedural modules on cross-border coordination and evidence documentation in online contexts. Annex VII presents the training needs identified during the TAT's discussions with the stakeholders.

Training gaps were especially pronounced[16] in areas such as mystery shopping implementation, handling AI-based screening tools, engaging with online platforms through structured protocols and interpreting obligations under new EU legislation. While some central-level experts had familiarity with these issues, provincial staff expressed the need for simplified, hands-on guidance and regular updates as the regulatory and technical landscape evolves.

The implementation of train-the-trainers programs could play a key role in ensuring scalable and equitable training delivery across MSAs. Furthermore, the integration of training needs assessment into institutional performance reviews and the inclusion of digital enforcement capabilities in recruitment criteria could help sustain the shift toward a modernized surveillance workforce. While not immediately feasible within the current scope, the development of a

[15] Surveys from the trainings

[16] Ibid

national e-learning platform may be considered as a longer-term initiative under future project phases to ensure continuity, reach and cost-effective upskilling.

4.4 Digital and IT Infrastructure

4.4.1 Overview of Existing Systems and Tools

The TAT performed an analysis study concerning the existing systems available in MSAs. The questionnaire forms used in the current status analysis (Activity 1.1) focused on the availability of the systems in MSAs and e-Commerce platforms to perform the e-MS activity.

4.4.1.1 Existing systems in MSAs

The TAT evaluated the status of the MSAs from the perspective of the project objectives as follows:

The following table illustrates that the MSAs generally use a local application to perform physical MSA activities.

Application	Owner	Purpose
MSA Specific MS applications	MSAs	To manage the physical MS activities. Partially including the e-MS activities.
PGDBIS	Ministry of Trade	Each MSA provides the results of the physical MS activities through the Web interface provided.
TAREKS	Ministry of Trade	GTIP-based Risk Management application for imported products.

MSAs also use the Safety Gate to address the risky products by manually searching. Primarily, via search engines like Google, text and image-based searching is used manually to identify which e-commerce platforms the products are sold on. Some MSAs are in progress of development of the institutional e-MS system.

Table 1: MSA IT capabilities within MS activities

MSA	In-House Applications	Information from the Current Status Report
Ministry of Industry and Technology:	Specific software and applications are used to digitise the inspection processes. A web-based system is used in the scope of MS, and the whole process, including sampling.	Specific software and applications are used to digitise the inspection processes.
Information and Communication Technologies Authority:	A web-based system is used in the scope of MS, and the whole process, including sampling, is followed up effectively.	The text of the product offer should contain the licence information, declaration of conformity and right of use. The technical file could not be asked to be shared due to trade secrecy and know-how.
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry:	A web-based food safety system is used, but it differs in terms of coverage (such as import and export controls, analysis results, banned products, etc.) and functionality (not specific for MS), There are multiple software solutions for specific product groups and products.	The lack of information and documents (such as registration, notification and licence) concerning special products on e-commerce platforms is one of the most critical problems faced.
Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure:	No applications were specified for institutional use for MS activities.	Carries out MS activities on boats, ships and marine equipment, Risk analysis is carried out according to the nature of the deficiencies, since the economic value of recreational boats and engines is very high.
Ministry of Environment, Urbanisation and Climate Change (MEUCC):	No applications were specified for institutional use for MS activities	It was emphasized that the Construction Products do not directly target consumers and that their MS differs from other product groups.

MSA	In-House Applications	Information from the Current Status Report
		It was also highlighted that that an evaluation is made based on national legislation in matters not regulated by EU legislation. Therefore, the requirements of this legislation may need to be considered in the IT tool to be developed (G Regulation).
Ministry of Labour and Social Security:	The IT system of the Ministry has SSI, MERSIS and ESBIS integration, thus workplace number and accident data are received in the Social Security Institution.	Categorised the risks as 1, 2 and 3 according to the technical legislation, Company, category and document controls are carried out during MS. It is possible to directly search on the internet since the product groups are specific. The addresses are now shown as virtual addresses, so it is difficult to follow up.
Ministry of Health:	A ÇEVSİS system is in place, which is used for MS. The establishment of an AI-based inspection system is currently ongoing.	The product offers listed on e-platforms should have label and license information. The “user group” should be included on the label.
Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency:	The products are the responsibility of the Agency and are traceable through the product tracking system (ÜTS) where the products are registered before being placed on the market.	During the physical MS activity, the Agency carry out licence and label inspections. A notification procedure is valid for cosmetic products, and a QR code application is also in place.
MoT- DG Consumer Protection and Market Surveillance:	General Consideration	Products within the scope of authority are not subject to any registration system, which results in inspections being carried out primarily in response to complaints or periodically.

MSA	In-House Applications	Information from the Current Status Report
		For products like detergents sold on e-commerce platforms, label information should be provided on a separate page/section for clear viewing.
MoT-DG for Product Safety and Inspection	TAREKS	The system covers the database for the risky products identified by the MSAs during the import controls. (HS Code based)
	ETBIS	The ETBIS System covers the most recent demographic information about sellers (E-marketplaces, E-Commerce websites, etc.).
	ESBIS	The ESBIS System covers the most recent demographic information about individual sellers (E-marketplaces, E-Commerce websites, etc.).
	MERSIS	The MERSIS System covers the most recent company registration information for business entities.
MoT-DG for Product Safety and Inspection	PGDBIS	The PGDBIS can transfer the MS inspection results through a central system. If the inspection results are flagged negatively, the E-MS system comes into play for further activity. (such as searching for the product on platforms, sending notifications, initiating legal procedures, etc.).

4.4.2 IT Specific Needs

The following high-level needs are being identified during the analysis and training study. The needs are collected and the suggestions are made by the bodies mentioned here. This list will be elaborated to build the user stories backlogs.

Table 2: IT Specific needs

Needs	Relevant Body	Approaches
Difficulties faced during reaching the seller's information and tracing the seller's contact details.	MSAs	Introducing an obligation to use a Registered Electronic Mail (REM-KEP) address may solve the notification, legal notices and traceability problem. However, there is no obligation to obtain a Registered Electronic Mail (KEP) address under the current E-Commerce Law. The existing requirement for providing an email address in the current legislation should be evaluated.
	Mainly by the Ministry of Agriculture	As experience has shown, the primary aim is to reach the seller of the product. The competent authority recommends access to the account to which the payment was transferred (via the Interbank Card Center – BKM); this would assist in identifying and tracing economic operators whose contact information is otherwise inaccessible.
Principles in searching images	MSAs	Because AI-based fake images are being produced, principles may be needed for scanning pictures For example, regulations (procedures and principles) could be defined regarding the position and quality of the image on the listing or webpage. Image or document scanning through visual links presents certain challenges. This approach may be considered by the inspector during the visual examination of sales pages. The issue of images being included within files downloaded via a link (e.g., within a PDF file)

Needs	Relevant Body	Approaches
		should also be taken into consideration.
The heavy workload that may arise in the scanning and extraction system for product safety information in sales offers	MSAs	Alternative methods should be evaluated within the scope of the IT System and infrastructure, considering that the MoT's product offer scanning system will require a very high processor capacity. Alternative methods could be identified to reduce the system's work load and get quick results For example, transferring product safety data from web platforms to MSAs and/or the difficulty in requiring platforms to verify product safety information for completeness and accuracy before allowing sellers to publish a sales listings.
Data scraping and collection (Crawling/Scraping)	MSAs	If possible, the party and batch information would be available in the product offer or retrieved directly from the seller.
Mystery Shopping profile	MSAs	There should be a typical budget for all MSAs, and the budget should be allocated accordingly between MSAs.
Reaching to decision after completion of the data collection and analysis.	MSAs	Development of the Common Risk Analysis methodology for each MSA.
Decision on the information to be gathered from web platforms	MSAs	Some specific information is needed for specific product groups and sub-groups. A study should be provided to identify the general and specific data to be collected.
The notifications mechanism should be integrated into the	Ministry of Industry and Technology	The notifications system should allow the inspector to initiate

Needs	Relevant Body	Approaches
product information on the e-platform.		communication between MSA and the seller over a web page including the product advertisement in the platform.

4.4.3 Interoperability and Integration Capacity

The interoperability mechanism would be essential to keep instant and reliable organisational communication between MSAs and other organisations (e-platforms, public authorities, NGOs, etc.). However, achieving such interoperability requires additional software development for both parties participating in integration. For example, in the case of developing API (Application Programming Interfaces) to exchange information, both parties must develop the software that constitutes both the data provider and data consumer interfaces and establish the technical infrastructure necessary to send and receive the information.

4.4.3.1 Interoperability with MSA systems

Depending on the institutional structure, it may not always be possible to ensure the software development capacity required for creating such interfaces within the scope of MS. To assess such situations in more detail, the TAT was provided with the relevant questions within the questionnaires sent to MSAs during the Current Status Analysis study and answers were incorporated into the reporting.

Table 1: MSA interoperability capacity

MSA	**Capability**	**Comments**
Ministry of Industry and Technology:	MoIT uses various MS applications to perform inspection activities. MS Application can provide API integrations. Requires special arrangement by the MSA.	Such integration may not be possible during the pilot implementation.
Information and Communication Technologies Authority:	MS Application can provide API integrations. Requires special arrangement by the MSA.	Such integration may not be possible during the pilot implementation.

MSA	Capability	Comments
Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry:	MS Application has the capability to provide API integrations. Requires special arrangement by the MSA.	Such integration may not be possible during the pilot implementation.
Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure:	No applications were specified for MS use	
Ministry of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change (MEUCC):	No applications were specified for MS use	
Ministry of Labour and Social Security:	The IT system of the Ministry has SSI, MERSIS and ESBIS integration, thus workplace number and accident data are received in the Social Security Institution.	The integration capability may be considered during the pilot implementation.
Ministry of Health:	A ÇEVSİS system is in place, which is used for MS.	The integration capability may be considered during the pilot implementation.
Turkish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency:	The products under the responsibility of the Agency have traceability due to the product tracking system (ÜTS) where the products are registered before placed on the market,	The integration capability may be considered during the pilot implementation
MoT- DG of Information Technologies:	The DGIT of MoT mainly manages the systems by providing services from IT solution providers. MoT DGIT provides web services via SOAP UI integrations and plans to shift to REST API integrations. Because the E-MS servers will be under control of the DGIT, all necessary security measures should be considered during the development activity.	Workplace information constitutes the foundation of the master data infrastructure. The integration capability will be considered during the pilot implementation to enable the exchange for the E-Commerce companies (ETBIS, ESBIS, MERSIS) and the risk databases (TAREKS, PGDBIS).

MSA	**Capability**	**Comments**
	TAREKS	The current version of the TAREKS could provide a Web services (REST or SOAP) based API mechanism to facilitate further data requirements. The situation for the new version is still not clear.
	ETBIS: Technical services are procured externally for the maintenance and support of the application.	ETBIS could provide a Web services (REST or SOAP) based API mechanism to facilitate further data requirements (Complaints, product specifications, etc.)
	ESBIS: Technical services are procured externally for the maintenance and support of the application.	An integration platform could be built to obtain information about craftsmen (demographic information, complaints, etc.) ESBIS could provide a Web services (REST or SOAP) based API mechanism to facilitate further data requirements.
	MERSIS: Technical services are procured externally for the maintenance and support of the application.	An integration platform could be built to obtain information about enterprises (demographic information, complaints, etc.) API access is required to retrieve the Company Registration (trade registry) information into the e-MS system. MERSIS could provide a Web services (REST or SOAP) based API mechanism to facilitate further data requirements.
	PGDBIS: Technical services are procured externally for the maintenance and support of the application.	PGDBIS is a primary source for physical inspection data conducted by MSAs. The MS results of the PGDBIS can be transferred to the E-MS system.

MSA	Capability	Comments
		It has been indicated that numerous API integrations currently exist in the system. To facilitate data transfer requirements, PGDBIS may provide a web service–based API mechanism (REST or SOAP).

4.4.3.2 Interoperability with E-Commerce Company systems

Concerning the interoperability of e-commerce platforms, the relevant questions were asked by e-Commerce providers in questionnaires and training sessions.

As the relevant laws and regulations mention, e-commerce platforms should provide the necessary product safety information for the products sold on their websites. The law states that this information is available on the websites for each product sold. The TAT performed a series of meetings with MSA experts to define the required fields in general and for each product group-subgroup.

Some e-commerce platforms (Trendyol, Migros, PTTAVM, etc.) have updated their systems – based on their own specifications- to allow sellers to enter and upload product safety related information.

To standardize the information entered by the e-Commerce platforms, make it compatible for processing and ensure the collection of accurate data, the TAT and MSAs developed a framework to identify the data requirements and discussed these with the relevant stakeholders in the trainings and the Needs Analysis Workshop organized.

