4.REPORTING: THE BUSINESS CARD OF THE PROJECT

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During project life, the Lead Beneficiary (LB) has to inform the MA on project progress (GC art. 6) by means of regular reporting. Reporting aims to update on relevant progress in project implementation and demonstrate whether or not the indicative plan for outputs and activities completion is on track with respect to the approved project annexed to the GC.

The GC foresees three types of reports: **Progress**, **Interim** and **Final**. Each report has a specific goal AND a **narrative** and a **financial** section. In addition, a communication on project starting is expected after 3 months from the signature of the GC.

The following table, based on the GC, provides a synthetic overview of the deadlines set on the basis of the starting date of implementation of the GC:

Type of the report	*Months covered by the report - Reporting period*	*Deadline for submission*
Communication on project starting	1-3	3 months after the signature of the GC
Progress	1-6	10 working days after the end of the reporting period
Interim	1 - 12	3 months after the end of the reporting period
Progress	13-18	10 working days after the end of the reporting period
Interim	13 - 24	3 months after the end of the reporting period
Progress	25-30	10 working days after the end of the reporting period
Final	25-36	3 months after the end of the reporting period

The project submits a "Progress" report each semester, then an "Interim" report each year and a "Final" report by the end of the project implementation period. All reports provide narrative and financial information.

Only Interim and Final reports are supported by auditor's reports (Expenditure Verification Reports – EVR). (GC. Art.7.2 b). Reports are addressed to the JTS/MA via the Management Information System (MIS).

Key issues:

- ✓ Who is in charge of the reporting? The LB is responsible for reporting on behalf of the partnership. This means that the LB is expected to check the quality of the information provided by the partners, both in terms of content (narrative report, annexed tables, outputs/deliverables/other supporting documents) and in terms of financial reporting. The LB shall draft an integrated report, based on the contributions of all partners;

- ✓ Reporting forms (progress report, interim report, final report) are consistent with the approved project (GC Annex I) and are available in the MIS. See in Annex 4.1 the Narrative Courtesy Form with Annexes. They are focused on the collection of information and data in relation to results, outputs and their indicators as well as activities. You will upload in the MIS outputs/deliverables/other supporting documents. Use files´ names related to the contents of the file. E.g. a file containing the minutes of a steering committee meeting should be numbered and titled according to the timeframe of the project activities implementation "1_SC_minutes_Beirut_02-03.05.2019";

- ✓ Cross border transversal result indicators at Programme level. In addition to project content-based information, projects are expected to contribute to two cross-border transversal result indicators, which are: "New jobs created" as a result of the projects initiatives and "Increased participation and visibility of cross-border cooperation". Both include specific information and supporting documents to be collected;

- ✓ Languages. Reporting has to be completed in the language of the project: English or French. If outputs are drafted in a different language, a brief description in one of the project languages is requested within the progress or interim narrative report;

- ✓ Clarifications on reporting have to be provided within 15 calendar days. Different deadlines may be agreed on a case-by-case basis.

4.1. REPORTING AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (MIS)

As anticipated above, the Programme is supported by a dedicated Management and Information System (MIS) as an IT interface between the actors involved in the

Programme management and the LBs. The final scope is to reduce hard copies production and strive to a "zero paper" approach.

The MIS is linked to the Programme web site as further described in "Chapter. 10 Communication".

The MIS is the IT software designed to support three functions: results-based approach, project management, and communication providing all needed forms listed below:

Result Based Management (RBM):

- Analysis of the outputs (and activities) reported providing a comparison between the scheduled time and the deadlines initially set in the overview of the outputs and activities of the approved application form;

- Support to decision-making process at project and Programme level including information on potential impact, performances, risks and corrective measures, as the case may be;

- Analysis of results achieved and financial resources flows at work package level by comparing the level of expenditures and the foreseen budget at cost category and partners levels;

- Review of the expected results and output indicators' progress

Project Management:

- Reports, Expenditure Verification Reports (EVR) and outputs/other supporting documents uploading. Availability of template and check list for the Expenditure Verification Report (EVR) that auditors will have to complete and sign and for payment request to be completed and signed (digitally when possible) by beneficiaries;

