

Interreg IPA CBC Italy–Albania–Montenegro Programme

PROGRAMME MANUAL

4.1 Reporting procedure

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Introduction

This factsheet provides technical guidance to the Partners on the project reporting activities.

Reporting is one of the tools used by the Programme to monitor, on a regular basis or at certain stages of the project implementation, the project's physical and financial progress, the performance, deliverables, outputs, achievements and contributions to the Programme objectives and output indicators. Reporting is also the basis for the reimbursement of the IPA contribution part of the project expenditures to the Lead Partner and, through the LP, to the other Partners.

Please follow the activities as described below.

1. HOW TO REPORT PROJECT PROGRESS

1.1. The Reporting System and Process

Each joint progress report of a project consists of:

- Activities sections (including communication) providing information on the implementation of activities, deliverables and outputs
- Financial sections providing information on the project's expenditure verified by national controllers (according to the Rule of Eligibility of Expenditure)

There are 2 types of reports a project has to complete:

- **Partner Progress Report:** this report is filled out by each Partner, including the Lead Partner. It contains both activities and financial information. The Partner Report is submitted by each Partner to their First Level Controller in eMS.
- **Joint Progress Report:** this report is filled out by the Lead Partner. It contains both activities and financial information based on the Partners' First Level Control certificates collected. The Joint Progress Report is submitted on the eMS by the Lead Partner.

Partners' Reports and Joint Progress Reports must be submitted through the electronic monitoring system eMS to the MA/JS.

In the Joint Progress Report, the LP reports about the project progress proving that the implementation is in accordance with the approved AF and justifies the reported and validated expenditures included in the AfR.

Each PP must contribute to the compilation of the Joint Progress Reports by preparing and submitting the own *Partner Progress Reports* (PPR) providing adequate information for the LP concerning the activities and the financial progress through the Partner Report in relation to a certain reporting period.

The PPR also contains the financial data of the expenditures (related invoices, accounting documents of equivalent probative value, etc. filled in according with procedure depicted) reported by the Partner, validated by the Controller by issuing the Control Certificate.

The PP has to submit the PPR to the designated/selected First Level Controller within the deadline agreed in compliance with the country's specific requirements for the FLC and before the deadlines agreed with the LP useful for the submission of the JPR (more information on the validation procedure is provided in Factsheet 4.4 of this manual).

Based on the PPR, the LP fill out the JPR at project level. The Lead Partner confirms that the information provided by the Partners:

- has been verified and validated by the FLC in compliance with the respective country specific control requirements;
- the Partners' information has been accurately reflected in the joint progress report and that the related costs has incurred from the implementation of the project activities as planned and set out in the application form (AF) and described in the JPR.

Once the JPR is completed by the LP it is submitted to the MA/JS. The submission of the JPR implies the automatic generation of the AfR (see Factsheet 4.2).

The MA/JS checks the submitted JPR and, if necessary, requests for clarification to the Lead Partner in order to approve the JPR.

