



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
 REGIONAL AND URBAN POLICY
 European Territorial Cooperation, Macro-regions, Interreg and Programme Implementation I
Interreg Cross-Border Cooperation Internal Borders

Brussels
 REGIO.DDG.D1-D.2/MZ

Dear Ms Bouziani

Subject: COVID outbreak- Force majeure- Cancellation of events- Eligibility of expenditure

Thank you for your mail of 12/03/2020 by which you communicate the letter sent to the national partners of the INTERREG programmes (n°30075/MA1532). By this letter you ask for comments about 1) the eligibility of expenditure paid or due to be paid by beneficiaries (or participants to) for the organisation (or participation to) of events, fairs and meetings cancelled due to COVID19 outbreak and 2) the possible extension of projects by three months.

- 1) As regards the eligibility of expenditure for events cancelled after the COVID-19 outbreak, according to Article 65 (1) of Regulation (EU) 1303/2013 and Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No 1299/2013, with the exception of the eligibility rules laid down in these regulations and Regulation (EU) No 481/2014, the eligibility rules are adopted by the participating Member States in the Monitoring Committee. None of the abovementioned provisions set out EU eligibility rules on force majeure. Therefore, by virtue of Article 18(2) of Regulation (EU) 1299/2013, the Monitoring Committee of an ETC programme is allowed to adopt such rules.

A reply to this question has already been provided to the Q&A platform. In a nutshell, it is stressed that the ESIF legislative framework, including the management and control system, remains fully applicable. However, following a case-by-case assessment, the COVID19 outbreak could be considered as “force majeure”. Hence, expenditure at stake (e.g. expenses of travel or accommodation that could not be cancelled and which are not reimbursed from other sources in cases where participation in meetings or events had to be cancelled due to circumstances related to the COVID-19 outbreak, whether personal or organisational) should be regarded as

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eligible cost. In their actions related to addressing the specific circumstances due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the competent authorities should take into account the principles of proportionality, equal treatment, as well as transparency with communication measures to inform properly the beneficiaries. You can access to the platform

via: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/wikis/pages/viewpage.action?spaceKey=CORONAVIRUSRII&title=Coronavirus+Response+Investment+Initiative>

Finally, you can get inspiration from the guidelines issued on this topic by other ETC programmes, as for instance the programme “Estonia-Latvia”(<https://estlat.eu/en/for-projects/reporting>).

- 2) As regards the proposal for a three months extension for the completion of projects, as far as the programme final eligibility date of 31.12.2023 is not exceeded we do not have any objection.

Yours sincerely,

Jean-Pierre Halkin and Pascal Boijmans

Heads of REGIO D1 and REGIO D2 Units

e-signed in ARES