- The management of "Major and Minor amendments": template for the request by the Lead Beneficiaries, requests for clarifications (traced in the Communication section) functions for validation and creation of an approval or denial document to be signed and archived in the system. Template of an addendum to the contract automatically filled in with the validated changes;

- Alert system that warns on the approach of the deadlines established by the Grant Contract for the presentation of the reports by the beneficiaries and track record of all procedural phases from submission to payment. The status of the process will be available for the beneficiaries at any step;

- Management of requests of clarification sent to projects that will allow to record the date on which the request is notified with consequent automatic suspension of the procedural phase and the date on which the clarifications are received;

- Management of cases of "Suspension & Termination" of the projects according to the deadlines defined by the contract: template for the request by the Beneficiaries, exchange of communication with the MA, automatic notification of the final decisions of "Suspension & Termination".

Communication:

- Messaging platform between JTS officers and Lead Beneficiary;

- Recording of all key milestones achieved (project life card);

- Availability of the latest versions of documents sent/received (Progress Reports, major changes, etc.);

- Sending automatic emails informing JTS/LBs on monitoring tasks.

A dedicated manual for using the MIS will be drafted before-hands describing the functionalities provided by the system.

Key issues:

- ✓ What does the LB is expected to report? The report should provide factual-based evidences that the project delivers outputs and results described in GC Annex I, follows the payments plan according to the GC and contributes to the Programme indicators set in JOP;

- ✓ Respect the deadlines set in the GC, by including "data collection for reporting" in your weekly tasks: this will help you respect reporting timing and submit a complete and coherent dossier;

- ✓ Get familiar with the system. Familiarize with the Management Information System (MIS), templates and annexes since the beginning of project´s implementation: this will help you to collect appropriate data, information and supporting documents throughout the project lifetime. To facilitate information collection, courtesy forms can be downloaded from MIS in order to share them among partners;

- ✓ Completeness of information. Pay attention to the completeness of the information and data you are providing: the goal of the reports is to "speak" for your project. Bear in mind that the report has to be approved by the MA for the necessary payments, it is your interest to secure the completeness of the provided information;

4.2. PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress reports allow on-going monitoring by the MA/JTS. Their goal is to provide an overview of each project progresses, in terms of achieved results, outputs delivered and lessons learnt.

Progress narrative reports

Progress reports are to be submitted after month 6, month 18 and month 30 (depending on the duration of your project), within 10 working days after the end of the reporting period. They cover the previous six-month period. In case the duration of your project is 30 months, the last report will be an interim report instead of a six-month report. A courtesy form template is provided to facilitate information and data collection.

Progress financial report

The progress financial reports are based on the template set up in the MIS as "**Summary report on expenses**", in order to effectively monitor the expenses incurred by cost categories, work packages and outputs for the concerned implementation period. Information on the expenditures trends will be compared to the approved budget.

Both the LBs and partners will fill in the above mentioned templates through the MIS. LBs will also need to "validate" the report on expenses. Since this operation may take time, it is highly recommended that the LBs monitor on a regular basis (at least on a monthly basis), the input of the financial information provided by each partner. This will also allow the LB to promptly detect potential delays and take corrective measures. The progress report will be processed and approved by the JTS. The JTS will have 45 calendar days to finalize its technical assessment with the possibility to suspend this deadline in case of request for clarification. If no feedback has been given within 45 calendar days, the report will be considered as approved. In the event of requests for clarification, the 45 calendar days will be suspended up to a maximum of 90 calendar days. If no clarification is received by the JTS, the report is considered as rejected.

4.3. INTERIM REPORTS

Interim Narrative reports

Interim reports shall be submitted after month 12, month 24 and month 36 of project implementation (depending on the duration of your project), within 3 months after the end of the reporting period. They cover the previous six-month period. The interim **narrative** report has the same structure as the progress narrative report.

