

PROJECT HANDBOOK

WP 6: PROJECT MANAGEMENT

MNGT 6.3: DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE PROJECT

Project Handbook is prepared for providing the optimal project management.

**Development of Regional Joint Master Program in Maritime Environmental Protection
and Management – MEP&M
Project no. 619239-EPP-1-2020-1-ME-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP**

PROJECT HANDBOOK

MNGT 6.3: Day-to-day management of the project

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation/ Acronym	Full name
AC	Actual costs
CBHE	Capacity building in the field of higher education
EACEA	Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency of the European Commission
EU	European Union
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ITR	Individual travel report
JD	Joint declaration
MEP&M	Development of Regional Joint Master Program in Maritime Environmental Protection and Management
QAB	Quality Assurance Body
PC	Partner Country
PMB	Project management board
PO	Project officer in the EACEA (assigned to the MEP&M project)
TS	Time-Sheet
UC	Unit costs
VAT	Value added tax
WP	Work package

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the Project Handbook is to facilitate day-to-day management of the project activities maintained through communication on the level of consortium, WPs, or even tasks. The communication will be via e-mail, phone, video conferences, or other means deemed suitable. In addition, the document outlines the standard procedures the project consortium will implement when delivering project reports and other deliverables with reference to the development of joint regional master (MSc) program in Maritime Environmental Protection and Management (MEP&M).

The Project Handbook is prepared by the Project Coordinator, approved by the representatives of each project Partner, and adopted by the Project Management Board (PMB). This document contributes to setting basis and guidelines for smooth and transparent coordination, as well as defining roles and responsibilities of coordinator and all Partners, reflecting the Grant Agreement, Partnership Agreements, Erasmus+ Programme Guide, and internal set of rules for coordination. The Project Handbook provides rules, templates and dynamics of the project coordination, communication, conflict resolution, reporting, and other issues. The handbook might be updated whenever necessary. For the avoidance of doubt, the Grant Agreement and Partnership Agreement take precedence over this document.

The structure of the document is as follows. In section 2 are presented management structures and responsibilities at the consortium level. The details on the work packages and deliverables are given in section 3. Communication methodologies and financial management rules and procedures are reported in sections 4 and 5, respectively. Reporting and report obligations between Partners and coordinator are specified in section 6, while the project risk management framework is given in section 7. List of documents/templates for the reporting are provided in Annex I.

2. MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Specific objectives of the MEP&M project were defined as well as a corresponding set of activities. In this way, the consortium ensured that the activities are aligned with the needs of each PC HEI and their perspective to make a master program sustainable. This project consortium have chosen an approach that is consisting of qualitative and quantitative methods to achieve the following goals:

- Developing and accreditation of new master program to address the long-term needs in specific issues and challenges of coastal and marine environmental protection and management in South Adriatic and Ionian seas. An overview of MSc programs in field of MEP&M at EU HEIs will be performed with teaching methodologies implemented for such programs. A Guideline will be developed with detailed instructions on developing curricula with teaching, research and practical knowledge and skills for new MSc program, based upon previously delivered GAP analysis. This will ensure that all the best practices from EU will be used to meet the needs of PC HEIs, and that prepared master program curricula and course catalogues will be synchronized with relevant national and international legislation and strategies in field of marine environmental protection.
- Capacity building of PC HEIs to support new MSc program will be performed. Sophisticated e-learning platform and e-books will be purchased and installed at PC HEIs to support new teaching and learning methodologies through distance learning process. Know-how transfer to teaching staff of PC HEIs' will be performed through tailored trainings by Partners from EU HEIs that are highly experienced and already engaged in numerous MSc programs in the area of MEP&M and using new teaching and learning methodologies for e-learning.
- Creating a website of the project and redesigning regular PC HEIs website with aim to enhance networking among PC HEIs, governmental institutions and stakeholders from Blue economy sector in order to act regionally in order to prevent and cope with consequences of global climate change and local/regional marine pollution.

Main decision-making body is Project Management Board (PMB) specified in Table 1, consisting of the representatives of all Partners and officially appointed at the Kick-off meeting. Each WP has a leader. Decision-making will be based on 2/3 of PMB members. In case of drop-out of a crucial team member, PMB will appoint a substitute among existing members, or decide upon a proposal of a new member by the respective Partner.

PMB will cooperate closely with Quality Assurance body (QAB), and also utilize the Internal Quality and Monitoring Plan and quality templates. PMB will be in charge of solving any possible minor issues and major conflicts, via e-mail or at PMB meetings, where timeslot will be dedicated to these issues.

Conflict resolution will be based on recognized conflict resolution models. PMB will be in charge of providing maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the budget expenditure. PMB will discuss and review the progress of project activities, approve deliverables, make decisions and agree on any risk contingency measures.