Because of the nature of technology, e-Commerce companies have many alternatives to build their e-Commerce solutions, as summarised below:

- Custom Software Development
- Developments to be carried out by Cloud service providers
- Developments to be carried out by Application Providers
- Developments to be carried out by Data Integration Service Providers
- Developments to be carried out by Process Integration Providers (logistics, invoicing, payments, etc.)

While some e-Commerce companies have internal development teams to provide interoperability capability, others provide those services with the support of service providers, including the product specification information for the products sold on the platforms.

Mainly, it is anticipated that the information for the e-commerce provider, seller and products will be gathered from the offers for the information available to the community and specific information will be gathered whenever required using electronic communications (API).

The resulting outcomes are listed in the table below.

Table 2: Interoperability requirement with E-Commerce platforms

Requirement	**Capability**	**Comments**
Development of the User Interfaces to enter the safety information for each product.	Most e-commerce platforms can provide user interfaces that enable e-MS activities either directly or through their platform providers.	As mentioned in the previous sections, a harmonised data layout would enable the efficient processing of the collected data with analysis methods.
Data Exchange	It is stated that the crawling of thousands of e-commerce platforms and intermediary service provider platforms with hundreds of thousands of products will require enormous IT resources. Also, any changes made to the UI of e-commerce platforms may require redevelopment of site-specific crawling infrastructure. Large-scale e-commerce platforms are willing to share the data by exchanging through interfaces to overcome this issue.	Two types of data exchange activity will be required. In the first implementation, the platforms could send the whole list of products with the required analysis data. In the second stage, the changes to the data and the new product could be transferred periodically.
Notifications Mechanisms	The notifications mechanism is a vital part of the communications infrastructure. The e-commerce platforms must implement additional software on their systems to enable two-way communication between MSA and their own platforms. Large-scale e-commerce platforms commit to providing solutions to enable the mechanism.	Some of the notifications are time-bound, and the platform should provide feedback for the notifications received (i.e. blocking URL, correction request for the offer, etc.).

Requirement	Capability	Comments
Web Crawling/Scrapping	Most e-commerce platforms may not be able to provide data exchange infrastructure. In such cases, the e-MS system should be able to crawl and scrape the website to transfer and analyse the product safety-related data. To ensure the quality of the transferred data and its suitability for the intended evaluation, additional regulations and procedural guidelines will need to be established.	This activity will consume computing resources for all relevant parties (MSAs, e-platforms) involved. The E-MS system will require high-performing IT infrastructure and microservices-capable software solutions. On the other hand, the crawling-scrapping activity will use the resources of the target systems (CPU, RAM, etc.), and therefore, e-commerce platforms may block the software from being processed on their systems.

During the pilot implementation of the project, the abovementioned conditions would be tested to measure the required infrastructure.

4.4.4 Gaps in Automation and Digital Coordination

Currently, MSAs are performing product safety MS activities on e-commerce platforms using search engines and manual inspection techniques. The inspectors search the products using search engines to determine the sales of the products on the e-commerce platforms.

Searching the offers of the e-commerce platforms to identify the risky products by using manual checking is a process very difficult to manage. Therefore, the products identified as risky or having complaints, containing specific keywords in the product descriptions, warnings, etc., were searched site by site on the basis of platforms (refer to risk methodology).

Picture-based searches using the capabilities of search engines are used to search for the identified products on web platforms. Each time, various photos are used to target one product. This technique is very efficient in determining where the specific product is sold.

However, considering the high number of e-commerce platforms and the volume of products in the e-commerce market, it is clear that a solution must be developed to enable bulk searching and the ability to analyze both textual and visual data.

- A methodology should also be developed to decide on sending the product for mystery shopping in order to carry out physical inspection. The methodology in question is included in this document.

- An inspector user interface should initiate the search (crawling), scraping and analysis of the product safety information.
- The User Interface (UI) should provide an AI-based chatting interface to perform various tasks to identify risky products.
- A risk methodology should be developed and improved based on the performance of defined criteria; this will be achieved through system training.
- Dashboards are used to determine market trends based on the collected data.
- The real-time monitoring of the sale of the identified risky products (TAREKS, Safety Gate, etc.) should be carried out.
- The AI system should be trained to reflect accurate results in risk and trends analysis assessment.
- A methodology should be established to support decision making on physical inspections based on analysis results derived from product safety data. The proposed methodology prepared in this context is presented in the following sections.
- A methodology should be developed to decide on sending the product for mystery shopping in order to perform the physical inspection. The methodology in question is included in this document.

4.5 Risk Assessment and Compliance Monitoring

4.5.1 Current Practices in Risk Evaluation and Trend Analysis

E-commerce, shaped in the competitive environment of the information age, has opened an important door for companies to survive in these highly competitive conditions. However, entropy, the measure of disorder and the tendency of every system to deteriorate, has also taken its place at the centre of e-commerce.

Human beings are looking for various ways to define this emerging complex order, to make sense of it and to make their decisions. Some of these ways are traditional avoidance methods that emerge within the framework of the cultural patterns of the individual. On the other hand, the search for reaching a conclusion by determining the conditions within the framework of various probability models is becoming a more modern approach. At the heart of this search is the quest to reduce complexity and help us focus on finding what is really essential.

The concept of risk, which we can call "the uncertainty felt about what will happen in the future", can be expressed as a mathematical model in which the possible negative effects that

may occur in a specific period can be calculated and the measures to be taken against them can be priced.

On the other hand, risk management is a set of processes that includes identifying, measuring and assessing risks, determining the activities to be carried out against them, assigning responsibilities, implementing the determined activities, monitoring them and reviewing the results. Risk management, which is a planning method, requires forward-looking thinking, evaluation, research and examination.

The competent authority is responsible for ensuring that all goods and services supplied to the market, especially to consumers, are safe and thus protect the health and safety of users and wellbeing's of their economic life and property safety. The most important factor in fulfilling this responsibility is the examination of the products supplied to the market within the framework of the determined risk assessment parameters and taking the necessary measures. However, during the current status analysis conducted within the scope of the project, it was observed that some of the MSAs use a non-institutional or predictive risk analysis methodology, while others do not conduct any risk assessment.

Therefore, it has been determined that there is a need for a risk assessment approach that can be used by all MSAs to carry out the efficient e-MS activities. As in all activities carried out by the competent authority, both efficiency and economy are of great importance during this activity.

Within the framework of this general objective;

- Utilising current technologies,
- Real time,
- It is aimed to develop a risk analysis model that increases the accuracy of the analysis by making corporate databases common.

4.5.2 Digital Risk Tools and Methodologies

E-commerce applications eliminate the necessity of being in a physical place arising from the nature of traditional purchasing activity. For this reason, consumers try to consume goods and services independently of time and space, and more importantly, with a virtual perception of trust. From this point of view, this invisible commercial geography, where many different individuals and institutions with very different objectives come together, carries the existing risks to a different level. This contentious process between those who want to reach a safe and cheap product and those who try to maximise the profit margin they can obtain, usually results in the victimisation of the economically weak.

No matter how much the competent authority wants to carry out inspections, it is impossible to completely control this large invisible geography, to control every seller, every manufacturer or importer, and to inspect all the products supplied to the market. Therefore, the most appropriate solution is to look for the riskier ones and to carry out inspections based on risk level.

In this section of the analysis, a machine learning method based on the data science will be proposed to achieve the aforementioned objectives.

The models used in data mining, which is based on the processing of a large number of data, are analysed under two main headings: **predictive and descriptive**. In predictive models, it is aimed to develop a model based on data with known results and to predict the result values for data sets with unknown results by using this model. Descriptive models, on the other hand, identify patterns in the available data that can be used to guide decision making.

In order to identify the risks arising within the scope of e-commerce, firstly, it is aimed to estimate the results of the current data based on the data in the existing databases of the MSAs. **Thus, it is aimed to highlight important data, categorise them and predict future data trends.**

Artificial Neural Networks, Genetic Algorithms, K-Nearest Neighbour, Naive-Bayes classifier, Logistic Regression Analysis and Decision Trees are the main techniques used to examine regression models that occur during e-commerce activities.

Taking into account the information obtained in the Current Status Analysis Report, it is recommended to use "**Decision Trees and Decision Tree Algorithms**", which is a data mining approach frequently used for classification and prediction. Low cost, easy understanding and easy interpretation, ease of integration with databases and high reliability are the main reasons for using this model.

However, it is also possible to apply *Multi-Criteria Decision Making Methods* such as AHP, MOORA, Dematel, TOPSIS etc. during the development process of the software.

Lastly, DSS (Decision Support Systems) is a vital technology that enables organisations to make business-related decisions based on qualitative information, statistical analysis, and modelling.

Within the project's scope, the Artificial Intelligence system will primarily use statistical modelling to make the most informed decisions about product safety based on the time axis data. The TAT shall provide training on the DSS tools and methodologies and provide the DSS models using the relevant tool to meet the beneficiary's requirements.

4.5.3 Challenges and Improvement Opportunities

The assessment of current practices reveals that Türkiye's MSAs face critical challenges in applying structured risk assessment and trend analysis methodologies in the field of e-MS, particularly in the context of e-commerce.

Existing approaches vary widely across institutions—ranging from informal assessments based on inspector judgment to partial use of historical complaint data. Most MSAs lack access to integrated risk databases, standardized risk criteria or automated scoring systems for proactive mechanisms. Furthermore, there is no unified mechanism to track product trends over time or to detect seasonal spikes in demand that may signal safety concerns or enforcement opportunities. As a result, inspections remain largely reactive, fragmented and sometimes inconsistent across product groups and digital platforms.

These limitations significantly constrain Türkiye's ability to implement a coherent, data-driven and preventive enforcement model, as envisioned under EU Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and reinforced by the Commission's 2025 implementation report. The lack of a standardized methodology not only hampers resource prioritization but also undermines the transparency and predictability of enforcement. It also prevents Türkiye from responding effectively to the systemic risks highlighted in the European Commission's Communication on safe and sustainable e-commerce (COM(2025) 37 final), which advocates for coordinated, risk-based and digitally supported market surveillance practices across Member States and associated partners.

To address these challenges, a recommended model for harmonized risk assessment and trend analysis is outlined in the "Recommendations" Section of this Report, tailored to Türkiye's institutional environment. The proposed system introduces a quantitative, criteria-based scoring approach using indicators such as product type, origin, past non-compliance records and consumer complaints—weighted appropriately to reflect enforcement priorities. It further integrates machine learning techniques and time series tools to detect recurring patterns, seasonal shifts and anomaly signals across product categories and sales periods. This model is designed to be scalable, adaptable to sector-specific needs and capable of informing both short-term inspection planning and long-term risk management strategies. Its adoption would not only bring consistency across MSAs but also align Türkiye's digital surveillance architecture with the EU's evolving regulatory and strategic frameworks.

4.6 Sampling and Inspection Procedures

4.6.1 Methods in Use (Including Mystery Shopping)

Current sampling and inspection procedures used by MSAs in Türkiye are primarily designed for traditional retail settings. In the digital context, these methods face operational and procedural limitations. While some MSAs attempt to adapt conventional sampling procedures to the online environment—such as ordering products from online platforms using official accounts—these are often improvised and lack standardization or legal details.

Mystery shopping, which is a critical tool for identifying non-compliant or misleading offers, is not systematically applied in Türkiye due to the absence of a formal legal or procedural framework. Feedback from the April 2025 training and the Current Status Report confirms that MSAs lack clear instructions, budget allocation mechanisms and internal procedures for executing anonymous purchases or managing the logistics of such sampling. There is also no centralized coordination mechanism to avoid duplication or to track sampling results across institutions.

International good practices[17] [18] show that mystery shopping can be integrated into digital enforcement programs through anonymized payment tools, alternate delivery addresses and digital evidence preservation protocols. However, none of these systems are currently institutionalized in Türkiye. As a result, authorities rely on reactive measures, such as complaints or platform-based notices, rather than proactive sampling of high-risk or fast-moving product categories online.

The absence of standardized sampling procedures tailored to e-commerce significantly hampers Türkiye's ability to detect unsafe products at the pre-market or early distribution stages. Addressing this gap is critical to achieving alignment with Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and the General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988, both of which emphasize proactive monitoring and early intervention in digital marketplaces.

