

Interreg IPA South Adriatic (Italy–Albania–Montenegro 2021-2027)



PROGRAMME MANUAL

4.7 Project changes

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Introduction

Projects are implemented according to the approved application form (AF), which is a binding document. During their implementation, however, projects might face the need to modify some elements to adapt to actual developments.

This factsheet sums up the key elements of the project changes of the 2021-2027 programme “2021TC16IPCB008 (Interreg VI-A) IPA Italy Albania Montenegro (South Adriatic)” or Interreg IPA South Adriatic (the **Programme** below), while providing project partners with guidance for the project changes measures.

Take notes that the Project can be modified only during its implementation period and the modification should not affect the basic purpose of the project itself, the grant award decision or be in contrary to the equal treatment of applicants.

The Programme has defined standardised rules for changes of approved projects/operations (article 8 of the subsidy contract). This factsheet provides guidance on the type of changes allowed within an approved project and the relevant steps and procedures to be followed. Projects are invited to take contact with the assigned JS Project officer in case questions arise or further guidance is needed.

Keep in mind that all project modification is managed through Jems-Platform (cfr. Jems manual project modification).

1.1 WHEN & WHO CAN INITIATE A MODIFICATION

Modifications can be initiated by a programme authority (e.g. MA, JS, MC) or by the LP.

A modification request can be asked according to the following:

- **Programme authorities** can open modification requests at any time after a project has been approved or approved under conditions.
- **Lead Partners** can request modifications after the project is in the status “contracted”. Before that stage it is not possible for LPs to request any modifications.

WARNING

No authority can request modifications for projects which are finalized or archived. It is always the last valid AF which is a subject to modification request, not the initial one! It is not possible to initiate a modification request (neither by programme authorities nor by LP) if a previous modification is not finalized (i.e. approved or rejected by JS).

1.2 TYPE OF MODIFICATION

Changes during the project implementation are allowed, as long as the maximum amount of funding awarded is not exceeded, if provisions related to State aid discipline are respected and if they follow the conditions and procedures as set out in this factsheet.

Any change should be targeted at ensuring the best project performance. Depending on their focus the following type of changes may occur:

- a) Partnership changes;
- b) Budget changes;
- c) Extension of project's duration;
- d) Content changes.

Modifications can be distinguished among:

TYPE OF MODIFICATIONS	DESCRIPTION	REQUIRED ACTION
ADJUSTMENTS	minor adaptation or modification of the format of activities or deliverables or adjustments in partner budget section.	Reported in the Joint progress reports
MINOR CHANGES	elements which can be implemented within a certain range of flexibility, but which need to be processed into JEMS, updating the AF.	Notified to JS/MA
MAJOR CHANGES	changes which concern a core element of the project and require a formal request for change to be submitted to the JS/MA and the prior approval by the relevant programme bodies.	Approved by MA/MC

The basis for the project changes is the latest approved AF.

Take note that the LP shall send an e-mail to inform the assigned Joint Secretariat's Project Officer that the project needs a project modification, for both major and minor changes-

The Request must be justified either by circumstances specifically related to the implementation of the project or by changes of external circumstances.

A Request for budget reallocation shall be always accompanied by a separate justification for each altered budget line.

Any unauthorised or non-notified modifications of the content of the approved AF, that goes beyond the flexibility limits allowed by the programme, is of no legal force and is therefore void. As a consequence, any **expenditure linked to it becomes ineligible.**

WARNING

Modification of activities deemed relevant for STATE AID purposes , for which contractual provisions apply, must be authorized by the competent programme bodies, even if minor ones.

Changes that may modify substantial elements of the AF (such as objectives, outputs, results, activities, etc.), or that in any case generate effects on the project, must be previously authorized by the JS/MA.

Anyway, in case of situations that present themselves as dubious or that seem to be addressed with an uncertain interpretation, the JS shall be duly informed in order to proceed with the appropriate assessments.

1.3 ADJUSTMENTS

The adjustments concern minor adaptation or modification of the format of activities or deliverables or adjustments in partner budget section.