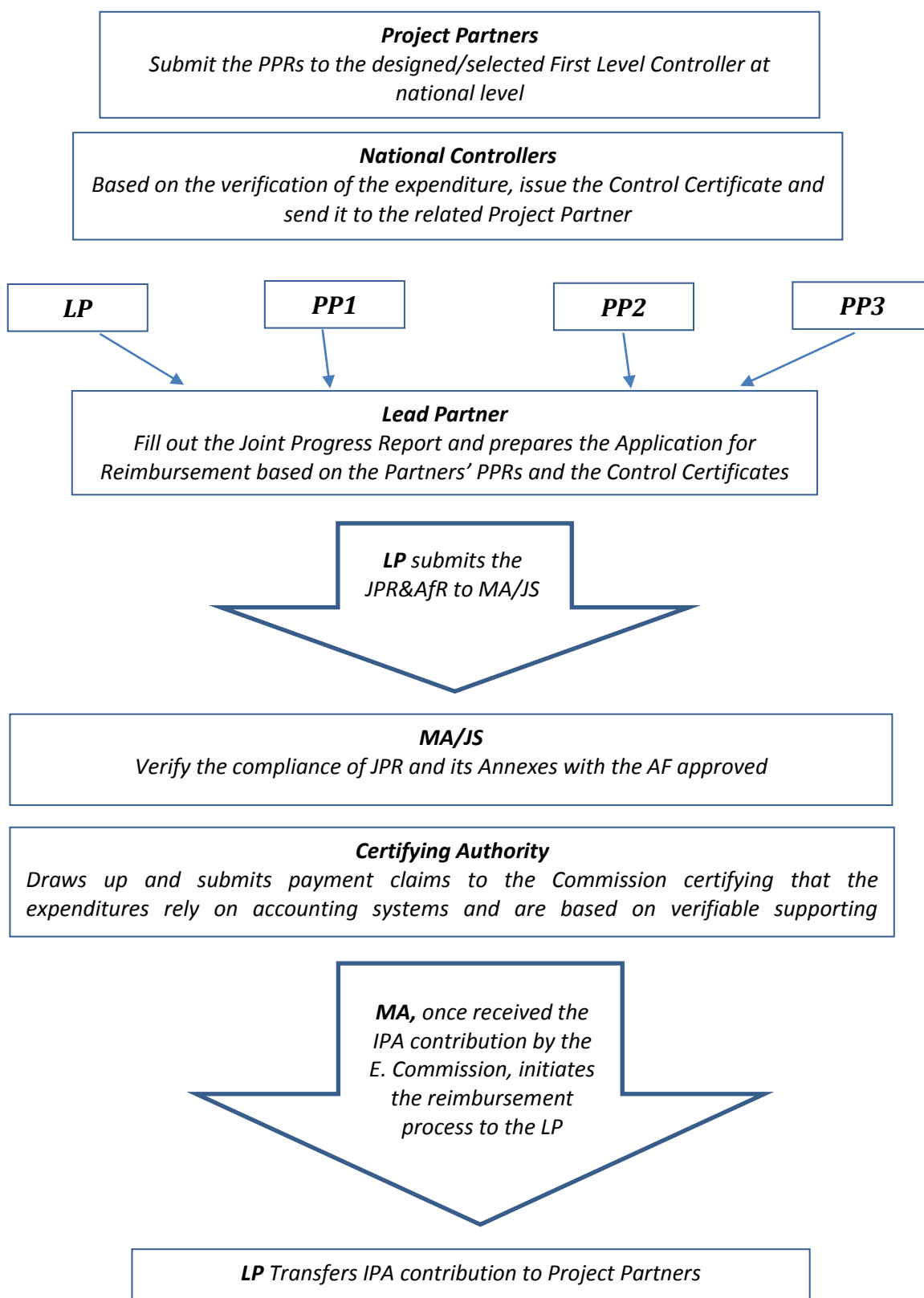
The Certifying Authority draws up and submits to the Commission the payment claim, certifying that the expenditures rely on accounting systems and are based on verifiable supporting documents.

Following, the MA proceeds with the reimbursement to the LP's of the related IPA contribution on the specific bank account. The LP is responsible for transferring the contributions to the PPs according the approved AfR and **without delay**.

Each JPR (and the overall project implementation) is monitored by two Project Officers of the Joint Secretariat in order to ensure a four eyes principle. The Project Officers will promptly provide feedback to the projects' LPs on their JPR.

The Joint Secretariat will also organise one or more mid-term review meeting with LPs of running projects. The aim of the mid-term review is to have a detailed picture on the project's performance before the finalization of the core activities and aimed at the monitoring of the action plans. The JS will communicate to the LP/PP the agenda of the review meeting and a "Mid term Review/Monitoring Visit minute" will be drafted (cfr. ANNEX 4.1.2)

The results of the mid term review might lead to project changes including budget changes or budget cut.



1.2. Reporting deadline

The LP must submit the Joint Progress Report **twice a year**, i.e. within **3 months** from the end date of each reporting period fixed on **30th June and 31st December**¹ starting from the start date of the project. The reporting periods are also regulated in the Subsidy Contract.

The **Joint Progress Report (JPR)** shall provide information about the progress of the project activities implemented by the PPs within the reporting period and the outputs achievement. Additionally, any public procurement procedures, as well as project's visibility/dissemination actions carried out within the reporting period, must be described in the JPR.

The JPR must be filled out by the LP (using the information provided by the PPs) and sent to the Programme Bodies – JS/MA/CA - through the eMS portal.

The Lead Partner has to submit the JPR to the Programme Bodies through the eMS portal of the Programme website. In case of delay in the reporting, a reminder will be sent by the JS to the Lead Partner. The Lead Partners are reminded that the failure to submit the required reports will be qualified as a basis for termination of the Subsidy Contract.

Each JPR must include only the activities implemented in the concerning reporting period.

Warning!

The eMS system automatically memorizes the data related to the submitted JPRs in the previous reporting periods. Therefore, the information of current period will be automatically added to the already existing information.

The JPR & AfR must be submitted to the MA/JS, by the LP, within **3 months** from the end date of each reporting period. The deadlines for submission of JPR & AfR are defined explicitly in the **Subsidy Contract/ ANNEX 3 – Reporting periods and deadlines**. The deadlines should be understood as the latest possible submission date, meaning that if a project is ready to submit the joint progress report before the set date may do so. All reports have to be submitted via eMS.