Table 1. Members of the Project Management Board (PMB)

PP	Institution	Name	E-mail address
1	University of Montenegro	Prof. Dr. Danilo Nikolić	dannikol@t-com.me
2	Aleksander Moisiu University of Durres	Prof. As. Dr. Osman Metalla	o.metalla@gmail.com
3	University 'Ismail Qemali' Vlore	Prof. As. Kristofor Lapa	kristoforlapa@gmail.com
4	University of Ljubljana	Marko Papić	Marko.Papic@uni-lj.si
5	Université Côte d'Azur	Prof. Dr. Srdjan Redzepagic	Srdjan.REDZEPAGIC@univ-cotedazur.fr
6	University of Cadiz	Prof. Dra. Ana Macías Bedoya	ana.macias@uca.es
7	General Maritime Directorate	MSc Capt. Tomor Harizi	tomor.harizi@dpdetare.gov.al
8	Nature and Environmental Protection Agency	Marko Radović	marko.radovic@epa.org.me
9	Ecological Center DOLPHIN	Ljilja Radunović	ecodelfinkotor@gmail.com

During the Kick-off meeting, the QAB was established (Table 2), a body responsible for overseeing the implementation of all project activities and cooperating with the PMB. It consists of one member of each consortium Partner. It's a direct support to the PMB in monitoring and assessing the quality of the project and its results and development of quality assurance plan. Activities of QAB will be spread throughout project lifetime. Report will be disseminated and incorporated into the general overview report.

Table 2. Members of the Quality Assurance Body (QAB)

PP	Institution	Name	E-mail address
1	University of Montenegro	MSc Radmila Gagić	radmilag@ucg.ac.me
2	Aleksander Moisiu University of Durres	Dr. Eli Vyshka	eli_vyshka@yahoo.it
3	University 'Ismail Qemali' Vlore	MSc Erald Aliko	eraldaliko@yahoo.it
4	University of Ljubljana	Miha Lebič	Miha.Lebic@uni-lj.si
5	Université Côte d'Azur	Madonna Lamazian	madonna.lamazian@univ-cotedazur.fr
6	University of Cadiz	Prof. Dra. Ana Macías Bedoya	ana.macias@uca.es
7	General Maritime Directorate	MSc Markela Kurti	markela.kurti@dpdetare.gov.al
8	Nature and Environmental Protection Agency	Milena Bataković	milena.batakovic@epa.org.me
9	Ecological Center DOLPHIN	Žarko Lj. Radulović	ecodelfinkotor@gmail.com

Some of the Coordinator's specific responsibilities are:

- Regular/daily administrative and financial management of the project.
- Communicate with EACEA on behalf of the Partners.

- Inform the Partners of any relevant communication exchanged with the EACEA.
- Inform the Partners of any changes connected to the project or to the Grant Agreement, or of any event likely to substantially affect the implementation of the action.
- Inform EACEA of any change of any of the Partners or of any event likely to affect or delay the implementation of the action.
- Submit reports to EACEA, and subsequently send copies to the Partners, as well as copies of any feedback letters received from EACEA following report assessment and field monitoring visits.
- Provide all necessary documents and information in the events of audits and evaluations, as well as in all other situations when required by the EACEA.
- Provide a signed copy of each Partnership Agreement to the EACEA within six (6) months of the signature of the Grant Agreement.

Some of the Partners' specific responsibilities are:

- Inform the Coordinator of any change in their legal, financial, technical, and organisational or ownership situation and of any change in their names, addresses or legal representatives.
- Inform the Coordinator of any event likely to substantially affect or delay the implementation of the action, as well as of any important deviation of the project, including the replacement of their contact persons or other engaged persons (the Partners have to ask the Coordinator for a prior approval for modification of project activities and budget items).
- Prepare and submit reports to the Coordinator, as defined by the Partnership Agreement.
- Submit in due time to the Coordinator all necessary documents and information in the events of audits and evaluations, as well as any other information or documents it may require and which are necessary for the management of the project.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, virtual, video/Zoom/Meet/Skype conferences may be organised, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, if needed, for decision making purposes. Also, all WP meetings will be used for the purpose of coordination meetings. After each meeting, minutes will be prepared and approved by the PMB.

Associate Partners in the project are:

- Portonovi Marina Management Company from Montenegro (Business sector - SME enterprise). Role in WP4 and WP5: Support the idea through providing recommendations and feedback on the quality of gained results as a stakeholder, as well as active participation in dissemination and exploitation of outputs and outcomes.
- Istituto Technico Superiore per la Logistica GE.IN.LOGISTIC from Italy (Technical Institute Foundation for higher education). Role in WP4 and WP5: Providing competence-based learning methodologies and fully exploiting digital technologies. Support the efficient implementation of transversal activities.
- Students' Parliament of the University of Montenegro from Montenegro (NGO). Role in WP5: Providing strong relationships between UoM and students/graduates aiming to contribute substantial impacts on project success and sustainability.
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Vlore from Albania. Role in WP4 and WP5: Support the idea through providing recommendations and feedback on the quality of gained results as a stakeholder, as well as active participation in dissemination and exploitation of outputs and outcomes.

3. WORK PACKAGES AND DELIVERABLES

The work plan consists of 6 work packages (WPs), classified into common "horizontal" activities involving all Partners, and "vertical" activities that regroup expert Partners in the different sub-domains (Table 3).

