



Date 08/05/2020 Reference N° 183523 Class: B.050.25.1
Prat. Fasc. Annexes

Subject: Interreg V-A IT-HR CBC Programme. Exceptional procedures to face COVID-19 restrictions.

To the Lead Partners of
Standard Projects

Dear Lead Partners,

due to the emergency situation caused by COVID-19 and to the resulting difficulties that projects are facing and could face as a consequence of restrictions put in place, it has been deemed necessary to take some specific measures to support the beneficiaries of Italy-Croatia CBC Programme. The measures adopted has been approved by the Monitoring Committee via WP 5-2020, closed on 5th May.

One of the most evident and immediate effect of the emergency is the cancellation of travels and events for which the payment of non-recoverable advance expenses by the projects partners could have occurred. We already communicated to the Standard projects' LPs that, based on the rules stated in Factsheet 6 with reference to **Travel and accommodation costs**, the MA considers the situation related to COVID-19 as "**an exceptional and duly justified case**" where **public authorities emitted orders, decrees or regulations** making impossible to reach and/or organize a planned event and, therefore, it shall be treated accordingly.

However, additional and unforeseen effects could arise in the near future, therefore an extra specific clause has been added to the Factsheet 6, named "**Force majeure and eligibility of costs**" (C.5.8) stating "Expenses paid in advance related to activities cancelled due to *force majeure*, including the COVID-19 health emergency, will be considered as eligible if they are not recoverable according to existing contractual terms and if duly documented".

For travels and events falling within the above cases, the following prescriptions apply:

1) Travel and accommodation costs:

In case of cancellation of the mission or payment of a surcharge for the modification of the timing for reasons linked to COVID-19 emergency or other *force majeure* contingencies, the costs of travels and accommodation are eligible, provided they are duly justified.

2) Event costs:

Area for Human Capital, Culture and Programming of European Funds
Directorate for Joint Programming
Organizational Unit Italy-Croatia Managing Authority
Rio Tre Ponti - Dorsoduro 3494/A - 30123 Venezia - Tel. 041/2791781 - Fax 041/2791790
italia.croazia@pec.regione.veneto.it



In order to consider expenses related to the organization of events canceled due to COVID-19 emergency or other *force majeure* contingencies as eligible, it is essential to provide to the first level controllers all necessary evidence demonstrating that the following conditions are met:

- a) the expenses refer to an activity foreseen in the project AF or authorized by the JS/MA;
- b) the expenses refer to an activity that has been canceled or not attended - if organized by third parties - due to the need to minimize the risks associated with COVID-19 following a travel ban expressed by public institutions or due to other verifiable *force majeure* contingencies;
- c) the expenses have been paid by the beneficiary;
- d) all possible means for obtaining a refund have been undertaken by the beneficiary and evidence is provided (for example: copies of the communications sent, copies of the web screens where information on the refund is provided, etc.);
- e) evidence of any refund / partial refund received is provided.

Other possible situations will be examined on a case-by-case basis.

Moreover, considered that the COVID-19 epidemic and subsequent lockdown is having an impact on working methods and is imposing heavy limitations in people's mobility, we adopt some flexibility to the Programme procedures as long as restrictions apply:

1. **Project Staff costs.**

During the lockdown period, project staff costs will be considered as eligible even if, due to the COVID-19 emergency, the work activities are carried out in smart working modality in a location outside the Programme area.

2. **Reporting and certification of expenditures.**

In order not to slow down reporting due to impediments to merely formal obligations, the use of digital signature is encouraged whenever possible; however, missing signature on declarations and not signed/stamped documents (e.g. job description, lists of staffs, timesheets etc.) as well as FLC check lists and CoVE provided by partners or FLC will be exceptionally accepted, during FLC and JS verification, if accompanied by an email from the signatories listing the concerned documents and including the commitment to provide signed/stamped documents asap; in case of centralized FLC, the e-mail for missing FLC signatures can be sent by FLC coordinator. Signed/stamped documents will have to be provided when possible, as soon as restrictions for the COVID-19 emergency are over, in any case within 60 days from the AFR submission or upon request of any Programme body.



3. FLC on the spot visits.

On-the-spot visits which were already planned during the health emergency period and cannot be rescheduled at a later stage would not be considered compulsory for the Programme during the COVID-19 lockdown / restrictions. The FLC should get proof of the implementation by other means (photos, web-meetings, etc) and include a comment on the FLC certificate; on the spot visits will be performed only if deemed strictly necessary, and in compliance to national/local restrictions. In case of doubt regarding the project implementation, the FLC will send communications to JS/MA.

4. Payment claims and Progress reports.

- Progress report (PR) and Application for Reimbursement (AfR) submission deadlines will be kept, but flexibility will be applied: the MA will consider if overall or on a case-by-case basis extensions will be necessary.
- The use of digital signature is encouraged whenever possible; however, in case the LP cannot sign a PR or AfR, the concerned PR or AfR will be accepted not signed, accompanied by an email of the signatory for JS verification. The signed PR or AfR shall be sent in .pdf format to the MA certified e-mail italia.croatia@pec.regione.veneto.it when possible, as soon as restrictions for the COVID-19 emergency are over, in any case within 60 days from the AfR submission.

5. Projects modifications during / linked to COVID-19 lockdown / restrictions.

Exceptionally, major changes **exclusively linked to COVID-19 lockdown / restrictions**, resulting in a project extension will be admitted, in duly justified cases, up to 12 months; in any case, the latest end date for a project is 31 December 2022 and no extension of duration beyond this date shall be granted.

For major change requests to be submitted via the SIU during COVID-19 restrictions, the use of digital signature is encouraged whenever possible; however, in case the LP cannot sign the major change request, this will be accepted not signed, accompanied by an email of the signatory for JS verification. The signed request shall be sent in .pdf format to the MA certified e-mail italia.croatia@pec.regione.veneto.it asap; the Subsidy Contract amendment would be signed when possible.



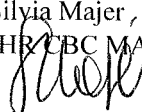
REGIONE DEL VENETO

giunta regionale

These measures apply until May, 31st 2020 with possible extension and are aimed at encouraging the continuity of the projects implementation, ensuring regular cash flows and avoiding any type of suspension of projects activities and expenses reporting.

Please bring the measures introduced to face the difficulties resulting from the COVID-19 emergency to the attention of your PPs and FLCs.

We thank you for your attention and we send our best regards,

Silyia Majer,
IT-HR/CBC/MA


Reference:

JS.Italy-Croatia@regione.veneto.it
041/2793120

Area for Human Capital, Culture and Programming of European Funds
Directorate for Joint Programming
Organizational Unit Italy-Croatia Managing Authority
Rio Tre Ponti - Dorsoduro 3494/A – 30123 Venezia - Tel. 041/2791781 – Fax 041/2791790
italia.croazia@pec.regione.veneto.it