The first JPR & AfR must include the **“Preparation costs”** of the project and the expenditures incurred and paid within the first reporting period. Also, it must include the Project's Communication Plan.

The last JPR must include also the Project's **“Closure costs”**.

JPR, with all related annexes, submitted after the fixed deadlines may be rejected. In this case, the rejected JPR data and annexes can be included and re-submitted in the next reporting period.

Warning!

Postponements of deadlines for submission of reports can be AUTHORIZED by the MA/JS only in exceptional and duly justified cases. In such cases, the LP has to formally request from the postponement to the MA/JS at least one week prior to the deadline.

¹ This is not applicable to TA, P.A. 5

The Project Partners should consider that the preparation of PPRs, with related validation of the expenditure at Partner level, affects the collection of PPRs and the submission of the JPRs by the LPs within the fixed deadline.

LPs are recommended to agree appropriate deadlines with the PPs for the timely submission of the PPR and validation of partner's expenditures by the FLC, in order to allow to guarantee the timely collection of all PPRs. This allows to LPs to perform in time quality checks of the collected information (including deliverables and outputs) and the preparation of the Joint Progress Report.

Once the JPR is submitted by the LP, the process of assessment by the JS/MA/CA starts.

The checks and approval of the JPR by the above-mentioned bodies, after submission of the JPR by the LPs, will be concluded within 90 days by the submission. In case of request for clarification or integration of the data/attachments to the LPs the deadline for the approval of the JPR is suspended. The LP must provide the requested clarification/integration of the necessary documents to the JS/MA/CA within 10 working days by the date of the formal request.

Finally, the Certifying Authority, after having verified the regularity of the JPR, **proceeds with submission of the payment claim to the European Commission.**

The payment of the eligible IPA amounts, to the LPs, by the MA is subject to the availability of pre-financing funding and interim payments. The Lead Partner is responsible for the reimbursement of the respective eligible amounts to each PP, according the amounts of the FLC Certificates included in the specific JPR, without delays.

Where applicable, the co-financing for Italian partners will be covered by the National Rotation fund and will be paid by the MA for the total eligible amount, after the project closure and after the validation of all incurred project's expenditure.

A specific request of the co-financing reimbursement must be sent to the MA by each concerned partner according a specific template to be provided by the MA.

The Final Joint Progress Report (FJPR) must include the description of the overall activities implemented during the project. The information about the project's contribution to the Programme Output Indicator(s), the horizontal issues, etc. shall be reported by the LP, too.

The procedure of submission, checks and approval for the FJPR is identical to the one described for the Joint Progress Reports.

Jointly to the FJPR, the LP is required to submit brief overview of the objectives reached, activities implemented and results achieved by the project in the document **Final Project Summary**. The information shall be used by the MA /JS for purposes of project promotion. (see Factsheet 5.1 Project Closure Process)

The Final Joint Progress Report (FJPR) has to be submitted within 30 (thirty) working days after the end of the the last project reporting period.

1.3. Preparation of Progress Report and Joint Progress Report

The description of the project implementation in the PPR by the PPs must be adequately detailed to allow to the LP to draft an exhaustive JPR, including the Certificates of validation of expenditures, for the concerning reporting period.

Description of the activities implemented in the Progress report

The Activity part of the JPR collects contributions contained in the Partner Report (PR). In the activity part of the PR, PPs must describe the project implementation achievements at Partner level, how it is progressing, how the target groups are reached, the activities carried out and the status of the related deliverables for completed activities to be uploaded.

Please note that the Partner Report is a reporting tool prepared and delivered by PPs to the LP. Therefore, the responsibility for the check of the single PPRs is on the LP. Only the JPR submitted by the LP is subject to check by the concerned programme bodies (JS/MA/CA).

The templates of both PPR (feeding into the JPR) and the JPR follow a similar structure.

Based on the activity report prepared by PPs, in the activity part of the JPR, the LP should provide a comprehensive overview of the overall progress of the project in terms of results achieved, cross-border implementation by the Partnership and any kind of discrepancy from the original application form.

Furthermore, detailed description concerning the progress towards reaching the specific objectives of the project should be provided in terms of: target groups reached and involved by the Partnership; activities carried out and by which PPs within the different work packages; the overall progress in relation to the planned activities, deliverables and outputs compared to the initially envisaged targets values.

The specific descriptions of the activities and outputs should, at the same time, justify the reported expenditures of the different project Partners are claimed in the concerned AfR.