Table 3. Work packages and related deliverables

Activity no.	Title	Estimated end date
WP1	State of the art on Maritime Environmental Protection and Management	
1.1	Overview of MSc programs in field of MEP&M at EU HEIs	15-05-2021
1.2	GAP analysis	15-08-2021
1.3	Reporting on actions and model for introduction of new joint interdisciplinary MSc program in MEP&M in English language	15-12-2021
WP2	Development and implementation of master degree program	
2.1	Development of master program curricula	15-06-2022
2.2	Development of teaching materials and methodology	15-11-2022
2.3	Development of e-lectures	15-04-2023
2.4	Accreditation of master program	15-03-2023
2.5	Start-up and self-evaluation of master program	14-01-2024
WP3	Capacity Building through staff training and equipment purchase	
3.1	Procurement of equipment and e-books	15-03-2022
3.2	Technical staff training for the new equipment	15-09-2022
3.3	Redesign of English web sites of Montenegrin and Albanian HEIs	15-01-2024
3.4	Know-how transfer to teaching staff related to the MEPM	15-09-2022
3.4.1	<i>Know-how transfer to teaching staff related to marine and coastal pollution and emission of GHG</i>	15-08-2021
3.4.2	<i>Know-how transfer to teaching staff related to climate change and marine pollution effects on marine ecosystems</i>	15-12-2021
3.4.3	<i>Know-how transfer to teaching staff related to international laws on climate change and marine pollution</i>	15-03-2022
3.4.4	<i>Know-how transfer to teaching staff related to the environmental management</i>	15-06-2022
3.4.5	<i>Know-how transfer related to organizational and procedural aspects of online/blended learning courses development as well as innovative teaching and learning methods using e-learning techniques</i>	15-09-2022
WP4	Quality Control and Monitoring	
4.1	Establishment of Quality Assurance (QA) body	15-02-2021
4.2	Development and implementation of Internal Quality Control and Monitoring Plan	14-01-2024
4.3	External Quality Control and Evaluation	14-01-2024
4.4	Impact Analysis	14-01-2024
WP5	Dissemination and Exploitation of Project Results	

5.1	Development and implementation of dissemination and exploitation plans	14-01-2024
5.2	Website of the project and social media accounts	14-01-2024
5.3	Dissemination products and materials	14-01-2024
5.4	Dissemination and exploitation events	14-01-2024
5.5	Development of exploitation roadmap	14-01-2024
5.6	Exploring possibilities for continuation of the cooperation with the EU partners	14-01-2024
WP6	Project Management	
6.1	Establishment of Project management structures	14-03-2021
6.2	Project meetings	14-01-2024
6.3	Day-to-day management of the project	14-01-2024
6.4	Periodic and final reports to EACEA	14-01-2024
6.5	External financial control	14-01-2024

For each WP there is a lead institution which is responsible for the overall progress of the respective WP (Table 4). On behalf of the institution, WP leader manages the WP team and tasks, ensuring the performance of activities and achievement of objectives within deadlines and budget limits. WP leader submits to the Coordinator the required information and reports related to realization of WP. The list of the contact persons for each WP are presented in Tables 5-9.

Table 4. WP Leader representative

WP	Institution	Name	E-mail address
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5	University 'Ismael Qemali' Vlore	Suard Alizoti	sudi82al@yahoo.com
2	University of Ljubljana	Marko Papić	Marko.Papic@uni-lj.si
1	Université Côte d'Azur	Prof. Dr. Srdjan Redzepagic	Srdjan.REDZEPAGIC@univ-cotedazur.fr
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Table 5. Contact person for WP1

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Table 6. Contact person for WP2

PP	Institution	Name	E-mail address
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4	University of Ljubljana	Marko Papić	Marko.Papic@uni-lj.si
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PP	Institution	Name	E-mail address
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Table 8. Contact person for WP4

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4	University of Ljubljana	Marko Papić	Marko.Papic@uni-lj.si
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6	University of Cadiz	Prof. Dra. Ana Macías Bedoya	ana.macias@uca.es
7	General Maritime Directorate	MSc Capt Lorenc Rexhepaj	lorenc.rexhepaj@dpdetare.gov.al
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Table 9. Contact person for WP5

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2	Aleksander Moisiu University of Durres	Mrs. Aurela Cara	aurela.cara01@gmail.com
3	University 'Ismail Qemali' Vlore	Suard Alizoti	suard.alizoti82@gmail.com
4	University of Ljubljana	Marko Papić	Marko.Papic@uni-lj.si
5	Université Côte d'Azur	Christophe Mocquet	christophe.mocquet@univ-cotedazur.fr
6	University of Cadiz	Prof. Dra. Ana Macías Bedoya	ana.macias@uca.es
7	General Maritime Directorate	MSc Brunilda Çoti	brunilda.coti@dpdetare.gov.al
8	Nature and Environmental Protection Agency	Aleksandar Božović	aleksandar.bozovic@epa.org.me
9	Ecological Center DOLPHIN	Ljilja Radunović	ecodelfinkotor@gmail.com

4. COMMUNICATION

4.1. Communication with EACEA

Any communication with EACEA will be done only by the Coordinator. Only in exceptional and/or duly justified circumstances, the EACEA will enter into correspondence with other project Partners.

Any written communication by ordinary post to the EACEA must be addressed to the Head of Unit, according to the article I.7.2 of the Grant Agreement.

In order to implement the supervision and to provide necessary assistance, the EACEA assigned a Project Officer (PO) to the MEP&M project. Any electronic communication to the EACEA must be sent to the e-mail address of the PO and to the functional mailbox EACEA-EPLUS-CBHE-PROJECTS@ec.europa.eu (the purpose of this mailbox is to ensure a centralized monitoring of the correspondence, as well as a follow-up of the message in the absence of the PO).

In case the Coordinator needs some explanations, it can address also the National Erasmus+ Office prior to addressing the EACEA. Partners can also consult the National Erasmus+ Offices in their countries.

4.2. Internal and external communication

Day-to-day communication at the consortium level will be based on emails. Emails will be sent to all Partners, with individual reminders if needed. Mailing lists were created and delivered to the Partners. The virtual applications for the meetings will be used during the project lifetime. PMB meetings will be organized in accordance to the progress of the tasks and work plan.