According to COM (2025) 63 final, enforcement experiences from EU Member States have shown that only 14% of online product listings from third-country sellers were found to be compliant with Article 4 obligations. This underscores the continued relevance of proactive tools such as mystery shopping for detecting non-compliant products in e-commerce. The lack

[17] Good Practice in Market Surveillance Activities related to Non-Food Consumer Products sold Online Report
[18] https://www.mrs.org.uk/pdf/2.%20MRS%20Guideline%20Conducting%20Mystery%20Shopping%202024.pdf

of a visible or reachable responsible economic operator was cited as a major shortcoming in digital listings.

Furthermore, the Commission's 2025 Communication (COM (2025) 37 final) emphasizes a strategic shift towards risk-based, cross-border digital enforcement. This supports Türkiye's initiative to institutionalize digital mystery shopping by providing both a legal rationale and practical reference for piloting anonymized purchases, establishing budget mechanisms and using anonymous digital identities.

4.6.2 Budget and Regulatory Impacts

One of the main barriers to implementing effective mystery shopping and digital sampling is the lack of an explicit regulatory basis and budgetary mechanism. Unlike traditional inspections, online product orders often require prepayment using official or anonymous accounts, which raises legal and financial management concerns under current Turkish public administration rules. MSAs lack clear authorization to use public funds for anonymous online purchases or to manage refund and return processes[19].

Moreover, the accountability structure for such expenditures is unclear. Institutions do not have guidance on how to record online purchases as part of inspection budgets, nor do they have access to specialized procurement channels that would facilitate secure and legally compliant mystery shopping. These procedural ambiguities deter authorities from engaging in proactive sampling, even when risks are known or suspected.

There are also legal concerns regarding the collection and admissibility of evidence obtained through anonymous purchasing. Without a structured regulatory framework, it is uncertain whether digital invoices, screenshots or delivery records can be used as valid inspection findings or enforcement evidence. This further discourages field personnel from using online tools and undermines confidence in digital sampling as a reliable enforcement method.

To overcome these challenges, both budgetary and legal reforms are required. Establishing a centralized fund or a dedicated inspection budget line for digital sampling, along with guidance on admissibility and documentation standards, would empower MSAs to carry out inspections effectively and legally in the digital domain.

[19] Current Status Report

4.6.3 Proposed Improvements

To institutionalize effective sampling and inspection in e-commerce, Türkiye should consider developing formal procedures for mystery shopping, based on international best practices and aligned with EU legal expectations. This may involve issuing internal regulations or secondary legislation that defines the scope, methods and authorizations required for digital sampling, including the use of pseudonymous identities and payment cards.

Establishing a centralized coordination mechanism—possibly under the Ministry of Trade—for managing mystery shopping operations would help ensure consistency, prevent duplication and support collective learning. This body could also develop a risk-based targeting system to guide MSAs in selecting product categories and platforms for sampling, based on complaint data, platform behavior and cross-border alerts.

Technical improvements could include the development of an inspection management interface that supports sample tracking, digital receipt validation and automated archiving of screenshots and transaction records. This would facilitate evidence collection, improve traceability and support legal admissibility. This is considered as an area that will need further support and could be realized with the supervision of a different project that would enable effective implementation of the current gaps. Collaboration with platforms could also be formalized to streamline follow-up actions such as suspending product offers or sharing traceability data.

In the interim, Türkiye could consider initiating a pilot phase for mystery shopping with a limited scope—such as high-risk product categories or selected platforms—while comprehensive procedures and legal adjustments are being developed. This would enable authorities to build experience and identify practical constraints before full-scale implementation.

From the perspective of the IT tool to be established, creating the mystery shopper profile is key to achieving mystery shopping activity. Based on the inspectors' experiences, the following improvements are suggested for the software:

1. Volunteer purchasers to support the inspections can use the system for purchasing (upon approval) and use their addresses for logistics.
2. Virtual cards are used to support purchases in limited amounts.
3. Use the fake names generated by the software when purchasing the item and the real names when receiving the product from the specific addresses and/or logistics locations. (Most of the couriers are using SMS verifications.)

However, the current implementations of the e-Commerce platforms for purchasing, shipping, and delivery should also be considered as a blocking factor (SMS validation, delivery locations,

name of the purchaser, etc.). Moreover, E-Commerce Law limitations and the Turkish Personal Data Protection Law (KVKK) enforcement should also be considered when providing fake profiles.

Given the current legal and operational constraints surrounding mystery shopping in Türkiye - such as the absence of a regulatory details for anonymized purchases, lack of budget mechanisms and logistical barriers—full implementation through the project's IT tool may face practical challenges. ***To mitigate these constraints, the project team recommends that, alternative pathways should be pursued***, including ***cooperative arrangements with e-commerce platforms*** that could facilitate access to necessary transaction data or support structured testing protocols. These partnerships could offer a transitional model until a comprehensive legal and procedural framework is established and scaled. Embedding such flexibility in implementation planning will help ensure that risk-based product verification can proceed despite the current limitations and can evolve alongside regulatory developments.

4.7 Platform Cooperation and Interoperability

4.7.1 Current Engagement with Platforms

Although Türkiye has taken initial steps toward establishing cooperation with major e-commerce platforms, these interactions remain limited, unstructured and largely informal. To date, several meetings have been held between the MSAs and representatives of large national and international platforms, often on an ad hoc basis or triggered by specific incidents such as product safety alerts or consumer complaints. These engagements have helped build mutual awareness but have not yet matured into formal cooperation protocols.

During the April 2025 training sessions, several MSAs reported relying on platform responsiveness for product removal upon notification[20], but this approach lacks predictability and enforceability. Most platforms act voluntarily, with no legal requirement to provide structured data, grant backend access or proactively report suspicious trader behavior to authorities. In the absence of such obligations, the speed and scope of action by platforms vary considerably, creating uncertainty in surveillance outcomes.

In the training sessions, it was also observed that some platforms expressed willingness to cooperate, especially in matters of urgent product removal and unsafe product alerts. Nonetheless, MSAs indicated that the level of cooperation varies significantly across platforms, depending on their market share, internal compliance culture and physical presence in Türkiye.

[20] Trainings Report

In the absence of a legal obligation or formalized protocol, some platforms are either unresponsive or inconsistent in providing requested data or reacting to safety notifications.

Further complicating this landscape is the fact that a large portion of online sales involves third-party traders whose identities and locations are not always transparent. Platforms often claim limited liability and control over such listings, citing their role as intermediaries. This severely limits the ability of MSAs to track, inspect or sanction non-compliant traders—particularly when those traders are located outside Türkiye. Consequently, enforcement becomes reactive, fragmented and often dependent on platform goodwill and cooperation.

Moreover, there is no systematic channel for data exchange between platforms and enforcement bodies. Authorities do not currently have access to structured offers, seller identifiers or risk indicators that would allow them to conduct preventive monitoring.

This lack of structured cooperation poses a significant barrier to proactive enforcement in the online space. While initial dialogues have created a foundation, the need for clear roles, obligations and communication mechanisms between public authorities and platforms has become increasingly urgent, especially in light of the evolving EU regulatory context.

4.7.2 Legal and Technical Cooperation Gaps

The absence of binding legal frameworks requiring platform cooperation with MSAs is one of the most critical structural weaknesses in Türkiye's current approach to e-commerce enforcement. Unlike the EU DSA, which mandates the appointment of a legal representative, traceability obligations for traders and responsiveness to enforcement orders, Türkiye has yet to introduce equivalent legislation for platform accountability in product safety matters.

Technical gaps compound this issue. There is no centralized system or secure API-based interface for the automatic exchange of data between e-commerce platforms and national enforcement bodies. As a result, MSAs are unable to detect non-compliant listings in real time or to conduct risk profiling based on data analytics. This prevents the adoption of predictive monitoring models, which are increasingly becoming the norm in leading EU Member States.

In addition, there are no standardized procedures for requesting or receiving technical documentation from platforms or traders hosted on them. MSAs lack the digital infrastructure to issue automated alerts to platforms or to receive structured feedback on removal actions. This leads to duplication of efforts and delays in corrective actions, thereby increasing the exposure of consumers to unsafe or non-compliant products.

Finally, there is a regulatory void regarding enforcement jurisdiction over foreign-based platforms offering goods to Turkish consumers. While Türkiye has transposed several EU-

aligned product safety legislations, the absence of legal tools to compel cooperation from cross-border platforms—especially those without a legal presence in Türkiye—creates loopholes that undermine the efficacy of national market surveillance systems.

4.7.3 MoUs and Shared Protocols

To date, Türkiye has not established formal Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) or structured cooperation protocols with e-commerce platforms in the field of product safety and surveillance. Engagement with platforms has been largely reactive and case-specific, lacking institutional frameworks to govern cooperation, data exchange or transparency obligations.

MoUs or similar instruments could serve as foundational tools to define responsibilities, standardize communication procedures and facilitate secure access to platform data for monitoring purposes. In the EU, several Member States have developed voluntary yet effective cooperation protocols with major platforms, often supported by shared databases and alert systems. Such instruments could be tailored to Türkiye's legal context and serve as interim mechanisms while comprehensive legislative reforms are under preparation.[21]

The development of pilot protocols could be explored in partnership with platforms that have demonstrated willingness to engage, especially those based in Türkiye or operating under a Turkish business license. These agreements could address practical areas such as automated product take-downs, provision of seller traceability data, structured complaints handling and cooperation in mystery shopping operations.

Additionally, building on the DSA's requirements, Türkiye may consider introducing a regulatory provision that enables or requires platforms to enter into cooperation frameworks with public authorities.

The development of MoUs should also be accompanied by IT system enhancements to ensure that agreed processes—such as alerting, feedback and verification—are technically supported and operationally viable. Building a data exchange platform between the MSAs and e-Commerce platforms requires a well-defined treaty between the parties. Thus, TAT suggests a pilot study with selected operators will enable the preparation of a well-defined protocol to enable further communications.

[21] However this may also raise a concern in Türkiye, of the fact that this co-operation is directed towards certain platforms which may cause misunderstanding among the public. For this reason, provisions for voluntary co-operation should be included in the legislation and co-operation methods should be determined.

4.8 Consumer Engagement and Complaint Mechanisms

4.8.1 Consumer Awareness and Education

Despite increased online shopping, consumer awareness of product safety obligations, label readings and complaint channels remains limited in Türkiye. Consumers often lack information about their rights in the context of online purchases or are unaware of how to verify whether a product is compliant with applicable technical standards. This results in weak demand-side pressure for regulatory compliance and a higher exposure to risky or misleading products.

The Current Status Report and April 2025 training sessions highlighted that public communication efforts on product safety have not yet been sufficiently tailored to digital consumers. Most awareness campaigns are designed for traditional shopping settings and are not adapted for mobile or digital environments. In particular, there is a lack of user-friendly educational content embedded within e-commerce platforms, such as safety disclaimers, trust badges or risk alerts.

Moreover, many consumers do not recognize key safety indicators such as CE markings, age warnings or recall notices. This contributes to a false sense of security in online transactions and weakens the market for compliant products. While some platforms provide limited safety information, this is often not standardized or monitored by public authorities.

To address this, Türkiye should consider launching coordinated public education campaigns specifically targeted at online consumers. These could involve digital media partnerships, influencer outreach and educational collaborations with platforms to ensure visibility and relevance. Messaging should focus on consumer rights, product and economic operator traceability and safe purchasing practices, particularly in high-risk categories such as electronics, toys and cosmetics.

4.8.2 Effectiveness of Complaint Channels

Türkiye has established several national complaint mechanisms, including the CIMER platform, the ALO 175 Consumer Hotline, ALO 130 Product Safety Hotline under Ministry of Industry and Technology, ALO 174 Foodstuff Safety Hotline under Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry etc, which receive and process consumer complaints across sectors. While these channels are widely accessible, their integration with product safety enforcement systems remains underdeveloped. Complaints are typically registered for statistical purposes or administrative follow-up, but not systematically used as triggers for market surveillance activities, since most data are not product safety related. Taking these into consideration, MSAs

can manually check the complaints received via their systems, clarify the safety and product compliance issues and trigger activity based on this information using the e-MS system.

Field feedback and internal reports indicate that consumer complaints are rarely analyzed to detect patterns or to prioritize enforcement actions in the online environment. Moreover, MSAs do not receive structured alerts or real-time notifications when digital product complaints are filed. This results in delayed response times and missed opportunities for early risk detection.

Another issue is the lack of transparency and feedback to consumers. Complainants often do not receive updates on the status of their reports or the actions taken by authorities, leading to declining trust in public enforcement. Additionally, there is limited guidance on how to submit complaints related to digital sellers, especially in cases where traders are anonymous, based abroad or operate through intermediary platforms.

The implementation of structured, interoperable and user-friendly complaint channels—ideally embedded in or linked to e-commerce platforms—would significantly enhance consumer participation in market surveillance. These systems should be designed to automatically flag high-risk product categories, integrate with enforcement dashboards and ensure transparency and follow-up for consumers.