Content of the JPR

Main data

This section contains administrative information for the project: name, reference number, reporting period, name of LP, contact details, etc.

The JPR contains a statement of the LP, declaring that the information and documentation contained in the progress report, and related attachments, provide a correct description of the implementation and the present status of the project part.

Activity report

LP is requested to provide an overview of the activities carried out during the reporting period and the degree of achievement of the project's objectives and results according the workplan described in the approved Application Form. Also, it must describe the level of involvement of all Partners explaining the main problems faced during the period.

It consists of the following sections:

- a. **Highlights of main achievements** - LPs are requested to provide an overview of the activities carried out **during the respective reporting period** (information for previous reporting periods will be included automatically), as well as the delivered outputs. At the same time LP has to compare the summarized data, concerning the implemented activities, with the original information from the Application Form. All deviations and/or differences, in comparison to the Action plan set in the Application Form schedule, should be reported, as well as their impact on the implementation of other project activities. (**Example:** If the procedure for supply of promotional materials is not finalized, explain if and how this could affect the correlated project activities such as the planned public events, and suggest possible ways of remediation);

Please, note that the information in this section have to be adequately detailed in order to allow a fast and prompt check and validation of the JPR by the concerned Programme Bodies;

- b. **List of available certificates of expenditure** – to be selected using the drop-down menu among those loaded.
- c. **Project specific objectives achievement Implementation timeframe** - LP should provide information about the Project Specific Objectives achievement in accordance to the action plan.
- d. **Project outputs achievement** - Indicate for each output its current level of achievement. Quantify the outputs finalised in the current period. Only for finalised outputs upload documentation.
- e. **Additional result indicators achievement** - Provide a quantification of indicators reached in the current period. Give a concise and clear explanation on the reported number (include reference to activity or deliverable number). Ensure compliance with indicator. Keep in mind the set targets and monitor the progress. Ensure that no multiple counting occurs, e.g. between periods and partners
- f. **Target groups reached** - Reported figures should reflect only active involvement of target groups (e.g. trainings, interviews, pilot actions etc.) but not general dissemination activities. Consider only entities and not persons. Ensure a transparent quantification. Ensure consistency with project activities. Keep in mind the set targets. No multiple counting of the same entity in the same or different periods or addressed by different partners.

Generally, the required documents for specified activities are listed below:

Type of Activities	Source of Verification
Seminar, Conference (organization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agenda; ▪ Participants (registration list, signed by the participants); ▪ Photos (hall, participants, lectors, programme/project visualization); ▪ Presentation (with the name, title and signature of the lectors); ▪ Copies of the materials given to participants; ▪ Feedback for response, with recommendations and assessment from participants; ▪ Public announcement or invitations; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above

Seminar, Conference (participation)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List of participants; ▪ Report of the PP's representative; ▪ Photo of the representative (in front of the agenda or other space of the seminar which gives sufficient information on the participation, programme/project visualization); ▪ Uploaded information on the seminar on project/beneficiaries' web site/s; ▪ Certificate(s) (if applicable); ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List of participants, full name, address, contact (phone, e-mail), name of organization they represent; ▪ Training programme; ▪ Training materials; ▪ Feedback for assessment of training; ▪ Report from training and summary of feedback; ▪ Photos from the training with programme/project visualization; ▪ Press publications with programme/project visualization; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Exhibition (participation)	<p>In addition to the seminar participation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plan of the hall; ▪ Plan of the stand; ▪ Photos of the stand (the visibility plaque has to be visible on the photo)
Application for trade mark or patent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copy of registration form; ▪ Certificate; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Tests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Report on test results; ▪ Contract for the tests with explicitly stated expected tests procedures; ▪ Certificate; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Web-site	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Screenshot; ▪ Website counter results; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Copy of the publication with programme/project visualization, including the first page of the magazine and the header of the page and the page self, where the publication is located; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photos of the advertisement; ▪ Video/audio material with programme/project visualization; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Internal carried tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reports on progress and related physical outputs; ▪ Drafts; ▪ Elaborated strategies, plan, and etc.; ▪ Technical documentations (test results, photo from tests, etc...); ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Working meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ List of participants, full name, address, contact (phone, e-mail), name of organization they represent; ▪ Detailed agenda; ▪ Photos; ▪ Report from meeting; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
External Experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contract ▪ Curricula ▪ Report for tasks completed; ▪ Copies of elaborated materials; ▪ Protocol for put-in-work ▪ Financial documentation, related to above