Open online platform will be mainly used for File storage and as the other organizational tool. It is integrated into the project website. All Partners are added to the project platform. It is used for sharing working documents, project management information, working documents of deliverables, and supporting documents. Each partner will propose an administrative person for the File storage platform.

Within the communication materials as well as other project publication contain the following acknowledgment: “The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein”.

4.3. Website and social media platforms

The website of the project is available at www.mepm.ucg.ac.me. The website will be dedicated for the presentation of the project. Social media accounts of MEP&M project will be accessible via the website (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn).

5. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

5.1. Financial relations/roles among project Partners

The Coordinator prepares the requests for payment to be sent to the EACEA, is the sole recipient of grant instalments from EACEA, manages the funds ensuring the respect of the EACEA's rules, transfers respective grant instalments to each Partner and verifies the appropriate spending of funds by the Partners.

The total budget amount is provided in Table 10. Each Partner opens a sub-account dedicated solely for the purpose of MEP&M project and is responsible for sound and efficient financial management of its allocated part of the grant amount.

Table 10. Project budget

Type of costs	Budget category	€	Ceilings per category
UC	Staff Costs	331,668.00	Cannot exceed 40% of total Grant requested
UC	Travel Costs	65,180.00	
UC	Costs of Stay	123,840.00	
AC	Equipment Costs	245,000.00	Cannot exceed 30% of total Grant requested
AC	Subcontracting Costs	79,500.00	Cannot exceed 10% of total Grant requested
AC	Exceptional Costs	0.00	
	Total awarded grant	845,188.00	

The maximum grant contribution to the project costs amounts to 845,188.00 €. Calculation for reimbursement of project expenses is based on two financial approaches, i.e. through division of budget categories in two types of costs: unit costs (UC) and actual costs (AC). As shown in Table 10, UC approach is implemented for staff costs, travel costs and costs of stay, while AC approach is implemented for equipment costs, subcontracting costs and exceptional costs (if applicable) for expensive travels.

CBHE scheme implements a co-funding principle – project Partners have their own financial contribution through UC approach, since the EACEA rules predefine the maximum level of unit costs for calculation of the grant contribution. Therefore, the grant contribution for AC budget categories will be in the amount of 100% of eligible costs actually incurred, while for UC budget categories the grant contribution for incurred eligible expenses will cover the amount of predefined unit costs (the amount obtained by multiplying the predefined unit amount by number of units used). Beneficiaries and affiliated entities with general accounts in a currency other than the Euro (€) must follow the provisions in the Article I.4.6 of the Grant Agreement.

5.2. Eligible and ineligible cost

Project Partners are obliged to use the grant funds exclusively for the purposes defined by the project and in line with the terms and provisions of the Partnership Agreements and the

Grant Agreement. If there would be a difference between the amount of grant spent and the amount of expenditure declared eligible by the EACEA at the end of the project, the Partner responsible for the expenditure declared ineligible will reimburse the corresponding amount.

The eligibility of costs is defined in Articles I.3.2, I.9, and I.13 of the Grant Agreement. In summary, the costs considered eligible are those that meet the following criteria:

- Incurred during the implementation period of the project (with the exception of costs for the preparation of final report).
- In connection with the project action and necessary for project implementation.
- Identifiable, verifiable, recorded in the accounting records of the Partners and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the countries where the Partners are established.
- Comply with applicable taxes and national legislation.
- Reasonable, complying with principle of sound financial management (in particular regarding economy and efficiency).
- Foreseen in the project application/budget.

Note that all the activities and costs foreseen/listed in the project application and budget should not be considered automatically eligible, i.e. automatically approved by the EACEA. Perform check of eligibility before starting any project activity.

Any expenditure including VAT, duties and charges (such as customs and import duties) are not eligible unless the Coordinator can provide an official document from the competent authorities proving that the corresponding costs cannot be recovered. If it is not possible to obtain such an official document from the competent authorities, a written proof should be provided from the same authorities that they do not issue such document.

5.3. Staff costs

According to EACEA rules, for the purpose of financial reporting, grant beneficiaries:

- Do not need to provide justifications to prove the level of expenses, i.e. the level of units.
- Have to prove that the activities have been (properly) implemented and the output produced.
- Do not need to send supporting documents when sending the financial statements to EACEA (unless specifically requested by EACEA).

Supporting documents that have to be kept in the project records (and be available for financial evaluation and/or audit) have to demonstrate that the volume of the activities justifies the number of unit costs charged to the grant. In the case of unit costs the list of supporting documents cannot be exhaustive as it depends on the actual outputs of the project and the quality of the documentation provided.

This budget category contributes to the cost of staff for performing the tasks directly necessary to the achievement of the project objectives. Staff member must have a formal contractual relationship with the Partner institution (see more in Programme Manual, p. 312). The unit costs to be applied for staff costs are defined in Table 11.

Table 11. Unit costs for staff

Country of the staff member	€ per day			
	managerial work	teaching/training/researching work	technical work	administrative work
France	280.00	214.00	162.00	131.00
Spain / Slovenia	164.00	137.00	102.00	78.00
Montenegro / Albania	108.00	80.00	57.00	45.00

Each unit cost corresponds to an amount in € per working day per staff member. One working day is defined according to national legislation (7 to 8 hours). In principle, declared working days per staff member should not exceed 20 days per month or 240 days per year.