The adjustments must be reported as “deviations” to the JS either within the periodic project progress reports (JPR)- section “project progress report identification – partner problems and deviation”.

The JPR has to include a justification of such minor changes compared to the approved AF, an explanation on their consequence on the project’s implementation and, if applicable, the solution agreed within the partnership on how to tackle them.

In order to clarify the nature of the change, the LP may contact the JS for advice. Based on this information, the JS will advise how to proceed. In case of adjustments, the **LP does not need to ask any modification request in the Jems and then no modification to the AF will be applied.**

Typologies of adjustment are reported in the sections below:

WORKPLAN/PARTNER BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

MODIFICATION	REQUIRED ACTION	RESTRICTION
Minor adaptation of the timeline of activities, deliverables or outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To inform the JS in advance by email To report the modification as deviation in the related WP of the JPR -- section “project progress report identification – partner problems and deviation”. providing the necessary justification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The modification must not affect the project intervention logic (e.g. project main and specific objectives and results, or project outputs indicators exceeding 30%) The modification must not change the nature, quantity and use of the planned outputs
Small Modification of format of activities or deliverables (e.g. postponement of a planned workshop, merging some deliverables, adjustment of scope of deliverables etc.)		
Change of Work Package Leader		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The budget per BL cannot be increased No modification of total budget line per WP is allowed No modification of the chosen reimbursement option (real costs/flat rate/SSUC/lumpsum) is allowed
Change in partner budget section (Sub budget lines modification or aggregation within the same WP: description, unit type, period, number of units, price per unit etc.) <u>In case of use of SCOs, this option is not allowed</u>		

1.4 MINOR CHANGES

Minor changes are modifications of the operation which do not have a significant impact on the operation's implementation, **but which need an updating of the AF in the Jems.**

They may concern administrative/management issues (such as changes of contact details, bank account, etc.) as well as budget shifts among budget lines up to 20% of the partner's total budget.

Minor changes must be notified by the LP to the JS/MA before their processing into Jems.

The LP shall keep an accurate and real-time progress of the project implementation, in order to promptly identify the need for a project change. It is **therefore strongly recommended to seek advice and guidance from the JS** as soon as the risk of a deviation is identified by the LP. The JS will help in clarifying whether the needed modifications are minor or not.

Minor changes are limited to the following:

- Modification of administrative elements
- Budget flexibility up to 20% of the partner's total budget.

1.4.1 Modification of administrative elements

The LP shall inform the JS by email on the change of administrative information; the JS will then analyse the modification request and, if applicable, the project change in Jems will be initiated by the JS. Further details on the modification of administrative elements are provided in the table below.

ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES

MODIFICATION	REQUIRED ACTION
Change of legal representative of the LP/PP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To update either the partner section of the AF in Jems. • To upload relevant supporting documents in Jems-(eg. in case of change of the legal representative of the LP/PP, it is necessary to submit the updated Statement (Annex A) of the concerned partner, signed and completed with the linked documents, as required in the related application procedure)
Change of contact data of the LP/PP	
Change of contact data of the project (eg. Project manager, communication manager, financial manager)	
Change of LP/PP name without impact on its legal status	
Change of bank account of the LP	

Any modification linked to or affecting the legal status of the beneficiary institution is to be regarded as a major change and it has to be managed following provisions included in § 1.5.

1.4.2 Budget flexibility up to 20% of the amount originally budgeted

The budget laid down in the approved AF should be as precise as possible. However, during the project implementation, the LP might need to adapt the financial plan to the actual project

execution status. In particular budget shifts among budget lines up to 20% of the partner’s total budget are eligible.

The LP has to inform the JS by email on the budget change; the JS will then analyse the modification request and, if applicable, the project change in Jems will be initiated by the JS.

As regards the STATE AID assessment performed by the Programme and linked contractual conditions, please see *Factsheet 4.6 State Aid*.

Basically, the budget flexibility cannot be applied to all chosen Simplified Cost Options, with exception of the SSUC, which shall be authorized by the JS.