Supply of equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents from tender procedure, technical specification, signed contracts; ▪ Documents for procurement, including Final Acceptance Certificate; ▪ Statement/certificate of origin for equipment/supplies; ▪ Available equipment, stamped as described hereinafter; ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Supply of promotion materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents from tender procedure, technical specification, signed contracts; ▪ Document for procurement, including Acceptance Certificate; ▪ Copies from the elaborated material (where the necessary Programme visual elements are printed); ▪ Photos made during the acceptance of promotional materials ▪ Financial documentation, related to above
Technical documentation for works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Documents from tender procedure, bill of quantities, technical specification, signed contracts; ▪ Correspondance between involved parties; ▪ Permissions, Environmental Impact Assessment (if applicable); ▪ Documents from Works Supervision – statements, protocols for works completed, supervision reports, copy of the required protocols in construction; ▪ Documents for acceptance of site by Committee and/or Use Permits; ▪ Publicity measures; ▪ Photos with programme/project visualization ▪ Financial documentation, related to above

One of the most common errors in Interreg projects, which caused many ineligible expenditures, irregularities and thus funds being paid back to the programme, is the documentation of expenditures (the audit trail).

We **strongly recommend and urge all project managers** to organize and keep the audit trail right from the beginning, i.e. to store all key electronic documents in a project storage space (server, shared drive, external hard disk), as well as in original paper folders.

For example, you might want to organise your folders according to the work packages (01 WP 1, 02 WP 2...) and the subfolders according to the expenditure category (011 Staff, 012 Travel...).

Please note that in case of controls and audit, you will be required to demonstrate you are keeping an organized and complete audit trail.

We suggest thus to name your files with a certain logic and to upload them in the eMS for reporting with a coherent name such as:

“YEAR_No OF PROGRESS REPORT_BUDGET LINE_WP_DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION_DOCUMENT NUMBER”

The supporting documents of the expenditures, in the eMS “List of expenditures” section, may be uploaded in both pdf files and zipped folders. To simplify the FLC check the different documents, related to a single expenditure, should be scanned and uploaded in single pdf file or in zipped folder.

Warning!

To avoid system’s slow-downs it’s advisable the upload of attachments having maximum size 15MB. In any case the maximum size of each single file/zip folder cannot exceed 30 MB. If possible, in *only one* pdf document or zip folder should be included all necessary supporting documents for each expenditure item.

Example n.1 - Reporting of Staff Cost of employee selected to work full time on the project

Attachment n.1 File name:

2018_1PR_STAFF COST_WP1_PAYSLIP JANUARY 2018_P.ROSSI_SELECTION PROCEDURE/APPOINTMENT

(This file should include all documents related to the public selection procedure official or written assignment of the employee and work contract and any other relevant document)

Attachment n.2 - File name:

2018_1PR_STAFF COST_WP1_PAYSLIP JANUARY 2018_P.ROSSI_PAYMENT DOCUMENTS

(This pdf file should include all documents related to the payment of the staff member such as payslip, report of the activities implemented, payment proofs of the salary and payment documents concerning any other costs directly linked to salary as above specified, incurred and paid by the employer and any other relevant document)

Example n.2: Reporting of Travel and accommodation costs

Attachment name:

2018_1PR_T&A_WP1_MISSION REIMBURSEMENT P.ROSSI_N.2/2018_1° PARTNERS MEETING BARI

(This pdf file should include all necessary documents proving the expenditure such as authorization, receipt/invoices, any declarations, reimbursement request from the employee, payment proof and all other necessary supporting documents)

In cases of expenditures incurred on the basis of public selection procedures/public procurement procedures and paid periodically through the concerning payment documents (such as monthly staff payslips or invoices for services contracted) it is recommended to upload only once the documents related to the procedure, in the first reporting of the expenditure. In the next reportings of the following Progress Reports, it should be indicated in the eMS “Partner comment” section the “Project Report” and the “Internal Reference number” containing the concerning uploaded documents.

Financial part of the Report

The financial report section of the JPR/FJPR, filled in according to procedures depicted in Factsheets 4.4, and 4.10, reports the expenditures validated by the FLC at national level in relation to the reported activities of the project, incurred and paid by the LP and the PPs during the relevant project period.

Only validated expenditure can be reported by the project Partners to the Lead Partner, according to the following procedure:

1. Each Project Partner, as well as the LP, has to report and submit for validation to the designated Controller in its Partner State, the expenditures incurred and paid in the relevant project period in the Partner Report². Each project Partner – including the LP – is responsible separately for having its expenditure validated by the designated Controller in its Partner State.
2. The Controller verifies the expenditure submitted by the Project Partner based on the invoices or accounting documents with equivalent probative value and the delivery of the products and services, the soundness of the expenditure declared and the compliance of such expenditure with EU and Programme rules, and relevant national rules. The Controller issues the signed FLC Certificate and the Independent FLC Report to the Project Partners/LPs through eMS platform (see Factsheet 4.4).