The unit cost to be applied is the one corresponding to the country in which the staff member is employed, independently of where the tasks will be performed. Which staff category should be applied depends on the nature of work performed, not on the status/title of the individual. Explanation for staff categories are:

- Managerial work – top managerial activities related to the administration and coordination of project activities.
- Teaching, training, researching work – academic activities related to curriculum/training Programme development, development and adaptation of teaching/training materials, preparation and teaching of courses or trainings.
- Technical work – technical tasks such as book-keeping, accountancy and translation activities (external translation services and external language courses should be classified under the budget category of “subcontracting costs”).
- Administrative work – administrative tasks such as secretarial duties.

The costs of staff during travels may be charged to the project if the work performed can be demonstrated in terms of workload, output produced and activities realized and if it is in line with the practices of the Partner institution.

Supporting documents for staff costs

For the purpose of any financial evaluation and/or audit, the following supporting documents have to be kept in the project records:

- A formal contractual relationship between the staff member and the Partner institution.
- A duly filled-in Joint Declaration (JD) for each staff member. JD must be signed by the staff member performing the activity and then countersigned and stamped by the person responsible in the Partner institution that engaged this staff member. For staff performing the activities that belong to different categories of work a separate JD must be signed for each type of category. The form of JD is given in the Annex I of this document.
- Duly filled-in Time-Sheets (TS). Each JD must have a corresponding Time-Sheet attached. TS must be signed by the staff member concerned and countersigned by the person responsible in the Partner institution that engaged this staff member. For each different category of work a separate TS is filled in. The form of TS is given in the Annex I of this document.

- Any material evidence allowing to verify the purpose, workload, quality and outputs of work performed, and that the declared workloads correspond to actual activities/outputs (for example: agendas, minutes, attendance/participant lists, personal internal reports, tangible outputs/products, salary slips, etc).

Staff category declared in JD has to be in line with the attached TS (as well as the information about the number of days of work, description of work and outputs produced). The amount that a staff member will be paid from the budget category “staff costs“, and subsequently presented in the financial report table, must be in line with JD and TS (data in the financial report that are related to staff costs will refer to relevant JD and TS). Work package title selected in TS must correspond to the WP title from the work plan presented in the project application. The number of days declared in TS must be in line with the budget plan of project.

Funds from the budget category “staff costs“ can be paid to staff members for the work already performed, provided that JD and attached TS have been filled in and subsequently approved/signed by the person responsible in the Partner institution.

5.4. Travel costs and Costs of stay

Travel costs

This budget category contributes to the costs of travel for staff participating in activities directly related to the achievement of the project objectives. Staff member must have a formal contractual relationship with the Partner institution in order to participate to any travel. The maximum duration of travel can be three (3) months. Prior written authorization from EACEA is required if the staff concerned intends to carry out activities not described in the application form.

The travel costs and costs of stay related to subcontracted service providers have to be declared under the budget category “subcontracting costs” and be justified and documented accordingly. Travel costs include visa fee and related obligatory insurance, travel insurance and cancellation costs if justified. No financial contribution will be granted for travels of less than 10 km. The unit costs to be applied for travels are defined in Table 12.

Table 12. Unit costs for travel per person

One-way travel distance	€ per person (for round trip)
10 - 99 km	20.00
100 - 499 km	180.00
500 – 1,999 km	275.00
2,000 – 2,999 km	360.00
3,000 – 3,999 km	530.00
4,000 – 7,999 km	820.00
more than 8,000 km	1,500.00

The unit costs shown in Table 12 are fixed amounts of the grant contribution per travel per person (regardless of the expenses actually incurred), related to the travels of staff from their place of origin (home institution within the partnership) to the venue of the activity and return. Prior written authorization from EACEA is required for activities and their corresponding

travel costs and costs of stay which are not taking place in or between countries represented in the project partnership.

In order to apply the correct unit cost, a one-way travel distances between concrete locations must be identified using the distance calculator supported by the European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/tools/distance_en.htm).

In the context of a circular travel (e.g.: a person leaves a place of departure “A” in order to participate in a project activity in another location “B”, and then leaves “B” to participate immediately in a second project activity in a third location “C”, before returning directly to the place of departure “A”), the grant contribution to the travel costs will be calculated as the sum of these two unit costs:

- The unit cost amount corresponding to the distance from A to B
- The unit cost amount corresponding to the distance from B to C.

The notion of circular travel implies a project activity in each destination and does not apply to air travels with stopover.

Costs of stay

Costs of stay can be claimed for staff involved in the project for activities taking place outside the city of the Partner’s home institution and directly related to the achievement of the project objectives. The activities must be carried out in the Partners' countries. Any exception to this rule must be authorized by EACEA.

Costs of stay include subsistence, accommodation, local and public transport such as bus and taxi, personal or optional health insurance. The unit costs to be applied for stay are defined in Table 13.

Table 13. Unit costs for stay per person

Duration of stay	€ per person
up to 14 days	120.00 €/day
+ from the 15th until 60th day	70.00 €/day
+ from the 61st day up to 3 months	50.00 €/day

In order to apply the correct unit cost, the duration of the activity must be identified, in days, including the travel from the place of origin to the venue of the activity and vice-versa (independently of the time of departure or arrival), and then the corresponding unit cost has to be applied as defined in Table 13, in the following manner:

$$\text{Number of days of activities (including travel)} = \text{Number of unit costs};$$

The unit costs shown in Table 13 are fixed amounts of the grant contribution per day per person (regardless of the expenses actually incurred). No costs of stay will be granted for travels of less than 10 km.