The **Lump sums** are fixed amounts/activity/country and cannot be reduced nor increased. So, operating on a binary approach, there are no other choices than **implementing 0% or 100%** of the single lump sum.

Conversely, **The Standard scales of unit costs (SSUC)** operate on a modulated approach, and then the value may be re-parameterized to the real operating conditions.

Finally, the available flat rates are chosen by each partner at the starting stage of the project and cannot be changed during project implementation.

Budget flexibility requirements applied by the Programme regard budget shifts among budget lines:

BUDGET FLEXIBILITY

MODIFICATION	REQUIRED ACTION	RESTRICTION
Budget shifts among budget lines up to 20% of the partner’s total budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To use the procedure specified in Jems <u>manual project modification</u> To update an excel tool provided by the JS for checks and monitoring issues¹ To update the AF into Jems accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The IPA contribution to the operation cannot be increased The nature, quantity and use of planned investments (<i>See Factsheet 4.10</i>) cannot be substantially changed <p>STATE AID contractual conditions setting threshold to the budget granted to beneficiaries may limit the application of the budget flexibility rules</p>

Exceeding the budget flexibility limits without prior notification to the relevant programme bodies will result in the ineligibility of the amount exceeding the thresholds².

It is responsibility of the LP to monitor project expenditures in order to ensure the respect of the

¹ In order to keep track of budget changes and to check if the total change exceeds the admitted percentage within the flexibility rule, the tool in annex 2 shall be used.

² Unlike for budget shifts above 20%, for which prior approval is a condition of eligibility, for minor budget shifts up to 20%, this is just a temporary ineligibility, because partners are entitled to this minor budget shift upon request/notification to the JS. Therefore, in cases of partner budget shift among BL below 20%, detected by the JS during monitoring of the submitted JPR, the JS may agree with the LP to accept the JPR, provided that the LP enters also a budget shift into Jems before submitting subsequent JPRs. Alternatively, the JS may revert the JPR to the LP or to the FLC for a related correction or it may reject it, as the exceed expenditures may be reported in subsequent JPRs, upon budget change in Jems .

budget flexibility thresholds. Thus, any expenditure carried out at PP level, exceeding the overall budget availability of the respective PP, as well as the allocation per BL should be duly monitored and checked by the LP.

Partnerships should be aware that any minor change procedure has to be initiated at latest 30 days prior the project relevant reporting deadline. In case of more requests of minor budget changes, the cumulative percentage of different requests should be under the abovementioned thresholds (20%).

1.5 MAJOR CHANGES

MAJOR CHANGES include any deviation from the latest approved AF going beyond the flexibility limits applicable to “minor changes”, as detailed in the §1.4.

Any major change must be previously approved by the relevant programme bodies (MA/MC). Major changes concern the following:

- Partnership changes;
- Budget change between partnership;
- Budget changes, exceeding level of flexibility allowed;
- Changes in the project’s duration;
- Changes in the content and/or activities of the Project.

In case of major changes, the LP must submit the Request for amendment of the Application Form to the JS at the latest **30 days before the end of the implementation period**. Please note that the modification procedure takes some time, therefore the LP should carefully assess, whether a modification request is needed.

We advise all LPs to change as little as possible (**1-2 times is acceptable, more needs will be duly justified**), because this has a strong impact on the project performance. The JS assess the request and forward the evaluation to the MA.

1.5.1 Changes in the Partnership

The partnership is a core element of a Project/Operation, as it has been assessed in the application process and approved by **MC**, and the contribution of the LP and each PP are clearly defined³. Changes in its composition should therefore be limited as much as possible. It anyway requires the prior approval of the relevant programme bodies. However, once approved, it is effective

³ Accordingly, the change of partner functions, i.e. partners agree on a new lead partner (LP) within the same partnership, even though it must be considered only in very exceptional circumstances upon consultation of the JS, it must be regulated in the same way: a) a change request by the LP agreed with all partners (e.g. documented through meeting minutes, etc.); b) MC approval; c) change of the application form in Jems (new version); d) consensual termination of the old subsidy contract, signatures of the new subsidy contract and of the new partnership agreement.

retrospectively starting from the date when a written request⁴ was submitted to the JS.