With reference to the FLC system, as far as Italian beneficiaries are concerned, please check the Factsheet n. 4.9 “Nulla Osta” – Release procedure for the Italian First Level Control.

As far as concern Albanian and Montenegrin beneficiaries the national FLC system is centralized and will be implemented respectively:

- *Albania*: Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
- *Montenegro*: Ministry of Finance.

Currency exchange

Expenditures incurred in a currency other than the euro shall be converted into euro according the monthly exchange rate of the European Commission in which the expenditure is submitted for verification to the FLC:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/index_en.cfm

Revenues

Revenues represent cash inflows directly paid by users of goods and services developed/produced by the project.

As a rule, the eligible expenditure of a project shall be reduced according to the net revenue generated by the project both during project implementation period and during **three** years after project completion.

In the application phase, project Partners had to calculate the expected net revenues in accordance with the method described under Articles 15 to 19 of the Delegated Regulation (EU) No 480/2014.

➤ Revenues generated in the project implementation phase

Project Partners are responsible for keeping account of all the revenues and keep the required documentation available (e.g. for control purposes). The revenues, must be stated in the Partner reports and must be deducted from the eligible expenditure. Project Partners must provide their

² Eventual expenditures incurred and paid in previous project periods and not reported in the relevant periods, can be reported in next reporting periods if duly justified in the narrative report.

Controller with information on the revenues generated in the reporting period and to support this with the accounting or equivalent documents.

➤ **Revenues generated after the project closure**

If a project expects to have any revenues within three years after the project closure the respective revenues the MA/JS must be duly informed, and they must be deducted from the final payment claim of the Programme submitted to the European Commission.

1.4. Assessment of the JPR

Completion of the Progress Report and the Application for Reimbursement

Concerned Programme Bodies are responsible for the check and approval of the Joint Project Reports. The main objectives of JPRs assessment include analysis of the project's progress, timely implementation of the activities, project's output and their correspondence to the Application Form.

When the concerned Programme Bodies detect some inconsistencies or insufficient information in the reporting documents, they reject the JPR requesting the necessary integration from the LP within **maximum 10 working days** - completed with all required documents (shorter deadlines might be given according to the urgency or the type of completion).

If the LP does not fulfil all the requested corrections, or something different from the first completion has not been completed the MA/JS/CA can ask a second completion. The LP has another **maximum 5 working days** for the integration/corrections after receiving the formal request.

In this case the JPR must be re-submitted via eMS, in the given deadline.

Rejection of the Progress Report and the Application for Reimbursement

After the second unsuccessful completion, the JPR and AfR might be rejected.

If a JPR is rejected the amount requested in the related AfR will not be reimbursed to the LP in the concerned reporting period.

A rejected JPR and AfR can be resubmitted only once more. In such case, when the resubmitted JPR and AfR, have severe failures to report, impeding an assessment by MA/JS, the MA/JS might finally reject it, expenditures included in that AfR of the rejected JPR will not be reimbursed and without any possibility to recover.

This would also mean that the LP was not able to appropriately fulfil its reporting obligations deriving from the Subsidy Contract. Therefore, the MA reserves the right, on prior decision of the Joint Monitoring Committee, to:

- apply a reduction of the project management costs;
- withdraw from the Subsidy Contract (Art. 17 of the Subsidy Contract).

In case of investments activities performed during the reported period, the JS officers may proceed with **on-the-spot** visit.

1.5. Application for reimbursement

The **Application for Reimbursement** is the basis for requesting the reimbursement of the contribution from the EU Funds (IPA) by the LP for the project after the verified expenditures.

The data of the AfR are automatically included in the JPR in the eMS, based on the validated expenditures reported in the financial part of the JPR. The related FLC Certificates must be enclosed by LP to the JPR.

In case the FLC Certificates and PRs are not received from each project Partner for a given reporting period, the LP shall submit the JPR including only the FLC Certificates available for the reporting deadline. The expenditure of the project Partners not validated for the given reporting period within the deadline, shall be requested in the earliest next JPR.

Before submitting the JPR, in compliance with the Article 13(2) c and d) of the Regulation (EC) No. 1299/2013, the LP shall verify the following:

- the expenditure declared by the Project Partners participating in the Project has incurred only for the purpose of project implementation and corresponds to the activities agreed among those Project Partners in the frame of the approved Application Form;
- the expenditure declared by the Project Partners included in the present JPR has been validated by the designated FLC;
- all FLC Certificates presenting the expenditure of the Project Partners in the JPR are attached and are officially signed by the designated controllers;
- the expenditure declared in the AfR concerned has not been included in any other previous JPR;
- the information included in the JPR are true and correct.