Supporting documents for travel costs and costs of stay

For the purpose of any financial evaluation and/or audit, the Partners will have to be able to justify/prove that the journeys actually took place and are connected to specific and clearly identifiable project-related activities. The following supporting documents have to be kept in the project records:

- A duly filled-in Individual Travel Report (ITR), to be filled in by a staff member after each travel. The form of ITR is given in the Annex I of the document.
- Supporting documentation will have to be attached to each ITR in order to demonstrate that the travel and the activity actually took place (e.g. travel orders issued by the Partner institution, travel tickets, boarding passes with points of departure and destination, dates and name of the person travelling, all invoices, including for accommodation, receipts, proof of attendance in meetings and/or events, agendas, tangible outputs/products, minutes of meetings; this list is not exhaustive, so for example also photos from the meetings/events/activities may be attached). It will not be necessary to prove the actual cost of the travel.

In case of circular/multiple travels, separate ITRs have to be filled in. For example, a person departs from place “A” in order to participate in a project activity in place “B”, and then leaves “B” to participate immediately in another project activity in place “C”, before returning directly from “C” to “A” – it means that one ITR has to be filled in for travel between “A” and “B” (with the related distance in km from “A” to “B”), while the other ITR will refer to travel between “B” and “C” (with the related distance in km from “B” to “C”).

Type of activity to be marked in ITR should be in line with the project work plan. Prior to initiating any travel to be financed from the grant funds (either to fully cover the incurred expenses or partially) the Partner is supposed to send to the Coordinator a travel application form (by e-mail). It contains the main technical information related to the trip (invitation letter and/or e-mail with exact purpose of the travel, cumulative number of days per travel, planned meeting days and draft agenda).

Rules for designation of reference numbers for JD and ITR

Reference number (“Ref. No.”) to be written in JD and ITR forms should be composed in the following format:

XXX-YYY-ZZZ

- XXX – Instead of this write the acronym of the Partner institution.
- YYY – Instead of this write the acronym of the document in question (JD or ITR).
- ZZZ – Instead of this write a three-digit ordinal number of the document, using progressive numbering (001, 002, 003, 004...) in order that each JD/ITR from the Partner institution has a different reference number.

Thus, the first JD signed for example of the University of Montenegro (“Partner number” is P1) will have the reference number P1-JD-001, the next one will be P1-JD-002, etc (while ITRs will be numbered as P1-ITR-001, then P1-ITR-002, etc).

5.5. Actual costs

Financial reporting for AC budget categories will be based on the principle of the expenses actually incurred (the grant contribution for these budget categories will be equal to the eligible

expenses actually incurred). These expenses will need to be duly documented and their level to be justified.

5.5.1. Procurement methods for goods and services

According to EACEA rules, depending on the value of purchase, the following procurement methods are applied:

- less than 25.000 € – best value for money;
- from 25.000 € to 144.000 € – tendering procedure (obtaining at least 3 competitive offers and retaining the one offering the best value for money);
- more than 144.000 € – procurement in accordance with national legislation.

The grant beneficiaries may not split the purchase into smaller contracts with lower individual amounts below the threshold in order to avoid launching a formal tendering procedure.

5.5.2. Equipment

Apart from fulfilling the criteria of eligibility of costs, equipment may be purchased through this budget category if the following conditions are fulfilled:

- It is purchased only for the benefit of the higher education institution in the Erasmus+ Partner Country.
- The purchaser is the sole owner of the equipment.
- The equipment must be recorded in the inventory of the institution.
- All purchased equipment must bear an Erasmus+ sticker (to be printed or bought by the grant beneficiary).

The purchased equipment has to be used during the project implementation period and should be instrumental to the objectives of the project and should therefore be purchased and installed at the beginning of the project, as soon as practically possible. This budget category covers also the costs of transport, installation, maintenance and insurance of equipment.

Compared to the equipment as specified in the project application, minor adaptations in terms of quantity and product in the purchased equipment can be accepted without prior authorization from EACEA, provided that the budgetary ceilings are respected, the corresponding equipment items are eligible, the modification can be justified and is related with the project objectives.

In case of significant changes of the equipment to be purchased compared to the equipment as specified in the project application, prior written authorization from EACEA is necessary.

Supporting documents for equipment

For the purpose of any financial evaluation and/or audit, the following supporting documents have to be kept in the project records:

- Invoices and bank statements for all purchased equipment (note that order forms, pro-forma invoices, quotations or estimates are not considered as proof of expenditure).
- For the purchase in the amount from 25,000.00 € to 144,000.00 €, documentation on the tendering procedure and three quotations from different suppliers.

- For the purchase in the amount above 144,000.00 €, documentation on the tendering procedure applied according to national legislation.
- Proof that the equipment is recorded in the inventory of the institution.

When sending the final financial statement to EACEA, the Coordinator on behalf of the consortium has to send also, as supporting documents, the copies (not originals) of the invoice and the competitive offers for the purchase of equipment when a total value of the purchase is more than 25,000.00 €.

Other supporting documents should not be sent with financial statements to EACEA. At final reporting stage, EACEA will examine the expenses in detail to verify their eligibility. If there are doubts on any particular point, EACEA may request the grant beneficiaries to provide all the supporting documents.

5.6. Subcontracting

This budget category is intended for specific, time-bound, project-related tasks which cannot be performed by the Partners themselves. Therefore, it refers to the implementation of tasks by a third party, to which a service contract has been awarded by one or several participant institutions.