All changes to the project partnership (a simple change in the name of a partner is not considered as a partnership change whenever the competences and legal status remain the same) require the submission of a request for major change describing the new allocation of activities and budget. The LP has also the responsibility of informing the JS without delay of the eventuality of such changes. The request for change is checked by the JS, in coordination with the NIPs where relevant; its **approval is a competence of the MC.**

In addition, the programme sets minimum requirements for the composition and number of project partners (*cf. F.S.1.1. "Strategic and performance framework" and concerned "call for proposal terms of references"*). Projects should be aware that if the minimum number of partners as well as the eligible territories involved, are no longer ensured, the MA is entitled to withdraw from the Subsidy Contract.

Changes in partnership may concern:

- the withdrawal of a partner
- the entry of a new partner

In case a **project partner withdraws** from the project, the remaining partners should undertake all possible measures to find a rapid and efficient solution to ensure the further proper implementation of the project. They should ensure that the responsibilities and project tasks of this partner are taken over by a new partner (preferably from the same country/region) or are reallocated within the existing partnership.

It should be noted that the concept of partnership change requiring the approval by the competent programme bodies refers to any change that has impact on the legal relationship within the partnership. This could be the case if a partner institution leaves the partnership and its tasks are taken over by a separate or new legal entity⁵.

In case of institutional changes where according to the national law the legal personality does not change and where all assets of the LP/PP are taken over so that a deterioration of the financial capacity of the acquiring institution is not to be expected (i.e. in cases of universal succession), prior consent by the programme bodies is not necessary. However, the LP must submit in due time related information to the MA/JS together with all documents, necessary to analyse the legal case. If the MA/JS consider the conditions stated above as not fulfilled (i.e. case of singular succession), the LP will be informed that a partnership change procedure cannot start.

When the withdrawing partner is replaced by a new incoming organization, this should be located preferably in the same country/region of the withdrawing partner and must have the necessary experience and technical, organizational and financial capacity to properly participate in the project.

⁴ As general rule, before the submission of all assessed documents through the Jems function, a written request signed by the legal representative (see annex TEMPLATE FOR PROJECT MAJOR CHANGES), with all related documents, shall be submitted by the LP to the JS. Once approved by the relevant Programme Body, the changes are effective from the date of submission of the signed formal request. In exceptional, urgent and duly justified cases, other types of written informal communication may be admitted by the Managing Authority to start a decision of the relevant Programme Body, but in these cases, changes are effective only from the date of the decision.

⁵ Even if the withdrawing institution and the new one joining the partnership are coming from the same group of organizations, a partnership change procedure has to be initiated in case both constitute, within a group, separate entities in legal terms.

Funds of the withdrawing partner become available for the new partner only after the approval of the replacement by the competent programme bodies. During the modification process, the JS and if any the NIPs, will have to perform a check on the legal status/eligibility of the new partner.

When the withdrawing partner is replaced within the existing partnership, the budget may be reallocated among the partners taking over its tasks.

When a partner leaves a partnership, it could be not replaced by any other organization (within or outside the existing partnership). In this case the activities in the workplan referring to the withdrawing partner (and the related budget) have to be excluded from the revised AF.

However, this possibility is allowed only if the concerned activities and the role of the withdrawing partner are not crucial for the project implementation and their exclusion do not have an impact on reaching the project objectives/results/outputs as planned in the approved AF. If this cannot be demonstrated, the MA has the right to terminate the project and request the return of the funds.

Finally, a combination of the above three types of partnership changes is possible, e.g. when only part of activities is taken over by a newly incoming PP and the other ones (with related budget) are either excluded or distributed within the partnership.

A project may also request the inclusion of an additional partner (without any partner withdrawal). This is in principle possible where the added value for the implementation of the project is demonstrated and according to the maximum number of partners allowed for each Operation.

Any modification to the partnership agreement (PA) has to be sent to and approved by the MA.