Interim Financial reports

The Interim financial report is composed of three (3) templates:

1. **Summary report on expenses** (see Progress financial report)
2. **Expenditure verification report (EVR):** this is the document issued by the auditors – appointed by the Lead Beneficiary and partners - for the verification of expenses. (GC. 6.6). In addition to the EVR of the Lead Beneficiary and partners, the Auditor of the Lead Beneficiary will draft a consolidated report, including the results of the verification carried out by all auditors. Annex 4.2.1 to 4.2.7 TESIM model forms. The auditors will access to MIS in order to:
   - Verify the analytical report expenditure by expense, indicating for each individual expense, the compliance or not, the amount of ineligible expenses and the reasons for non-eligibility;
   - Verify the compliance with the rules by completing the checklists (which will be completed directly online);
   - Process the model forms online as a final result of the verification.
3. **Request of payment:** the MIS will generate the format by the end of the reporting circuit (Annex 4.3)[1]

4.4. FINAL REPORT

Final Narrative report

In addition to the interim narrative report for the last 6-month of project, you shall submit a Final Narrative Report covering the entire project implementation period. (Annex 4.4). The final report provides a global overview of the achieved results and impact of the project, the added value in terms of cross-border cooperation, project sustainability and contribution to the objectives of the Programme, including cross-cutting issues (non-discrimination principle in all activities; environmental sustainability; gender equality) (see per.2.6 of the JOP).

Final Financial report

The Final Financial report is composed of the same three (3) templates of the Financial Interim report, such as:

1. Summary report on expenses (see Progress)
2. Expenditure verification report (EVR)
3. Request of payment

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[1] To be provided through the MIS

4.5. REPORTS FLOWS AND APPROVAL

It is important to have a clear picture of the reports flow within the partnership and within the MA.

Flows within the partnership.

For the Narrative Reports, the LB is in charge of explaining to each partner the reporting process, collect partners' contributions and consolidate the reports to be uploaded in the MIS.

With respect to the Financial Reports, the LB fills in the MIS its own report and has it checked always in the MIS by its auditor. The selected Auditor checks the documentation and issues a "LB Compliance note" for the Lead Beneficiary financial report.

Each partner fills in the MIS its financial report. His/her selected Auditor checks the documentation and releases a "Partners Compliance note" directly in the MIS.

The MIS processes an "Overall report" and then elaborates an "Overall Compliance note". Both documents have to be approved by the Auditor of the LB. This note is the pre-requisite for the payment process.

Flows within the JTS/MA.

Reports and supporting documents are uploaded directly in the MIS, while MIS automatically generates EVR forms. Once uploaded, reports will be assessed by the JTS. The JTS will have 45 calendar days to finalize its technical assessment with the possibility to suspend this deadline in case of request for clarification. If no feedback has been given within 45 calendar days, the report will be considered as approved. In the event of requests for clarification, the 45 calendar days will be suspended up to a maximum of 90 calendar days. If no clarification has been received, or if on the clarifications are not sufficient to finalize the assessment, the report is considered as rejected.

The outcomes of the technical check of the JTS may be:

- The reports are approved;
- The reports are not approved;
- The report is approved with financial cuts. This scenario implies: underperformed activities; results have not been achieved in terms of quality and quantity, lack of respect of the budgetary constraints. For example, a project foresees to buy a buoy (activity) for the production of environmental data (output). If the buoy is installed at the very end of the implementation period so that the environmental data are limited and of no practical use, the

total cost of the buoy may be considered ineligible along with other related costs (i.e. Human Resources in charge for WP implementation).

If the report is approved by the JTS, the MA will then process it, in order to define the accepted expenditures and the amount of further pre-financing (or the final balance). In particular, the Authorizing unit of the MA will have 30 calendar days with the possibility to suspend this period only once, and for not longer than 30 calendar days. Within its assessment, the Authorizing Unit may request supporting documents and/or clarification to the LB or to the Control Contact Point of the Country to which the request refers to. If no clarification has been received, or if on the clarifications are not sufficient to finalize the assessment, the report may be rejected.

The final step (payment) will be carried out in 15 calendar days by the Payment and Accounting Unit.

Finally, the LB will receive the outcomes of the assessment including:

- a short summary of the quality assessment including recommendations or corrective actions to be taken, if any;
- the list of accepted expenditures;
- the list of non-eligible expenditures;
- the amount of further pre-financing to be received.

Annexes

4.1: Narrative Report template with annexes

4.2.1 to 4.2.7: TESIM: Auditors Contract and Terms of References. EVRs formats and Procedures

4.3 Request for payment[2]

4.4 Final report[3]

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[2] *Ibidem*

[3] *Ibidem*