4.8.3 Suggested Improvements

To improve consumer engagement, Türkiye should strengthen the legal and operational framework for complaint collection and processing. This includes developing a digital product safety complaint module that allows consumers to report unsafe products directly to e-commerce platforms or mobile devices. Such a module should support evidence uploads (e.g., photos, receipts) and real-time status tracking.

Furthermore, the integration of complaint data into the e-MS workflow is essential. Complaints should be automatically filtered, categorized and routed to the appropriate authorities, triggering inspection or product removal workflows where applicable.

Awareness campaigns should also focus on complaint rights and procedures, using accessible language and relatable scenarios. Cooperation with consumer NGOs and education institutions could help extend outreach, especially to vulnerable populations such as elderly consumers or those who face difficulties in exercising their right to file a complaint.

Finally, Türkiye should consider aligning its complaint mechanisms with the obligations set out in the GPSR and DSA[22], both of which emphasize the need for transparent, effective and accessible reporting channels. This would not only enhance consumer trust but also bring national practice closer to the evolving EU regulatory framework.

4.9 Training, Capacity Building and Awareness Raising

4.9.1 Training Needs for Authorities

The April 2025 training workshops and prior assessments revealed significant gaps in the technical, legal and operational preparedness of MSAs to address the complexities of e-commerce enforcement. While traditional inspection procedures are well understood, there is limited expertise in areas such as digital evidence gathering, risk prioritization in online contexts, cooperation with platforms and interpreting new EU legislation such as the GPSR and the DSA.

Authorities expressed a clear need for modular training programs adapted to varying levels of responsibility and experience. Legal and regulatory staff require detailed sessions on emerging EU obligations, cross-border enforcement tools and procedural reforms. Field inspectors need hands-on training on digital interface use, traceability of online offers and compliant documentation of digital inspections. IT staff, meanwhile, must be trained on data security, API development and the operational integration of e-surveillance platforms.

In addition to foundational training, a long-term capacity-building strategy is essential. Continuous learning mechanisms, such as mentoring programs and follow-up webinars, would ensure knowledge retention and update inspectors on evolving risks and tools. Training should also be synchronized with system developments, including the future deployment of the e-MS tool and the results of the Needs Analysis and Strategy and Action Plan.

4.9.2 Platform and Public Education

Alongside institutional training, there is a strong need to raise awareness among digital market stakeholders, especially e-commerce platforms and sellers, about their legal obligations. Current engagement is mostly informal and does not ensure systematic knowledge transfer. Platform representatives and third-party traders often lack clarity on Turkish product safety

[22] In particular, the DSA provides for a mechanism for very large platforms to receive complaints from consumers and to inform consumers thereof. This system is a special arrangement for the retention of users' personal data for this purpose only. This serves the purpose of rapid information and rapid action by the platforms.

rules, labelling obligations and recall procedures. This increases the likelihood of non-compliant offers, especially when cross-border traders are involved.

Public education campaigns have not yet been sufficiently targeted at the online shopping context. Consumers and traders alike require updated and accessible guidance on safe trading practices, product obligations and complaint mechanisms. The use of short videos, visual infographics, digital banners and in-platform awareness prompts (e.g. pop-ups or disclaimer boxes) could enhance compliance and understanding in both B2C and C2C sales environments.

In this context, Türkiye should consider preparing a national outreach campaign in coordination with platform operators, emphasizing both consumer protection and regulatory alignment with the EU. These campaigns should include sector-specific guidance for high-risk products and a focus on vulnerable consumer groups such as children, the elderly or consumers with limited digital literacy.

4.9.3 Coordination with NGOs and Institutions

Enhancing awareness and training efforts requires the involvement of external actors beyond government institutions. Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), consumer rights associations, chambers of commerce and academic institutions can all play meaningful roles in disseminating product safety information and supporting the national capacity-building framework. These actors can also serve as intermediaries between regulators and the public, helping to interpret complex rules in accessible language.

Currently, however, there is no structured mechanism for involving NGOs or professional associations in either training or awareness initiatives. While informal collaborations exist, these are not backed by memoranda of understanding or joint action frameworks. Establishing such partnerships would enable wider geographic and demographic reach and allow content to be tailored to the needs of specific groups—such as SMEs entering e-commerce or disadvantaged consumer groups.

Moreover, universities and vocational schools could be encouraged to incorporate product safety and digital market compliance into their curricula, ensuring that future traders, entrepreneurs and enforcement personnel enter the workforce with baseline knowledge. This long-term investment in human capital would ensure sustainability of reforms beyond the project duration and enhance Türkiye's readiness for full regulatory convergence with the EU.

5 PRIORITIZATION OF NEEDS

5.1 Urgent Priorities

Several critical areas have emerged from the Needs Analysis as requiring immediate attention. Chief among these is the legal transposition and institutional adaptation to the General Product Safety Regulation (EU) 2023/988 and the Digital Services Act (EU) 2022/2065. Without national alignment, Türkiye risks falling behind in regulatory harmonization and jeopardizing safe access to the EU market.

A second urgent priority is the development of a legal and procedural framework for conducting mystery shopping and digital sampling. The absence of such a framework severely restricts Türkiye's ability to proactively detect and remove unsafe products sold online. This issue has been consistently raised by MSAs in project meetings and was also highlighted during the April 2025 training. Also, the legal basis of the Regulation's provisions on the powers of MSAs and sanctions should be clarified.

Equally urgent is the need to enhance the digital capacity of MSAs. Authorities currently lack sufficient tools and trained staff for real-time monitoring, risk profiling and data-driven inspections. In particular, there is no centralized infrastructure to manage or automate enforcement processes related to e-commerce. This undermines Türkiye's ability to implement risk-based, efficient and responsive surveillance in digital contexts.

Another urgency linked directly to the effective realization and implementation of the IT Tool is the conclusion of the risk assessment and trend analysis methodology, as proposed under the Project.

Finally, the establishment of formal cooperation protocols with e-commerce platforms must be treated as a short-term strategic necessity. The lack of binding mechanisms for data sharing, trader verification or coordinated product recalls leads to inconsistent enforcement outcomes and missed opportunities for rapid risk containment. Addressing this issue would strengthen Türkiye's ability to prevent the circulation of unsafe products and improve platform accountability.

5.2 Medium-Term Actions

Medium-term priorities focus on structural improvements that require planning, stakeholder coordination and resource allocation. One such area is the development of interoperable IT tools and digital infrastructure that allow MSAs to conduct real-time inspections and analyze

surveillance data across institutions. This also includes the creation or enhancement of interfaces between public systems (e.g., PGDBIS, TAREKS) and platform data environments.

Another medium-term objective is the institutionalization of digital training programs. While one-off workshops have proven useful, sustained knowledge transfer requires a formalized approach. This could include a train-the-trainers certification programs and integration of digital market surveillance training into national inspector qualification frameworks. These tools would ensure that expertise is built and retained across both central and provincial MSAs.

In parallel, Türkiye should invest in consumer awareness and public communication strategies. A digital outreach program tailored to online consumers, sellers and vulnerable groups would help reduce non-compliance through preventive measures and empower the public to make safer purchasing decisions. Collaboration with NGOs, consumer associations and education institutions should be structured into these campaigns to expand their reach and effectiveness.

5.3 Long-Term Structural Objectives

In the longer term, Türkiye must establish a comprehensive, EU-aligned framework for digital product safety governance. This includes full legal alignment with the General Product Safety Regulation and the Digital Services Act, the establishment of clear mandates for digital surveillance at both central and local levels and the institutionalization of multi-stakeholder cooperation mechanisms. These reforms are essential for ensuring legal certainty, operational consistency and international credibility.

A long-term objective is to consolidate Türkiye's fragmented market surveillance system into a single institutional structure. This vision is supported by both the 2025 Presidential Annual Programme and the 2025–2027 Medium-Term Programme, which call for the establishment of a Market Surveillance and Inspection Authority. Such a reform is critical to ensuring consistent implementation, eliminating duplication and supporting digital transformation.

Sustainability of enforcement efforts will depend on the ability to integrate digital risk assessment models and AI-supported analytics into routine surveillance operations. Investing in smart surveillance systems capable of identifying trends, flagging high-risk products and prioritizing enforcement efforts will be key to modernizing Türkiye's product safety regime. This long-term goal also includes establishing digital evidence management systems and adopting common protocols for cross-border enforcement cooperation.

The development of a national e-learning platform may be considered as a longer-term initiative under future project phases to ensure continuity, reach and cost-effective upskilling.

Finally, Türkiye should continue to aim in becoming an active participant in EU digital product safety networks, not only for legislative alignment but also for strategic engagement. By contributing to and learning from EU-wide platforms, projects and alerts (e.g., Safety Gate, ICSMS), Türkiye can elevate its enforcement capabilities, support its exporters and strengthen its position in the global digital economy. Thus, the discussions with the EU Commission should be accelerated focusing on the initiative the EU plans to make within Regulation 1020/2019 and its implementing reports, which specifically addresses cooperation and collaboration in the MS area.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION AREAS

6.1 Legal and Policy Reform

a) Adoption and Horizontal Harmonisation of the DSA and GPSR: The adoption of the GPSR and the DSA is essential to establish a robust legal foundation for product safety in the digital environment. These horizontal regulations clarify the obligations of intermediary service providers and enhance consumer protection across online platforms. Türkiye should initiate the alignment process by transposing key provisions that relate to online marketplace responsibilities, traceability and cooperation with authorities, ensuring legal clarity for both economic operators and enforcement bodies.

b) Addressing Product Safety Information Placement and Format: To ensure the effectiveness of the e-MS software developed under the project, the legal framework should mandate that product safety statements, images and markings appear in a standardized format and location within online listings. A regulation should be introduced to define these placement rules and structural characteristics to support automated detection and verification.

c) Establishing a Legal Basis for Digital Market Surveillance Procedures: Current laws do not explicitly cover novel inspection tools such as algorithm-based monitoring, mystery shopping or automated flagging systems. Legal reform is needed to authorize these digital surveillance practices, define their legal validity and ensure their use is compatible with procedural guarantees and data protection principles.

d) Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities in E-Commerce Market Surveillance: The multi-actor structure of market surveillance in Türkiye requires greater legal clarity regarding institutional mandates in the digital domain. Legislative amendments should specify the roles of central and provincial MSAs and introduce coordination mechanisms for handling cross-sectoral and online-specific cases.

e) Introducing Legal Obligations for Platform Cooperation in Risk-Based Surveillance: A dedicated legal provision should require online platforms and marketplaces to cooperate with MSAs by providing structured product data, vendor identifiers and transaction details when flagged for inspection. This cooperation will facilitate the implementation of risk-based surveillance models and support early detection of unsafe or non-compliant products.

6.2 Digital Tools and IT Infrastructure

6.2.1 Risk Assessment and Trend Analysis Model for e-MS IT Tool

As detailed in Section 4.5, the current landscape of risk assessment among Türkiye's MSAs shows significant variation, with some authorities lacking structured methods and others relying on inspector discretion or fragmented data sources. This limits the ability to detect emerging risks, allocate resources effectively and conduct targeted digital inspections.

To address these gaps, a harmonized and technology-supported risk assessment model is proposed. Based on the analysis in Sections 4.5.1 to 4.5.3, the model would combine criteria-based scoring with machine learning techniques—particularly decision tree algorithms—for classifying and prioritizing risks in e-commerce environments. It would also incorporate time-series analysis and database integration to detect seasonal trends, anomalies and recurring issues.

This approach will support a shift from reactive enforcement to predictive and data-informed surveillance, improving coordination among institutions and enabling more efficient use of inspection resources. Further technical details are provided in the subsections below.

6.2.2 Software - Risk Assessment Relationship

In order to determine whether a product is safe or unsafe, it is first necessary to determine the place where the product is placed on the market and to evaluate it by means of indicators that reveal unsafety. For this reason, the software component of the project seeks answers to 4 basic questions.