In case of withdrawal, the costs of the old project partner are eligible and can be co-financed until the date of its withdrawal as communicated by the Partner to the LP; the eligibility of these costs is also subject to the confirmation from the LP and assessment from the JS that the contribution of this partner can be used for the project by the remaining project partners.

Despite its withdrawal, a project partner still has the obligation of keeping all relevant files, documents and data for the audit trail (*See Factsheet 4.10 Eligibility rules*).

Obligations deriving for the Subsidy Contract and the Partnership Agreement in terms of audits, retention of supporting documents and durability of outputs, remain applicable to the withdrawing partner even if only part of the originally foreseen budget was spent.

In the framework of a request for partnership change, the LP must submit the signed project change letter with further supplementary documents, as listed below:

PARTNERSHIP CHANGE

TYPE OF CHANGE	SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS
Partner withdrawal with replacement of new partner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdrawal letter of the concerned partner (in case it has already received funds also a declaration concerning the observation of obligations deriving from the SC and PA) New Partnership Agreement signed by the new Partnership Partner Statement (Annex A) and administrative documents of the Incoming Partner, as required in the related application procedure

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of partnership (e.g. minutes of project steering committee, email confirmation etc)
Partner withdrawal with replacement of existing partner(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal letter of the concerned partner (in case it has already received funds, also a declaration concerning the observation of obligations deriving from the SC and PA) • Updated Partner Statement (Annex A) taking over activities and budget of the withdrawing partner • Acknowledgement of partnership (e.g. minutes of project steering committee, email confirmation etc) • Amendment of the PA_ Declaration signed by the LP
Partner withdrawal without any replacement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal letter of the concerned partner (in case it has already received funds, also a declaration concerning the observation of obligations deriving from the SC and PA) • Acknowledgement of partnership (e.g. minutes of project steering committee, email confirmation etc,) • LP letter focused on the new distribution of roles among the confirmed partners without compromising the project aims) • Amendment of the PA_ Declaration signed by the LP
Structural or legal status change of Partner organization (e.g. legal succession)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official documents stating the structural/legal change of the concerned organization • In case of already received funds, a declaration from the changed partner concerning the observation of obligations also related to the previous partner organization, deriving from the SC and PA • Updated Partner Statement (Annex A) • Amendment of the PA_ Declaration signed by the LP
Replacement of LP due to cause of force majeure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official note of the concerned partner explaining in detail the reasons of LP change (in case it has already received funds, also a declaration concerning the observation of obligations deriving from the SC and PA) • Acknowledgement of partnership, in which new LP is appointed (e.g. minutes of project steering committee, email confirmation etc,) • Updated Partner Statement (Annex A) taking over activities and budget of the LP, with related annexes • Submission of new SC and PA

1.5.2 Major Changes in the budget

Changes in budget are allowed as long as the **maximum amount of IPA co-financing** awarded to the operation is not exceeded and certain conditions are also fulfilled, as described below. Be aware that the IPA - cofinancing is the 80% for partners belonging to Italy and the 85% for IPA countries (Albania and Montenegro).

As described in the § 1.4.2, projects are allowed flexibility in the spending of their IPA budget up to a maximum of 20% among budget lines of the partner's total budget, as stated in the latest approved version of the AF. To this end they are requested to justify these deviations and update the AF accordingly. It remains the duty of the lead partner (LP) to monitor compliance with the above-mentioned thresholds and the overall IPA co-financing.

During the project duration, reallocations exceeding these thresholds are allowed 1-2 times at maximum, duly justified, and need an approval by the Programme bodies.

In particular budget shifts could be the following:

- a) Above 20% of the partner’s total budget shall be approved by the Managing Authority
- b) Any budget shift among partners, shall be approved by the Monitoring Committee⁶

The LP has to timely submit a request for changes to the JS and MA.⁷

In case of Small Scale Project, using only SCOs, shift among partners are possible only if:

- the transfer of the SCOs gives a reduction in the total amount of the approved project;
- the SCOs output is not already delivered (and declared in a financial statement);
- the transfers are justified by the technical and scientific implementation of the action;
- a review confirms that the amendment does not call into question the decision awarding the grant or breach the principle of equal treatment;
- each partner’s contribution to the project implementation is ensured.