It includes self-employed / free-lance experts. Subcontracting to external bodies should be very occasional. The specific competences and particular expertise needed to reach the project objectives should be found in the project consortium having determined its composition. Subcontracting for project-management related tasks is therefore not eligible.

Subcontracting costs for the maintenance of any equipment purchased for the project may be included under the budget category “equipment”. Typical activities which may be subcontracted (provided they are not carried out by the Partners’ staff) are:

- Compulsory financial audits and any external QA procedure.
- IT courses, language courses.
- Printing, publishing and dissemination activities.
- Translation services.
- Web design and maintenance.
- Logistic support for the organization of events (except for catering and hospitality costs for participants receiving the costs of stay, to prevent double funding by the grant).

In all cases, tasks to be subcontracted must have been identified in the project proposal (based on relevant supporting information, along with clear reasons as to why the task cannot be carried out by the project Partners) and the estimated amount entered in the budget. Subcontracting initially not foreseen in the budget would need prior written authorization from EACEA. Subcontracting must be done on the basis of a contract, which should describe the specific task being carried out and its duration. It must include a date, the project reference number and the signature of both parties. Project Partners and their staff members are not allowed to operate in a subcontracting capacity for the project.

The travel costs and costs of stay related to subcontracted service providers have to be declared under the budget category “subcontracting costs” and be justified and documented.

Supporting documents for subcontracting

For the purpose of any financial evaluation and/or audit, the following supporting documents have to be kept in the project records:

- Invoices, subcontracts and bank statements.
- In the case of travel activities of subcontracted service provider, copies of travel tickets, boarding passes, invoices and receipts, or for car travel a copy of the internal regulations on the reimbursement rate per km. The aim of the supporting documentation is to demonstrate that the activities took place.
- When the threshold of 25,000.00 € is exceeded and is below 144,000.00 €, documentation on the tendering procedure and three quotations from different suppliers.
- When the threshold of 144,000.00 € is exceeded, documentation on the tendering procedure applied according to national legislation.
- Tangible outputs/products.

When sending the final financial statement to EACEA, the Coordinator on behalf of the consortium has to send also, as supporting documents, the copies (not originals) of the subcontract, the invoice and the competitive offers when the total value of the subcontract amounts to more than 25,000.00 €.

Other supporting documents should not be sent with financial statements to EACEA. At final reporting stage, EACEA will examine the expenses in detail to verify their eligibility. If there are doubts on any particular point, EACEA may request the grant beneficiaries to provide all the supporting documents.

5.7. Overview of supporting documents for all budget categories

Supporting documents (originals) – as specified in the previous part of this handbook under the chapters dedicated to each of the budget categories – must be kept by the Partners. Readable copies of those documents must be sent to and kept by the Coordinator (who will submit them to EACEA with the final report and financial statement when specifically requested).

If there are doubts on the actual implementation of any particular activity or expenditure, EACEA may request to be provided with the corresponding supporting documents. Failure to submit one or more documents may lead to a request for reimbursement of the corresponding grant contribution.

For all type of costs, any prior authorization from EACEA has to be sent with the final financial statement. A list of supporting documents for each budget category is summarized in Table 14.

Table 14. Overview of supporting documents per budget category

Reimbursement basis	Budget categories	Documents to keep in project records	Documents to be sent with the final report
UNIT COSTS	Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • formal employment contract • Joint Declaration (JD) • Time-Sheet (TS) • salary slips* • agendas* • attendance/participant lists* • tangible outputs/products* • minutes of meetings* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no supporting documents should be sent with the final report, except for any prior authorization from EACEA

	Travel costs and Costs of stay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Travel Report (ITR) • invoices, receipts, boarding passes* • agendas* • attendance/participant lists* • tangible outputs/products* • minutes of meetings* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • no supporting documents should be sent with the final report, except for any prior authorization from EACEA
ACTUAL COSTS	Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invoices • bank statements • tendering procedure for expenses exceeding 25.000 € • proof that the equipment is recorded in the inventory of the institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • invoices and three quotations from different suppliers for expenses exceeding 25.000 € • any prior authorization from EACEA
	Subcontracting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subcontracts • invoices • bank statements • tendering procedure for expenses exceeding 25.000 € • tangible outputs/products* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subcontracts, invoices and three quotations from different suppliers for expenses exceeding 25.000 € • any prior authorization from EACEA

* Examples of supporting documents. In the case of unit costs this list cannot be exhaustive as it depends on the actual outputs of the project and the quality of the documentation provided. As a general rule, keep all possible results to be able to show-case the activities.

A certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts (“certificate on the financial statements”) for each beneficiary and for each affiliated entity, if the maximum grant amount indicated for that beneficiary and its affiliated entities in the estimated budget as reimbursement of actual costs is more than 60,000.00 € (Article I.4.4 of the Grant Agreement).

A certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts (“Report of Factual Findings on the Final Financial Report – Type II”) must be sent to EACEA with the final report.

5.8. Reallocation of funds between budget categories

As shown in Table 10 of this handbook, there are ceilings for three budget categories, in percentages of the estimated total budget of the project: total staff costs can be maximum 40% of the total project budget, equipment costs can be maximum 30% and subcontracting costs can be maximum 10%.