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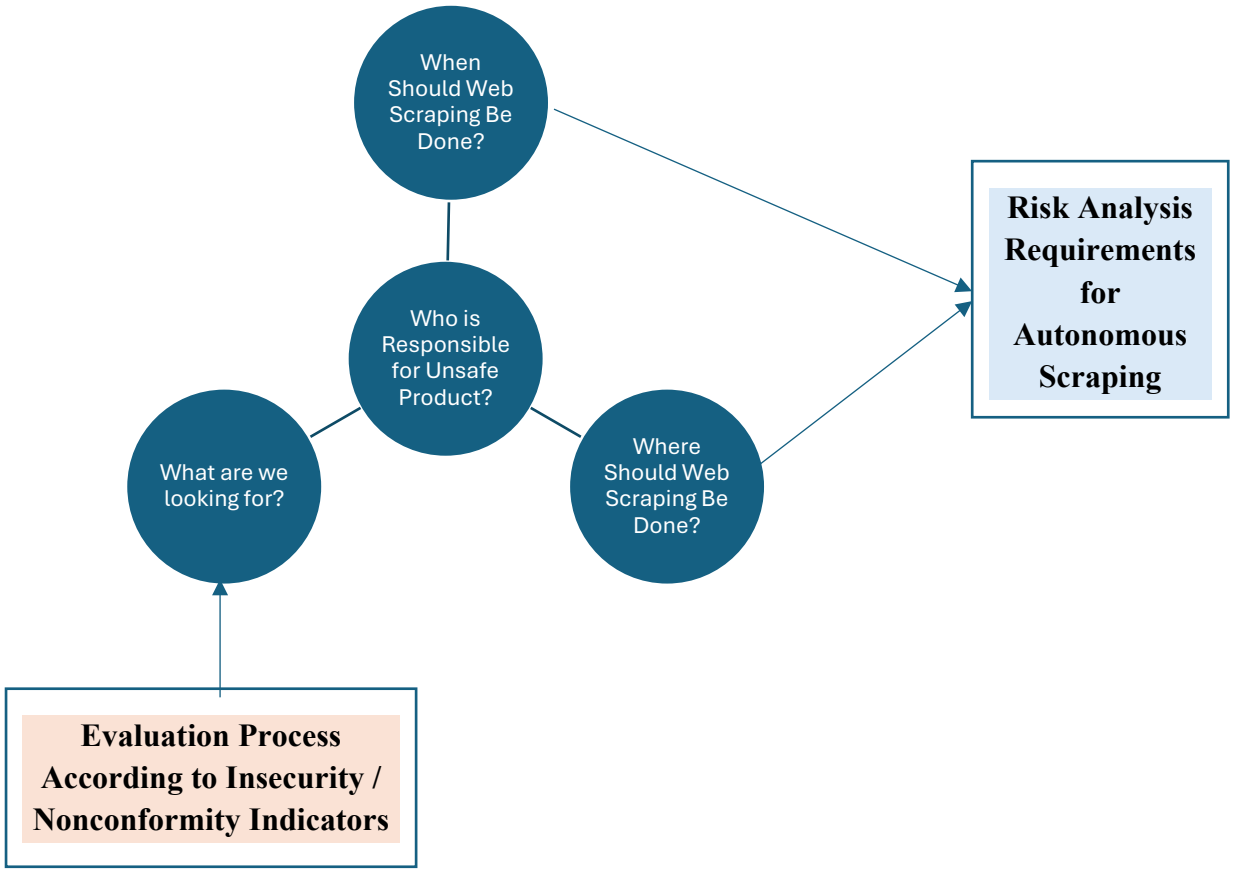

Figure 1: Purpose Diagram

6.2.2.1 Methods for Identification of Products and Product Information for product safety compliance assessment:

Two different methods are suggested to answer these questions.

a. Conditional Web Browsing (User-Derived Browsing):

It is about making a "web-based search" within the framework of the parameters entered by the users or selected from the existing tables. In this framework, the answer to the question **"What are we looking for"** will be sought.

Browsing Process: In this section, users will search for products that match the statements they have selected or entered through a web browsing tool.

b. Autonomous Web Scraping and Web Crawling (Transfer of the data):

Considering the fact that a continuous and unlimited search is not an economical solution and also that the searches carried out on the initiative of the individual are far from giving the

expected results, it is necessary to take advantage of the facilitating power of the software. For this reason, we characterise the e-MS application, which is performed within the framework of the available data without any intervention of the users, as autonomous web crawling. In this framework, **Web Scraping** (obtaining a large number of data) and **Web Crawling** (obtaining links) will be applied to answer two different questions with machine learning method.

i. Where Should Web Scraping Be Done?:

It is aimed to perform the most economical and shortest MS activity as a result of the risk analysis process that the software will perform by utilising the data obtained as a result of traditional inspection activities by MSAs.

As a result of the calculations made, the inspection priority;

- Which Company
- Which Product,
- Which Model, etc.
- It will be revealed which Search Expression it is required.

ii. When Should We Search?:

Identifying the right product at the right time will provide transaction economies. For this reason, the software is proposed to perform two different analyses on the time series taken from the marketplaces located in Türkiye and determined by the Beneficiary at specific periods.

- Trend Analysis: Identify products with increasing sales by utilising time series from marketplaces for critical products.
- Seasonal Analysis: It aims to reveal in which season the sales amount of critically important product groups increases.

6.2.2.2 What should we look for?

The information to be provided by the companies supplying the products covered by the legislation to the market and the banned or risky words and visuals of the product will be determined by MSAs and will be entered into the relevant database by MSAs (Table 5).

Table 5: Unsafety Assessment Parameters

Product Category	Market surveillance organisation	Product Subheadings	Mandatory Information	Mandatory Sign to Look For	Prohibited / Risky Words and Expressions	Risky Images
Consumer Products	Ministry of Trade (General Directorate of Consumer Protection and Market surveillance)	Toys	• Seller Information • Name of Manufacturer • Economic operator resident in Turkey • Product Name • Brand, Model and Serial No. • CE Marking • Warning Labels • Age Range • Instructions for use • Chemical Safety (REACH, KKDIK SCCS) • Batch/Lot Number • Recall History	CE		
Vehicles	Ministry of Industry and Technology	Road Vehicles	• Brand information • Model/Type information • Product description • Product and product label photos • Information on traceability • Name and registered trade name of the economic operator, contact postal address and e-mail address (selling the product) • Name and trade name of the manufacturer (if	e [23]		

[23] The "e" conformity mark for motor vehicles should follow the country code and must be framed. For Türkiye the country code is "37".

Product Category	Market surveillance organisation	Product Subheadings	Mandatory Information	Mandatory Sign to Look For	Prohibited / Risky Words and Expressions	Risky Images
			the manufacturer is resident in Turkey) • Postal address and electronic mail address of the manufacturer • Name and trade name of the importer (if the manufacturer is not resident in Turkey) • Importer's postal address and e-mail address • Name and registered trade name of the authorised representative or performance service provider resident in Turkey (if there is no manufacturer or importer resident in Turkey) • Postal address and electronic mail address of the authorised representative or performance service provider • Relevant technical legislation • Mark of conformity (e) • "Product Installation, Operation and Maintenance Manual" or • Warnings on the safe use of the product, which must be attached to the product or product packaging			

Product Category	Market surveillance organisation	Product Subheadings	Mandatory Information	Mandatory Sign to Look For	Prohibited / Risky Words and Expressions	Risky Images
			or accompanying documentation • Approval number indicating that the product complies with the technical regulation • Vehicle category, • Engine type and fuel type (electric, internal combustion, etc.), • Engine displacement, • Power (Maximum net power information (e.g. 15 kW limit) must be specified), • Mass/dimension information, • Year of production			
Food Products	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry	Food Products	• Name of the food • List of Ingrediaents • Allergen information • Net quantity • Special storage conditions and/or instructions for use • Name and address of the manufacturer, packer or importer • Country of origin • Nutrition statement (if available on the label)		Pipi Clo, hike hike water, zem zem water[24]	  

[24] These are some of the words used to mislead consumers anda re prohibited by the Ministry.

6.2.3 e-MS Risk Assessment Steps

6.2.3.1 Determination of Risk Criteria:

In the study, since it is aimed to develop a machine learning model for the products within the scope of *the Regulation on Market Surveillance of Products Placed on the Market through Means of Distance Communication*, the factors affecting the reliability of the products within the scope of the legislation subject to e-commerce were first identified. These factors were determined by taking into account the data obtained in the Current Status Analysis Report and the issues put forward in the needs analysis.

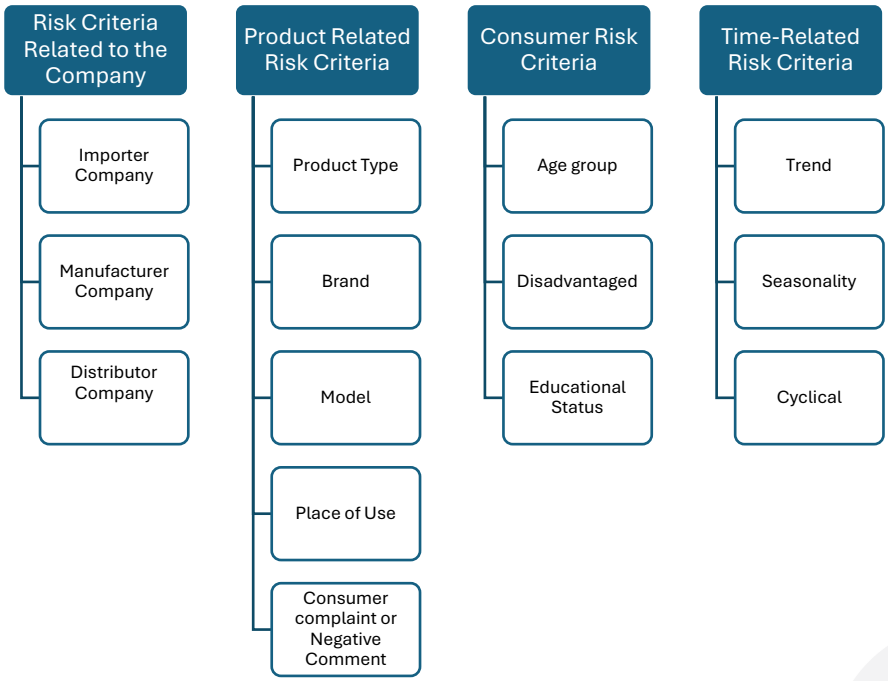

Figure 1: Risk Criteria

However, it is not possible to use all of these factors together. Two important objectives should be taken into account in the selection of factors to be used during risk analysis.

I. Uncertain and difficult-to-measure criteria that would adversely affect the calculation model should not be used.
II. "Systemic Risk Factor" should be identified.

In this study on product safety, the **systemic risk is considered** as the product placed on the market. However, the natural and legal persons who give the brand and model name to the product in question and determine the origin and technical specifications of the product are also considered as systemic risk. Moreover, in the EU's Guidelines for Safe and Sustainable E-

Commerce, it is aimed to collect more evidence on non-conforming products and economic operators supplying these products and it is stated that concrete results are expected to be achieved in the short term. In the same guidance, it is underlined that the information collected is important for both consumers and authorities and will help to prevent sellers from reselling unsuitable and/or unsafe products.

For this reason, in this study, there **are two examples** in which the risk assessment was carried out with and without taking into account the "Company Information". The beneficiary is expected to make the decision on this issue.

6.2.3.2 Risk Scoring:

Some of the risk factors expressed in Figure 1 should be selected for use in risk assessment and a risk score should be assigned for these criteria.

In addition, since it is seen that the complaints received from consumers and the comments on the seller's page are not completely objective and it is not possible to measure their accuracy, it is useful to add a coefficient for these two factors.

Description	Points to be assigned					
	Product Type	Company	Brand	Model	Origin	Consumer Complaint or Negative Comment
Audited and Non-Conformity Determined	0,2	(*)	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1

Figure 2-a: Risk Score Table (with company added)

Description	Points to be assigned				
	Product Type	Brand	Model	Origin	Consumer Complaint or Negative Comment
Audited and Non-Conformity Determined	0,2	0,2	0,1	0,2	0,1

Figure 2-b: Risk Score Table (Company removed)

In the calculation of the company risk score (*), the Product Safety and Technical Regulations Law No. 7223 should be taken into consideration. The aforementioned Law has determined separate responsibilities and sanctions for companies in Articles 8, 9 and 10. Therefore, a different structure is proposed in the calculation of the company risk score.

- The role of the company should be considered separately for each occurrence (importer, manufacturer, distributor).

- In each case, 0.1 points should be added to the company.
- If the measures specified in Article 16 of the Law are taken by MSAs, a score of 20 per cent of the total score should be added.
- According to Article 20 of the Law, a score of 20% of the total score should be added to the penalised companies.

The risk score of the firms should not only increase but also decrease under certain conditions.

For example, the risk score of the companies that do not have any non-conformity in a three-month period can be reduced to a certain extent. Thus, it will be ensured that the positive developments experienced in a certain period will have a positive effect on the firm's score.

6.2.3.3 Creating a Risk Score Database:

The Risk Scores assigned to the data resulting from previous audits constitute the total score of the variables in each Risk Factor. The resulting Risk Score Database will be an important indicator not only during the autonomous audit but also for conditional screening.