When requesting a budget change, supplementary documents have to be enclosed to the signed change request, as listed in the following table:

BUDGET CHANGE

TYPE OF CHANGE	SUPPLEMENTARY DOCUMENTS
Budget shifts among budget lines above 20% of the partner’s total budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a separate justification for each altered BL (using Annex 1 template) • the updated excel tool provided by the JS for checks and monitoring issues
Budget shift among all partners compared to the approved AF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a separate justification for the budget shift and each altered BL (using Annex 1 template) • the updated excel tool provided by the JS for checks and monitoring issues • Acknowledgement of partnership (e.g. minutes of project steering committee, email confirmation etc.)
If applicable, MA budget reduction following the mid-term project review or programme decommitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement of partners with reduced IPA budget

Financial implications of a partnership change are not considered as budget change, but rather than as a consequence of the partner change.

Projects should be aware that changes to the budget allocation per period are not allowed as this is

⁶ In exceptional and duly justified cases (e.g. minor adjustments after project closure, not substantially impacting on the final balance among countries or on the project outputs), the Managing Authority may derogate from this.

⁷ Be aware that a major change of the budget may also be requested by the Managing Authority following the project de-commitment procedure, as described in annex 2

the basis for the programme spending targets towards the European Commission⁸.

It is to be noted that following the approval of a major budget change, the new budget can still benefit from the budget flexibility rules (as explained in the § 1.4.2.) in order to perform minor changes⁹.

1.5.3 Changes in the project duration

Projects should put their efforts in completing their activities successfully and within the time plan set in the AF. To this end, measures should be put in place by the LP and project partners to identify and tackle possible delays at an early stage. Projects are also requested to inform the JS in case of difficulties that may lead to significant delays in the delivery of activities (e.g. through the project reports, direct contact with the JS). If, despite this, projects are not in the position to comply with the approved end date, they may request an extension of the project duration through a request for changes. The request for changes in project duration requires prior consultation by the JS.

Projects should be aware that extensions of project duration are limited to exceptional and well justified cases. **Any change in project duration shall be approved by the MA.**

Some limitations/ apply to the extension of project duration:

- As a general principle, the extension of a project duration **cannot exceed 12 months**. In case of Small Scale Project an extension of project duration cannot exceed 6 months.
- The extension cannot exceed the programme duration, too. Therefore, projects approved towards the end of the programme must pay particular attention to a timely delivery of their activities.
- The maximum duration of a project, including extensions, cannot be longer than 36 months for standard projects.
- Notwithstanding the above point, the latest end date for a project is **31/12/2029** and no extension of duration beyond this date shall be granted.

A request of project extension can be submitted only after project mid-term review (for standard and strategic projects) and before the project end date (as in the latest release of the approved AF). Any extension request submitted after the end of the project implementation period will be rejected.

It is strongly recommended to timely identify any potential need for prolongation and to submit the concerned project extension request **at least 60 days before** the project ending date (except in any case a justified and following term duly authorized by the MA/JS), in order to ensure a proper planning and implementation of the activities in the final phase of the operation.

The submission of the extension request of project's duration must be accompanied by an acknowledgement of the whole partnership (e.g. minutes of project steering committee, email confirmation etc.).

⁸ With reference to the budget allocation per period, with express derogation, the JS/MA can authorize budget shift per period only in exceptional and well-justified cases.

⁹ Budget shift request among budget lines (minor and major up to 20% of the partner's total budget) can be submitted by beneficiaries even after the project end date and before the final report submission, for the final settlement of the project budget, according to the relevant procedures described in the present F.S.

In case of project extension request, the LP has to produce a duly justified remodulation of the spending targets for the periods accompanied with mitigation measures, according to the rules and procedures of Section 1.5.2.