The reimbursement of EU contribution will be paid in EURO to the LP's bank account (as indicated in the eMS and Subsidy Contract), where all financial transactions related to the project can be identified and tracked.

The **LP is responsible to transfer the received contribution from EU Funds** to each project Partner according to the approved AfR as soon as possible, **at the latest within one month of its receipt**. No deduction, retention or any other specific charges can be made by LP concerning the approved amount when transferring the contribution and no legal dispute between the LP and the PP concerned could be subject to any compensation from the approved amount to be transferred by the LP to the PPs.

Warning!

Bank statements proving the transfers of contribution from EU Funds to each project partner are going to be requested in any audit of the project.

In case the LP does not transfer the EU Funds, an irregularity procedure could be initiated by the MA/JS.

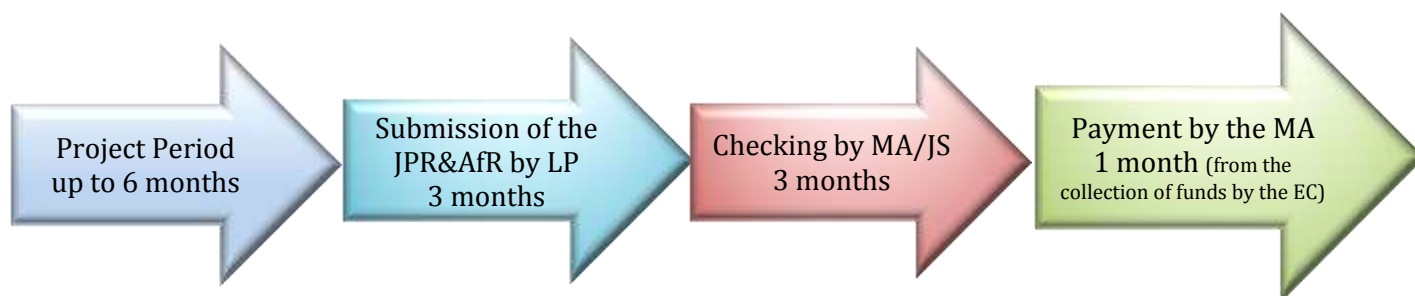
Where applicable, the co-financing for Italian partners will be covered by the National Rotation fund will be paid by the MA for the total eligible amount, after the project closure and related validation of all incurred project's expenditure.

A specific request of the co-financing reimbursement must be sent to the MA by each concerned partner according a specific template to be provided by the MA.

Timeframe of reimbursement

The LP and the project Partners must consider the timeframe of Funds reimbursement when preparing the time plan of their project activities.

The following flowchart presents the procedures described in the previous sections with the indicative timeframes.



It should also be taken into consideration that the timeframe for the JPRs check by the MA/JS might be extended for required completions by the LP.

1.6. Financial progress and decommitment of the project

The LP must ensure that each PP strictly follows its spending forecast according to the approved AF. The Partnership has the possibility to deviate from the spending forecasts laid down in the Subsidy Contract, but it must be taken in consideration that in case of under-spending compared to the original spending forecasts, the MA/JS can decommit the project, by reducing the original project budget and the corresponding contribution from EU Funds.

If the Project Partners are not able to report expenditures according to the approved spending forecast, the MA/JS will assess the level of under-spending and the reasons for lower financial performance. In case the underspending exceeds the 20% of the original spending forecasts, and/or the final level of expenditure is lower the 3%, of the minimum eligible project's budget (i.e 500.000€ for the 1st call), the MA/JS reserves the right to propose to the JMC the budget decommitment (Art. 20 of the Partnership Agreement and Artt. 12 and 17 of the Subsidy Contract).

In case of approval of the project's budget decommitment by the JMC, the MA/JS initiates the amendment of the Subsidy Contract (Factsheets 4.7 on project changes of this Manual). Through this process the distribution of the decommitment at project Partner level will be defined, taking into consideration the financial performance of the different Partners.

How to avoid decommitment at project level

The risk of a decommitment during project life time can be reduced by taking into consideration that:

- the financial plan of the project, especially the budget split along activities timeline should be defined carefully (considering already in advance possible delays, e.g. in the first level control);
- the financial performance of the project Partners should be monitored closely and regularly by the LP (as stated in PA the LP shall ensure sound financial management of the project);
- the project Partners should stay in contact with their first level control (FLC) bodies so to ensure that the expenditures can be certified in time (as stated in PA the project Partners shall ensure timely reporting of activities and costs).