On the other hand, it is useful to score platforms where an unsafe product is sold as much as possible and assign a risk score.

Market Surveillance activities to be carried out in the future will be carried out within the framework of the risk scores specified in this table.

Firm	Platform	Product Type	Brand	Country of origin	Product Model
• A • B (0.4) • C (0.2) • D (0.8) • E (0,1) • A1 (0) • A2 (0.5) • B1(0,2) • C1(0.3) • D1(0,1) • E1(0)	• 1 (0.4) • 2 (0.2) • 3 (0.4) • 4 (0.3) • 5 (0.1)	• Pen (0.2) • Detergent(0.2) • Radio (0,1) • Kettle (0.4) • Dried Meat (0.4) • Eraser (0.6) • Bicycle (0.4) • Boat (0.5)	• Alpha (0.2) • Beta (0.3) • Gamma (0.5) • C-Gamma (0.1) • Meat-San (0.6)	• Türkiye (25) • China (82) • Germany (20) • England (10) • Singapore (12)	• x(0,2) • y(0,1) • z (0.4) • x y (0,2) • yy (0,1) • yz (0.2)

Figure 3: Risk Score

6.2.3.4 Establishment of Market Surveillance Decision Database:

Firstly, an "MS Decision Database" to which the data held by MSAs are added, should be created. The speed and reliability of this activity will be directly proportional to the number of data shared by MSAs and the level of harmonisation with the software. The results of the inspections performed by both software and traditional methods should also be included in this

database. The MS Decision Database will be strengthened not only with the data from autonomous screening but also with the results of conditional screening performed by MSAs.

Instead of pulling the collected data from different databases and different tables each time; if necessary, combining them with database objects such as "view" or by making new tables will provide a suitable solution.

The MS Scoring on the MS Decision Database will be obtained from the numerical data obtained from the Risk Score Calculation Table

Predictors								Target
Distributor Company Title	Manufacturer Company Title	Importer Company Title	Product Type	Consumer Complaint/ Negative Reviews	Model	Brand	Country of Origin	Total Risk Score
	A1	A2(0,5)	Pen (0.2)	Var (0,1)	X (0,2)	Alpha (0.2)	China (82)	83,2
B	B1	-	Detergent	There is	y	Gamma	Türkiye	
C	C1	C2	Walkie-talkie	None	z	Beta	USA	
D	D1	D2	Water Heater	There is	xy	C-Gamma	Germany	
E	E1	-	Dried Meat	None	yy	Et-San	Türkiye	
B	B1	-	Eraser	None	zz	Gamma	Türkiye	

Figure 4: MS Decision Database

6.2.3.5 Autonomous Electronic Market Surveillance:

After the formation of the MS Decision Database and Risk Score Database, the products should be inspected electronically and an inspection decision should be made. In order to solve the decision problem and make the best prediction, first of all, there must be a sufficient number of reliable samples obtained for the purpose.

I. The software firstly travels around the marketplace (Flâneur Mode). During this excursion, not all products but the products included in the relevant Regulation or selected as “high-risk” among them will be analysed.
II. If there is missing information on the pages of these products or if a product prohibited for sale is identified, the inspection report is sent to the relevant MSAs.
III. If there is no missing information, the software will make a risk assessment by collecting information from the pages it travels (Inspection Mode).

During this evaluation, the decision tree method will be utilised. While creating the decision tree, divisions are made by taking into account the answers to the questions asked and the result

is reached. Therefore, the "divide and conquer phase" is the most important part of tree building. In the tree, starting from the root, it is progressed by branching to the leaves. At the nodes, the attribute that will best divide the samples into classes is selected, if all the samples belong to the same class, no new branching is done and the tree ends as branch-leaf-node.

Since showing all the data that will be input to the decision tree as input in the model will reduce the reliability of the model in the columns with opposite effects, it would be more accurate to determine which input will be more effective on our output and to clean the rest.

In this application, firstly, a certain part of the data set forming the decision trees is used for training purposes. For this reason, it is recommended to include data from MSAs in this training set. It should be noted that machine learning models require historical data—essentially, an electronic model of institutional memory—to function effectively. This training data is analysed by the relevant algorithm to create a model. Decision Trees have different calculation methods according to the type of target variable and purpose. Considering the characteristics of the data to be obtained from MSAs, it will be decided which algorithm to use (AID, CHAID, CART, ID3, C4.5, C5.0, MARS, E-CHAID, SLIQ, SPRINT and QUEST).

Independent of the algorithms, the most widely used measurement for this purpose is the "Entropy" measurement. The higher the entropy measure, the more uncertain and unstable the results obtained by using that area. Therefore, the areas with the lowest Entropy measure are used at the root of the decision tree. The formulas that find the Entropy measure of a given area are as follows:

$$Entropy(s_{di}) = \sum_{j=i}^{t} - p_j log_2 p_j \quad (1)$$

The branches forming the decision tree will be determined by Information Gain.

$$IG(Y,S) = Entropy(S) - \sum_{i=1}^{n} p_i \, Entropy(S_{d_i}) \quad (2)$$

Here (i) indicates the number of states of the selected attribute, while (j) indicates the number of classes of the attribute to be categorised. On the other hand, (pj) indicates the probability of realisation of class (j) for (di) state of the selected attribute

An example of the decision tree to be formed is given below;

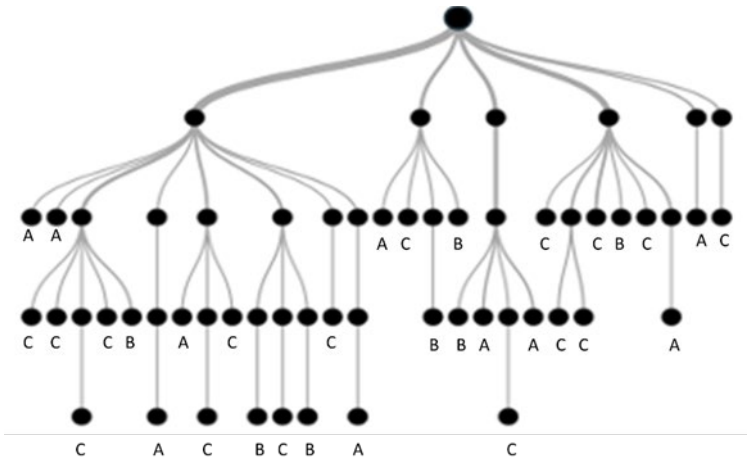

Figure 5: Decision Tree Example

Decision	MS	MS Period
A	There is	Initial Planning
B	There is	Second Planning
C	None	-

Figure 6: Inspection Decision

As a result of the study, which product type, which company, which model products should be inspected and the time planning for these inspections will be determined and presented to the relevant institution together with the justification. In the light of this information, decisions on whether a physical inspection will be carried out and whether samples will be taken will be made by the relevant institution.

6.2.3.6 Updating Dynamic Tables:

New findings will emerge as a result of the inspection performed by the software. Therefore, the Risk Score Database (Figure 3) will need to be updated. The resulting score changes will also cause changes in the MS Decision Database (Figure 4). For example, Company "A" imported X model of Alfa Brand Pen and it was found to be unsafe. In this case, 0,1 point will be added to company "A" and 0,2 points will be added to the product type and brand. This new table will be evaluated again with decision trees and risk analysis will be performed.

Predictors								Target
Distributor Company Title	**Manufacturer Company Title**	**Importer Company Title**	**Product Type**	**Consumer Complaint/ Negative Reviews**	**Model**	**Brand**	**Country of Origin**	**Total Risk Score**
	-	A (0,5)	Pen (0.4)	Var (0,1)	X (0,3)	Alpha (0.4)	China (82.2)	**84,9**
B	B1	-	Detergent	There is	y	Gamma	Türkiye	
C	C1	C2	Walkie-talkie	None	z	Beta	USA	
D2		D2	Water Heater	There is	xy	C-Gamma	Germany	
E	E1	-	Dried Meat	None	yy	Et-San	Türkiye	
B		B1	Eraser	None	zz	Gamma	Türkiye	

Figure 7: Updated MS Decision Database

6.2.4 Determination of Trend and Seasonality with Time Series Analysis in E-commerce Applications

When explaining the concept of risk, it would be insufficient to try to explain it by considering only a product, the seller who supplies that product to the market or the country where the product is produced. Another important issue that increases the diversity and amount of consumption activities, especially in e-commerce, is the "time" factor. For an integrated risk analysis methodology, it is necessary to analyse the changes in the demand for goods or services.

In order to examine a criterion as a dependent variable of time, it is necessary to create a time series and analyse this series. Time series analyses have two main objectives. The first of these is to reveal the relationship between the observation values that make up the series, and the other is to try to predict the values that may occur in the future.

There are several concepts used in the process of making sense of time series:

- Stationary
- Trend
- Seasonality
- Cyclicity (Cycle)

However, the concepts of "Trend" and "Seasonality", which create changes in the composition of e-commerce and cause significant differences in consumer demands, constitute the basis of this study.

A trend is the upward or downward movement of a time series over a period of time and reveals the character of that time series. Trend movements are under the influence of many factors. Changes in technology, differentiation of customer tastes, increase in national income, change in the amount of production, inflation or deflation are some of them. However, the most important of these is the change in customer preferences. An increase in demand for a particular good or service will lead to a weakening of control in the market.

Another important concept in terms of e-commerce is seasonality. Seasonality, which means repeating a certain behaviour in the time series in certain periods, has a distinct pattern. These patterns usually show repetitions at regular intervals such as a certain season, month, week or day.

By analysing time series, measures can be taken in a shorter period of time to reduce the impact of a disruptive factor such as an unsafe product. In addition, a more effective result will be expected with timely interventions. Therefore, it should be noted that time series are important for risk analysis for product safety. In case the demand for a certain product increases, it will be necessary to start or increase the frequency of market surveillance activities for that product.

The analysis to be performed by using time series is also important for the correct determination of the MS period.

6.2.4.1 Trend Identification in E-Commerce:

In order to perform trend analysis for any product, at least one year time series of the product in question is required. In order for the system to work safely, the data in question must be received monthly from the marketplaces (API). Each marketplace should share at least the top 20 best-selling products and a produc/product sub-group with on a monthly basis so that the database can be analysed. In order to express the way the system works, a monthly time series of a product supplied to the market through e-commerce as of 01.01.2010 is used.

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the European Union

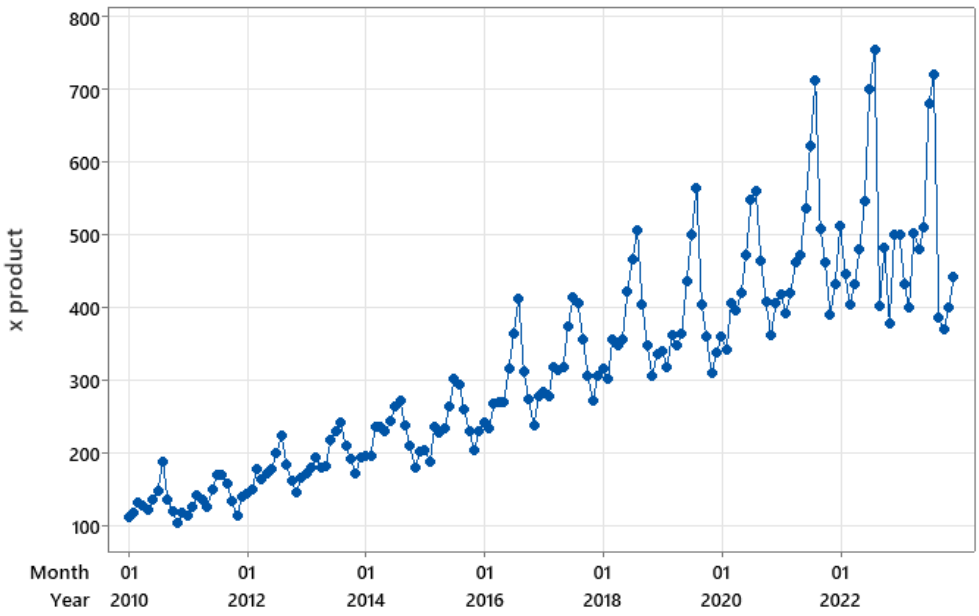

Figure 8: Time Series Plot of x-product (January 2010 - December 2023)

Trend analysis is carried out using various methods and different process steps. For our example, it is seen that the trend value is formed linearly and this curve can be expressed by the formula$Y_t = 93{,}08 + 2{,}595t$. As can be seen from the figure, there is a positive and increasing demand for the product in a certain amount. For this reason, it is beneficial to make a medium - or long-term MS planning for this product during the autonomous screening activity.