1.5.4 Changes in the project content

Basically, changes of minor entity to the content of a project (e.g. the rescheduling of activities, changes in the communication tools used, etc.) can be made by providing information and a justification on the reasons for change in the relevant Joint progress report (JPR).

In case project activities need to be modified going beyond a mere adjustment of the workplan (including additional or reduced project activities, deliverables and outputs, main characteristics of planned outputs and investments, **different locations of the investments**, project objectives and results), a formal approval by the programme bodies is necessary, through a formal request for change.

Any change of the targets for the output indicators **above 30%** shall be approved by the **MA**.

Major changes that substantially change the nature and the objective of the project (i.e. project objectives, results and main outputs assessed in the project selection procedure) require the prior approval by the **MC**.

Any content change considered as State Aid relevant within the project assessment procedure needs to be previously approved by the competent programme bodies.

The Request for content change has to include an exhaustive justification and shall be submitted on time, accompanied by a document demonstrating that the whole partnership acknowledges the modification. (e.g. minutes of the project steering committee meeting, email confirmations by partners). A retroactive approval may be granted only in exceptional and duly justified cases. In case of project's activities, outputs and/or results leading to State Aid relevance of the project, additional information may be requested to the partnership.

1.6 FINAL REQUIREMENTS

As already explained in the previous paragraphs, Major changes are to be considered as exceptional and they may be approved only in duly justified cases. This means that a major project change could be approved only if duly justified.

The request of a major modification is a complex process. Partnerships should be aware that any major change procedure should be initiated :

1. after the project mid-term review, with the exception of a request for partner change¹⁰;
2. before the project end date as indicated in the latest version of the approved AF. However, in order to ensure proper planning and implementation of activities in the final phase of the

¹⁰ Only for thematic projects, with express derogation and at any time, the JS/MA can authorize major modifications and changes for exceptional and well-justified cases before the mid-term-review.

project, it is strongly recommended to submit any major change request at latest 60 days prior to the project ending date.

All changes in the table below are subject to a request for changes procedure. As a first step, the LP has to timely inform the JS via e-mail of the upcoming project change. This is checked by the JS in coordination with the NIPs where relevant (i.e. in case of integration of a new partner). If the proposed changes are deemed acceptable in principle, the following steps are dealt through the programme electronic monitoring system (Jems).

In duly justified cases, project partners may request to the Joint Secretariat and Managing Authority an adaption to specific circumstances of these procedures, which needs to be agreed upon.

Type of change	Details	Programme Body in charge of approval
Administrative changes	//	Notification to JS/MA
Budget flexibility	Up to 20%	Notification to JS/MA
Partnership changes	//	MC
Budget change of the partner's total budget	Above 20%	MA
	Budget change between Partners	MC
Changes in project duration	up to max. 12 months, with exception of SSP (6 months)	MA
Content changes	Workplan changes and targets for the output indicators above 30%	MA
	substantial content changes	MC

All these changes require prior approval, and, once approved by the relevant Programme Body, they will become effective retrospectively starting from the date when the written request^{11*} was submitted to the JS.

¹¹ As general rule, before the submission of all assessed documents through the Jems function, a written request signed by the legal representative (see annex TEMPLATE FOR PROJECT MAJOR CHANGES) shall be submitted to the JS, including relevant documents. Once approved by the relevant Programme Body, the changes are effective from the date of submission of the signed formal request. In exceptional, urgent und duly justified cases, other types of written informal communication may be admitted by the Managing Authority to start a decision of the relevant Programme Body, but in these cases, changes are effective only from the date of the decision.

Programme reference documents

- Subsidy contract
- Partnership agreement
- SA Programme Manual
 - Factsheet 1.1 Programme strategic framework
 - Factsheet 4.1 Reporting Procedure
 - Factsheet 4.6 State Aid
 - Factsheet 4.10 Eligibility rules
 - Factsheet 4.10.1 Simplified cost options guidance
 - Factsheet Jems manual project modification
- Annex 1_template for project major changes (word file)
- Annex 2_Template Request for budget changes using the correct option, as specified by instructions provided within the file (xls file)