Decommitment at Programme Level

According to Article 136 of Regulation (EU) No 1303/2013 the European Commission shall automatically decommit any part of a budget commitment of a programme that has not been used by 31 December of the third year following the year of budget commitment (Factsheet 4.M).

In case the Interreg IPA Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme is affected by decommitment of Community funds the MA, upon a decision of the Joint Monitoring Committee, is entitled to decommit the approved projects budget.

Reference Documents

- *Regulation (EU) No 1303/2103*
- *Subsidy contract*
- *Partnership agreement*

1.7. On the Spot verifications by the MA/JS

MA/JS's main source of information for the monitoring of the project implementation progress is the JPR. Moreover, to have closer contacts between the programme management bodies and the project's Partnerships for a more realistic view of the projects implementation (ongoing activities, progress and achievements) the MA/JS may arrange on the spot checks for technical verifications to the contracted projects at least once during the implementation period. The verifications may be of two different tipologies:

1. Mid-term review

All standard projects approved in the framework of the Interreg IPA CBC Italy-Albania-Montenegro Programme must undergo to the mid term review aimed at understanding the progress of the project in terms of objectives, outputs and result achievement, as well as in terms of financial spending.

Before the mid-term review, no major project modification concerning the budget and activities is allowed.

The mid-term review is based on:

- ✓ The project first Joint Progress Report
- ✓ The Summary of project implementation (Annex 4.1.1) which is a template to be filled out by the LP before the check on the spot, highlighting the progress of the project in terms of implemented activities, achieved outputs, current financial spending per work packages and budget lines, deviation from the spending forecast and any proposal for a new financial forecast, potential risks, problems, delays and their possible solutions.

It would be preferable to arrange the mid-term review meeting in coincidence with the project's Steering Committee meeting considering the expected participation of all PPs.

The MA/JS informs the project LP and project's Partnership about the mid-term review outcome (as well as the JMC and NIPs, if relevant), if necessary included any recommendations/concrete measures and actions to fulfill, summarised in the form of Mid-term Review minutes (Annex 4.1.2).

The LP is obliged to inform the MA/JS about the fulfilment of the recommendations by filling in the respective part of the mid-term Review minutes and sending it to the MA/JS according agreed timing, based on the character of the recommendations.

In case of delays and poor financial performance, the programme might decide the project decommitment.

The JS will draft the agenda of the mid-term review meeting which shall contain at least the following: a general presentation of the status of the project by the LP (progress, delays, difficulties in implementation, etc.), presentations of the WP leaders/ PPs on specific issues, discussions, JS follow up and next steps.

Only for Thematic projects, having a longer project duration, also First Year review will be performed in addition to the mid term review.

2. Additional check on the spot review

Beyond the mid-term review meeting, in case of low financial performance of a project, it might be necessary additional check on the spot visit between the JS and the project management. Compared to the mid-term review the additional check on the spot has an advisory role and the main goal is to solve issues and problems encountered during implementation, to maximise the impact of the programme, to ensure the proper use of the funds, to support, advice, assist and assess the Partnership.

The check on the spot is not be considered an audit on the expenditures (performed by the AA), but a technical check related to the implementation of the project.

The MA/JS can propose specific actions, including withdrawal from the Subsidy Contract, in case the project implementation is significantly different from the objectives indicated in the Application form, serious irregularities or in all cases foreseen by the Subsidy Contract terms.

2. ANNEXES

2.1 Summary of Project Implementation

ANNEX 4.1.1

Summary of Project Implementation

Project ref. no.		Project Acronym	
Lead Partner			
Project start date		Project end date	
Visit type	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-term Review <input type="checkbox"/> Additional check on the spot visit	Visit number	
Place of the visit		Date of the visit	
JS Project Officer			

Implementation of work plan/activities
Achieved outputs
Financial progress³
Overall implementation

2.2 Check on the spot minute

ANNEX 4.1.2

Check on the spot minute

Project ref. no.		Project Acronym	
Lead Partner			
Project start date		Project end date	
Visit type	<input type="checkbox"/> Mid-term Review <input type="checkbox"/> Additional check on the spot visit	Visit number	
Place of the visit		Date of the visit	
JS Project Officer			

Project management and coordination	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Project financial management	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Partnership	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Implementation of work plan/activities	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Outputs	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Communication	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Involvement of target groups/stakeholders	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Sustainability and transferability of outputs/results	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>
Implementation of horizontal principles	
<i>Recommendations/deadlines</i>	<i>Fulfilment</i>

Work and cash flow in brief: an example