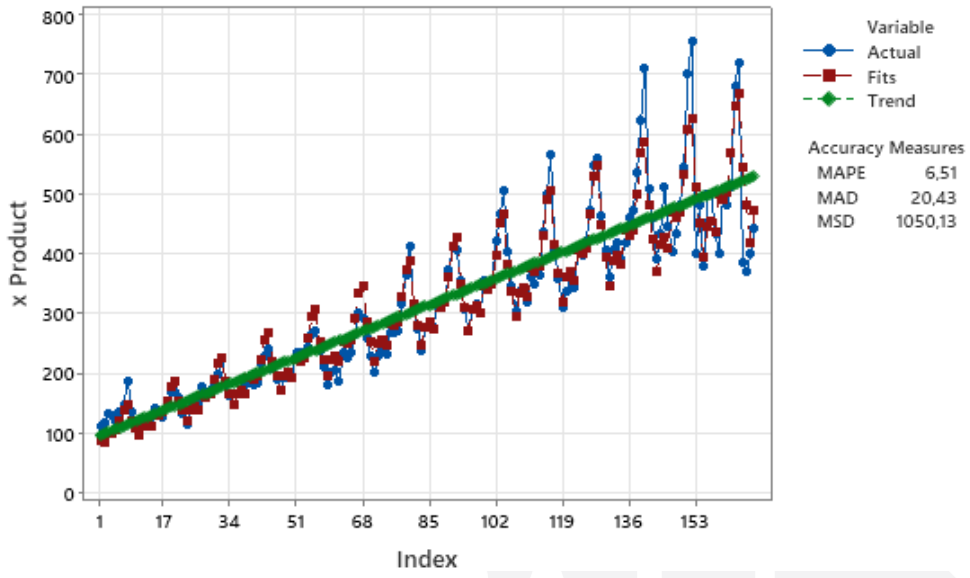

Figure 9: Time Series Decomposition Plot for "Product" (Multiplicative Model)

6.2.4.2 Seasonal Analyses in E-commerce:

Determining only the trend in time series will prevent achieving the desired goal. It is also necessary to investigate whether there is any effect of the season while the trend is forming. Thus, it will be possible to determine the time interval required for the inspection of some of the products offered for sale within the scope of e-commerce.

Based on the time series and trend information in our example, it is possible to determine in which months there is a significant movement.

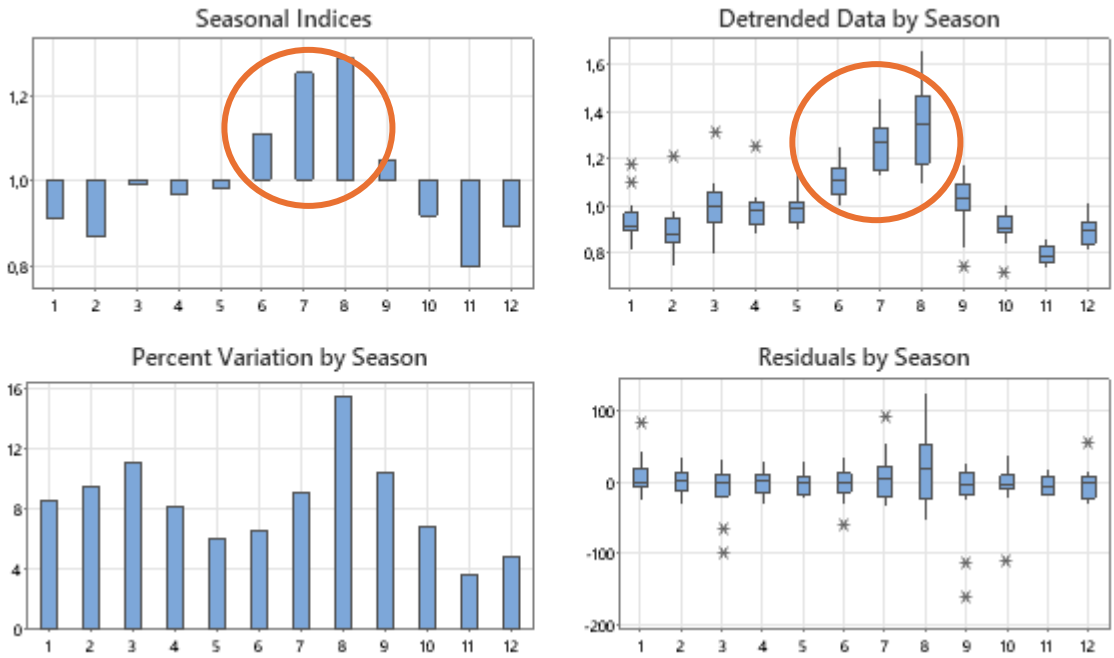

Figure 10: Seasonal Analysis for x Product (January 2010 - December 2023)

It is observed that consumer demand for this product increases in June and August. For this reason, it is beneficial to carry out the MS planning by taking May into consideration.

6.2.5 Procedures for Unsafe Products

Products identified as risky through the software risk assessment methodology will be controlled in accordance with the principles set out below and if the product is found to be unsafe, the following actions will be taken.

- First, the presence of prohibited and risky words, phrases and images will be checked. If at least one of these is detected, a report will be generated and sent to the relevant MSA and Beneficiary. The reporting period for the Beneficiary will be determined later.
- Even if no prohibited and risky words, expressions and visuals are detected, "Mandatory Information" and "Mandatory Signs to Look For" will be checked for each product caught on the radar of the software. If a deficiency is identified here, the report to be generated will be sent to the relevant MSA and Beneficiary.

- The user will select the operation to be performed (there may be more than one) through the software. Examples of these are given below.

    1. Marking the Product as Safe
    2. Marking the Product as Unsafe
        a. Reporting the insecurity to the company and the marketplace.
        b. Sending the link of the page to the relevant Institution to stop the sale, etc.

The results obtained from each web crawling and web scraping will be processed into the Risk Database.

6.3 Stakeholder Collaboration Mechanisms

To strengthen the efficiency and outreach of Türkiye's product safety and digital market surveillance system, enhanced collaboration with both institutional and non-institutional actors is critical. The following measures are recommended:

a) Formalization of Structured Dialogue Platforms with E-Commerce Platforms and Marketplaces: Establish regular coordination meetings and working groups with major online platforms, intermediary service providers and fulfillment service providers to improve communication, clarify obligations and encourage voluntary compliance practices aligned with EU approaches under the DSA and GPSR.

b) Strategic Partnerships with Consumer Associations and Civil Society: Engage consumer rights organizations and relevant NGOs in awareness campaigns, complaint monitoring and feedback collection to ensure citizen-centric enforcement and co-monitoring of online risks.

c) Integration of Sectoral Business Associations in Policy Design and Training: Include private sector federations, sectoral chambers and trade associations in the design of digital surveillance strategies and trainings, particularly for high-risk or technically complex product groups.

d) Design of a Public-Private Cooperation Framework on Risk Detection Tools: Encourage joint development or data sharing protocols for AI-driven surveillance, risk flagging systems or complaint dashboards between the Ministry of Trade and key private platforms.

e) Creation of an E-Commerce Stakeholder Advisory Committee under PGDKK: Establish an advisory body composed of representatives from online platforms, consumer groups, academia and MSAs to regularly review challenges and opportunities in e-market surveillance.

This advisory body could be divided into working groups such as:

i) e-MS coordination working group, which brings together representatives designated by the MSAs on a monthly basis. In addition to coordination activities, the following issues could also be discussed in this working group.

- Promoting effective cooperation in cross-border e-commerce
- Promoting good business practices, compliance and self-regulation in consumer protection in e-commerce
- The effectiveness of online consumer education campaigns
- Regulatory challenges and responsibility regimes in the collaborative economy.

ii) Consumers e-MS working group, which will be dedicated to consumer organisations in order to assess the impact of the measures taken and existing regulations. This group can be gathered annually.

f) New project for complaint handling: Consumers who do not have sufficient information about product safety generally address the problems they encounter with the products they purchase on the basis of their economic interests and, even if the issue involves product safety, they submit their complaints to different institutions. In particular, some of the complaints received through Consumer Dispute Resolution Boards and CİMER involve confidential product safety issues. Therefore, there is a need for a separate project in which such complaints are examined using AI methods, classified and shared with the relevant institutions.

6.4 Consumer-Focused Measures

Raising consumer awareness and equipping buyers with the ability to make safe and informed choices is an essential pillar of modern MS. In this context, the following measures are recommended:

a) Nationwide Consumer Awareness Campaigns on Product Safety in E-Commerce: Implement multilingual and multimedia campaigns addressing key consumer responsibilities, such as verifying product conformity markings, recognizing suspicious sellers and submitting complaints to authorities.

b) Development of Educational Modules on Safe Online Shopping: Produce curriculum-compatible educational content on digital product safety for schools, universities and public training programs, in partnership with the Ministry of Education and consumer organizations.

c) Interactive Labelling and Safety Indicator Tools for Consumers: Promote tools that provide visual indicators of compliance and risk levels for online-listed products, such as QR-code-based traceability or mobile-accessible conformity checks.

d) Establishment of a Centralized Consumer Product Safety Portal: Create a government-managed portal where consumers can access alerts, recall notices, guidance materials and submit complaints on unsafe or non-compliant products sold online.

e) Targeted Training for Vulnerable Consumer Groups: Design dedicated outreach and simplified educational materials for vulnerable populations such as the elderly, youth and digitally less-literate consumers, to protect them from misleading offers or unsafe products.

f) Academic studies should be supported: Studies to be carried out in search for determining the factors that cause consumers to choose e-commerce methods should be supported. In particular, the main focus of these studies should be on identifying the factors that build consumer confidence and establishing selection preferences.

g) Informative Public Service Announcements (Kamu Spotu): These could be broadcasted especially for products that are in high demand and also risky, such as toys, consumer electronics and stationery or products that are trending according to the result of the software.

h) Use of Social Media: 69% of those who prefer e-commerce are aged between 18 and 44[25]. Therefore, social media applications have become an important media tool for information activities. Awareness raising activities could also be realized by these means.

[25] https://www.similarweb.com/

7 FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENTS FROM THE NEEDS ANALYSIS WORKSHOP

The Needs Analysis Workshop held in Ankara on 18–20 June 2025 provided a multi-stakeholder platform bringing together MS authorities, e-commerce platforms, economic operators, consumer organizations and sectoral experts. Over the course of three days, participants evaluated the problem areas previously identified in the Needs Analysis Report, shared their field-based observations and developed solution proposals. This process not only enabled the validation of the current situation but also helped clarify operational gaps and calibrate recommendations for the Strategy and Action Plan Report (SAPR).

This section summarizes the outputs of the aforementioned Workshop under eight key headings and structures them into concrete findings based on stakeholder input.

7.1 Legal and Regulatory Framework

- Participants noted that the legal framework for online product safety in Türkiye has not yet been systematically defined and that existing regulations primarily focus on the physical market.
- A key issue on which participants expressed consensus during the workshop was that Türkiye is not yet fully aligned with the General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR) and the Digital Services Act (DSA) of the EU and that achieving such alignment should be treated as a strategic priority. This need, previously identified in the earlier sections of the report, was strongly reinforced by the workshop findings. In this context, the primary aim during the legal framework assessment process is to reflect these needs into the e-MS Regulation.
- In particular, the lack of clarity and legal enforceability regarding key practices on which the e-MS system relies—such as mystery shopping, the use of anonymous identities, alternative delivery methods, digital evidence generation and the obligations of e-platforms—was considered problematic in terms of both inspection reliability and legal validity in judicial processes.
- Additionally, the need for greater clarity regarding the legal basis for cross-border cooperation was highlighted.

7.2 Institutional Structure and Human Resources

- Workshop participants expressed the view that the current organizational structures of public institutions involved in the e-MS process are inadequate to meet the needs of digital inspections. It was particularly noted that institutional structures have limited

capabilities in areas such as analysis, monitoring and intervention—functions that go beyond traditional MS approaches.

- In this context, it was recommended that institutions responsible for e-MS establish specialized units focused on digitalization within their organizational structures and strengthen these units' competencies in technical areas such as IT infrastructure, software literacy and data analytics.
- In terms of human resources, it was emphasized that there is a need to enhance the competencies of inspectors, particularly in areas such as product identification on e-platforms, content analysis, risk assessment based on algorithmic rankings and evidence collection.
- It was also noted that the current MS capacity is unevenly distributed across regions, with some provinces lacking product safety personnel or having limited technical capacity. This situation hampers the effective nationwide implementation of the e-MS system and highlights the need to strengthen coordination between central and regional levels.
- Another important issue raised during the workshop was the need to restructure the authority, responsibilities and job descriptions of inspectors from a digital inspection perspective. In addition, it was suggested that technical contact points for communication with platforms should be designated and that internal coordination mechanisms should be clearly defined.

7.3 Digital and IT Infrastructure

- The desk-based assessments conducted during the Needs Analysis revealed that Türkiye currently lacks an integrated, intelligent and risk-based digital inspection system dedicated to e-commerce. The technical feedback provided by participants during the June 2025 Workshop strongly supported this finding and elaborated on the structural components that the e-MS software must possess in terms of both functionality and sustainability.
- The integration of the e-MS system with other public data sources was assessed as limited and it was concluded that it should be strengthened through APIs, decision support systems and analytical tools.
- The effectiveness of the e-MS system depends not only on the strength of its internal algorithms but also on its access to reliable, up-to-date and multi-source data. In this context, the integration of existing public databases such as TAREKS and PGDBIS into the system, facilitation of access by MSAs to their historical inspection data and ensuring compatibility between the e-MS software and Electronic Document Management Systems (EBYS) were emphasized.
- In addition, the need for technical solutions that can integrate with platforms and enable automatic data transfer was highlighted and a minimum data sharing protocol was

proposed for product information to be obtained from platforms (e.g., product title, brand, model, age group, image, etc.).

- An authorization matrix that enables inspectors to access the system at different levels should be structured in a way that ensures both confidentiality and traceability in sensitive e-MS operations such as mystery shopping.
- It was also assessed that every transaction record (e.g., sampling, complaint triggering, report generation) should be logged step by step and that the necessary legal and technical infrastructure must be established to ensure the admissibility of such records as evidence before judicial authorities when needed.

7.4 Risk Assessment and Trend Analysis

- Workshop participants stated that current risk assessment practices are largely subjective, fragmented and dependent on individual inspectors, which weakens consistency and coherence in inspection processes. In this context, the need for a digital risk assessment model that is based on numerical inputs, criterion-based, transparent and standardized was emphasized.
- Unlike traditional physical inspections, it was noted that inspections carried out on digital marketplaces should incorporate platform-derived data such as user reviews, star ratings, sales volume, listing frequency, product titles and price fluctuations into the risk analysis.
- Participants indicated that if platform data were shared with MSAs in a regular, structured and comparable manner, inspections could be conducted in a more proactive, targeted and data-driven way. At this point, it was recommended that data formats be harmonized and technical solutions developed to ensure continuous data flow.
- It was identified that consumer complaints are not systematically used as a risk criterion in the current inspection systems and that complaint channels such as ALO 175 and CİMER are not integrated with the product safety inspection infrastructure. This situation hampers the timely detection of potential risk signals and complicates the prioritization of inspections.
- In this regard, it was proposed to establish a centralized and platform-fed complaint data pool that brings together data from both platforms and consumer complaint lines, and to use this structure as a triggering parameter within the Decision Support System (DSS).
- In the long term, it was noted that this structure should be designed not only to support real-time risk assessment but also to enable trend analysis and early warning systems based on factors such as product category, seller behavior, seasonal peaks and complaint patterns.

7.5 Sampling and e-MS Methods

- Workshop participants noted significant implementation gaps in the processes of physically identifying, procuring and examining products subject to e-MS. The lack of sufficient legislation and practical guidance concerning the online tracking and procurement of products—distinct from traditional MS processes—was particularly emphasized.
- In the current system, the lack of a clearly defined legal basis for mystery shopping methods creates uncertainty in practice. Participants stated that mystery shopping operations should be carried out within the framework of a clearly defined protocol and safeguarded in terms of procedural validity and admissibility of evidence. To ensure the effective use of this method, standards are needed concerning identity masking, alternative delivery methods and documentation procedures.
- Furthermore, it was assessed that operational procedures related to the procurement, documentation, receipt, delivery to testing laboratories and reporting of results for products identified on online platforms have not yet been sufficiently standardized or systematized. These deficiencies were considered to pose risks to both the transparency of the MS process and the legal validity of subsequent administrative or judicial actions.

7.6 Cooperation and Coordination with Platforms

- Participants agreed on the importance of establishing structured cooperation with e-commerce platforms to enhance the effectiveness of e-MS. Considering the technical features of the online environment and the nature of data flows, the establishment of a functional, reliable coordination mechanism based on mutual responsibility with platforms was identified as a fundamental need.
- Platform representatives expressed their willingness to cooperate with public authorities but emphasized that such cooperation must be clearly defined in legal terms and safeguarded in terms of data privacy and responsibility sharing. In particular, technical and administrative uncertainties were noted regarding which information will be shared, how frequently, for what purposes and in what format.
- MSAs expressed the need for access to information from platforms, including product/seller data, user complaints, sales volumes, content changes and algorithmic structures that influence search results. Such data would form the basis of risk analysis and prioritization processes and support the efficient use of inspection resources.
- Additionally, it was proposed that digital interfaces such as notification APIs, suspicious product reporting panels and automated response systems be developed to strengthen the notification and feedback loops. These systems should function bidirectionally, enabling MS authorities to send notifications to platforms and receive confirmations and updates from platforms in return.

- Finally, it was recommended that e-commerce platforms operating in Türkiye be evaluated in comparison with practices and obligations in the EU, and that good practices under the DSA be used as references for adaptation in Türkiye.

7.7 Consumer Engagement and Complaint Mechanisms

- Workshop participants noted that consumer feedback is not effectively integrated into the product safety inspection system and that existing complaint mechanisms (such as ALO 175, CİMER and institutional call centers) remain limited in their ability to track product safety specific risks. These systems were described as mostly reactive, fragmented and weak in traceability.
- It was recommended that complaints be categorized in a structured manner based on parameters such as location, product type, platform, seller and risk level and be made usable in risk analysis. In this context, it was emphasized that complaint management modules integrated into the digital inspection system should be enhanced to support both monitoring and triggering functions.
- Participants stressed that consumer complaint data should become not only statistically useful but also operationally actionable—for example, a high concentration of complaints concerning a particular product group or seller could serve as an early warning mechanism for proactive inspections.
- Important insights regarding consumer behavior were also shared. A key consensus during the workshop was that consumer awareness remains very low with regard to CE marking, product information, seller responsibility and safe purchasing. This lack of awareness contributes both to the continued demand for unsafe products and to complaints being submitted inappropriately or without full understanding.
- In this regard, it was emphasized that consumers should be transformed from passive complainants into active stakeholders who detect, flag and feed risks into the system. This can only be achieved through inclusive awareness campaigns, open communication channels and warning systems embedded within platforms.
- Additionally, it was suggested that consumer participation in the inspection process could be increased through simple yet effective tools on product detail pages—such as safety icons, warning boxes and suspicious product report buttons.

7.8 Training, Capacity Building and Awareness Raising

- Workshop participants unanimously agreed that public personnel involved in e-MS activities cannot meet the needs of online inspections with traditional inspection training alone. The need for staff specialized in emerging areas such as digital tools, platform mechanisms and data analytics was strongly emphasized.

- Participants noted a significant skills gap particularly in areas such as product identification, online tracking, digital evidence collection, algorithmic content interpretation and AI-supported analysis. They stressed that this gap should be addressed through a structured training program.
- It was highlighted that training efforts should go beyond conventional inspector education and focus on areas such as data security, software literacy, platform behavior dynamics, consumer interaction management and technical communication with international platforms. Additionally, it was emphasized that training content should be aligned with current industry practices.
- The technical competence levels of staff in regional offices were reported to vary significantly, with some regions lacking qualified personnel capable of conducting digital inspection processes. This has led to inter-institutional and regional disparities in capacity. In this context, it was recommended to establish regional training hubs using a "train-the-trainers" approach.
- Furthermore, it was underlined that training and awareness-raising activities should not be limited to public institutions, but should also systematically target e-commerce platforms, sellers and consumers. It was suggested that awareness programs be coordinated for platform staff on their legal obligations, for sellers on product safety and for consumers on safe online shopping practices.

The findings summarized in this section have largely confirmed the problem areas previously identified in the Needs Analysis Report and in some cases provided deeper operational-level insights. The field-based feedback from participating institutions has strengthened the data foundation for the Strategy and Action Plan Report (SAPR) and allowed for a realistic assessment of the applicability of the proposed measures under key areas such as legal alignment, digital capacity, institutional structure and awareness. The actions to be included in the draft SAPR have been refined in light of these findings.

In the following section, under the title "Next Steps Towards the SAPR" the proposed areas of reform will be outlined and information on the methodology to be followed will be provided.

8 NEXT STEPS TOWARDS THE SAPR

The Needs Analysis Report at hand indicates the completion of a critical diagnostic phase regarding Türkiye's e-MS system. In particular, under current conditions where e-commerce is becoming increasingly dominant, operational weaknesses, legal gaps and institutional misalignments that limit the effectiveness of the existing structure have been identified. These findings—shaped by legislative reviews, institutional consultations and multi-stakeholder workshop outcomes—now provide the analytical foundation for the preparation of the Strategy and Action Plan Report (SAPR).

In this context, the SAPR will set out strategic objectives, define the responsible institutions, determine the sequence and timeline for implementation and identify the resources to be allocated by the implementing authorities. Additionally, measurable indicators will be developed to monitor progress.

The SAPR will be structured around the eight core thematic areas addressed in the Needs Analysis Report. Each area will be addressed through a tailored set of measures, taking into account the level of urgency (priority), feasibility and institutional readiness identified in earlier project phases.

The structured set of measures developed during the needs analysis phase will directly inform the SAPR's design. These measures will be translated into strategic action lines with defined timelines, milestones and responsible bodies. They cover a wide range of priorities—from the amendment of national legislation in line with the GPSR and DSA to the development of AI-based digital inspection tools and data-sharing mechanisms that will enable structured cooperation with platforms. Importantly, the main lines of these proposed measures were also presented to and discussed with participants during the Needs Analysis Workshop held in June 2025, ensuring that institutional views and practical constraints were taken into account from the outset.

Special attention will be paid to ensuring that these measures are embedded in a results-based planning framework. Each action item will be accompanied by expected outputs and performance indicators, providing the SAPR with a clear monitoring and evaluation framework. This will support policy coherence while also enhancing the practicality and traceability of implementation efforts. Additional inputs from the upcoming study visits and SAPR workshop will serve to validate, refine and sequence the actions in accordance with institutional realities and EU good practices.

The SAPR will respond not only to technical needs but also to national and international policy priorities. At the national level, alignment will be ensured with digital transformation objectives

related to product safety in the field of e-MS, as set out in the Presidential Programme, relevant action plans and strategy documents. At the EU level, concrete steps will be proposed to ensure alignment of national legislation with the General Product Safety Regulation (GPSR), the Digital Services Act (DSA) and the Market Surveillance Framework Regulation.

The principle of scalability will guide the design of the SAPR, given the variations in capacity, human resources and infrastructure among MSAs in Türkiye. Accordingly, the Plan will propose a phased implementation model. Initial steps will include the development of secondary legislation, digital inspection protocols and national guidance documents. These will be followed by pilot implementations, awareness-raising campaigns and training initiatives. In addition, digital solutions will be proposed to support technical compatibility and institutional adaptation.

The recommendations raised during the Needs Analysis Workshop held in June 2025 will also be integrated into the SAPR. These include the establishment of integrated complaint modules within the e-MS system, implementation of risk-weighted product prioritization models, institutionalization of cooperation protocols with platforms and development of interdisciplinary training programs. The Plan will also emphasize the clear regulation of institutional roles, data-sharing arrangements and consultation mechanisms.

Sustainability and institutional coordination will play a key role in the implementation of the SAPR. In this regard, leading institutions will be designated and mechanisms will be proposed to ensure regular dialogue among MSAs, platforms, consumer organizations and technical service providers. Furthermore, international cooperation channels will be explored to strengthen Türkiye's integration into the European product safety network.

The SAPR to be prepared is expected to present a transformation plan that is institutionally owned, adaptable to existing resources and aligned with the vision of a digital, risk-based and EU-compliant MS system. In this regard, the planned SAPR Workshop, to be held in consultation with relevant stakeholders, is also considered a key component in ensuring institutional ownership and engagement.

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ANNEXES

Annex I: Current Status Report

Annex II: Training Report of April 2025

Annex III: Conclusions of Thematic Groups (3 Presentations)

Annex IV: Closure Presentation of the Needs WS (1 Presentation)

Annex V: Draft Legal Framework Report presented to the Ministry

Annex VI: Replies to the Training's Questionnaires

Annex VII: Training Needs Table

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