Still, when carrying out the action, there is also a certain flexibility of the ceilings of all individual budget categories indicated in the estimated budget of the project. The Coordinator may make adjustments (which do not affect the implementation of the action) by transferring the funds between budget categories without prior authorization by EACEA if the increase of the ceiling amount for specific category is up to 10%. However, the total estimated budget of the project (the maximum grant as specified in Article I.3.1 of the Grant Agreement) must not be exceeded.

The corresponding increases as well as any significant decrease of expenditure under a given budget category should however be justifiable with regards to the objectives and overall

funding of the project. For increasing the budget category by more than 10%, a prior authorization by EACEA is needed, and consequently an amendment to the Grant Agreement would have to be made.

In order to request such amendment the Coordinator must justify the need for the change and send an updated budget breakdown, together with a revised budget allocation per Partner and an explanation of the envisaged changes. These requests must be submitted to EACEA at least one month before the end of the project implementation period. If EACEA accepts the change, an amendment letter including a new annex will be sent to the Coordinator.

If, as a consequence of the increase for more than 10%, the maximum ceiling set for staff (40%), equipment (30%) and subcontracting (10%) is exceeded, the request for a change in the budget breakdown will not be accepted.

In order to claim expenses related to project activities that could not take place due to the pandemic, and that have not been refunded by providers (mainly costs related to Travels and Costs of Stay, rarely Equipment and Subcontracting), the following should be applied:

- ***Costs to be claimed in the “Final Financial Statement”, financed through actual costs:***

Costs related to Subcontracting and Equipment have to be claimed in the Final Financial Statement, and not in the dedicated “Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19”. For each reference, please indicate the amount actually incurred, that has not been refunded by providers upon request of the grant beneficiary. Please add “COVID” at the beginning of the description of each reference in the column H “Nature, type and specifications of the item” of the Financial Statement (sheets Equipment/Subcontracting).

- ***Costs to be claimed in the dedicated “Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19”, financed through unit costs:***

Costs related to Travel costs and Costs of Stay have to be claimed in the dedicated “Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19”, following the instructions included in the Excel table (sheet ‘Instructions’). Beneficiaries have to indicate actual costs not reimbursed, in both actual and unit costs (please refer to the sheet ‘Instructions’). Please note that for each reference declared, the lowest amount between actual costs and unit costs will be considered for reimbursement in the framework of the EU grant contribution.

This reporting table has to be submitted with the Final Report as an attachment in accordance with the instructions provided in the “CBHE eReport Explanatory Note“, available on the beneficiary space.

- Expenses that have not been reimbursed in the framework of the pandemic, whether they are based on unit costs or actual costs, have to be claimed only once, either in the “Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19” (Travels and Costs of Stay) or in the Final Financial Statement (Equipment and Subcontracting). They must not be encoded twice in the two Excel tables.
- Costs that have not been reimbursed by providers and that are claimed in the “Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19” or in the Final Financial Statement may be subject to a financial control by the Agency or any other authorised body in the framework of a desk monitoring at final reporting stage. Beneficiaries need to keep any supporting documents proving that the expenses were not reimbursed.
- The rationale behind the reimbursement of Travel and Costs of Stay impacted by COVID as actual costs is due to the fact that the Agency and the European Commission need to collect statistics on these actual costs. The CBHE Grant Agreement foresees that Travel and Costs of stay are financed only through unit costs, for this reason the Agency has developed a dedicated reporting table ‘Reporting table for unit costs –

Covid 19” that allows reporting COVID costs also in actual costs (while Equipment and Subcontracting related costs can be reported in the Final Financial Statement).

- If travel ticket costs were refunded by the Air Company but not the VISA costs, the latter can be declared as Travel Costs under the “Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19”. In this case, a clear reference to these VISA costs should be added.
- In case the travel agency reimbursed only certain percentage of the ticket, the difference can be declared under the COVID reporting table: “*Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19*”.
- A voucher is considered as a reimbursement and cannot be claimed in the ‘*Reporting ‘COVID’ costs*’ table nor in the Final Financial Statement
- The ‘*Reporting table for unit costs – Covid 19*’ is applicable for all CBHE projects generations.
- If equipment was procured on time but delivered late due to COVID, in principle no reduction of the grant will be applied. However, it is always recommended to inform or consult the Agency in case of late purchase or delivery of Equipment.
- Costs of Stay are calculated based on the duration in days of the activity plus the travel day/s from their place of origin to the venue of the activity and vice-versa.

6. REPORTING

According to the Article 1.4 of the Grant Agreement, the action is divided into the following reporting periods:

- Reporting period 1: from month 1 to month 21
- Reporting period 2: from month 22 to month 36.

The Coordinator sends progress reports and final reports to EACEA on behalf of the consortium. Approval of the Coordinator's progress report leads to the launch of the second pre-financing payment and approval of the final report leads to the final/balance payment (if due). The progress report provides the EACEA with an update on how the project is advancing against original plan and budget, while the final report at the end of the project implementation period allows the overall evaluation of the project. In addition to the mandatory reports, EACEA may request additional reports on activities and/or expenditure, in which case the Coordinator will be given a period of two to six weeks to submit it.

Once the assessment is complete, EACEA will inform the Coordinator on the evaluation results, with an acceptance letter. In addition, the Coordinator shall provide the EACEA and/or the European Commission with information requested in order to promote the Erasmus+ Programme and disseminate its results. This may include answering questionnaires and entering data into databases. Also, it is recommended that the EACEA's Project Officer is communicated in advance about any particular activity or result that may be used by EACEA for dissemination purposes (e.g. outreaching event, project publication, etc).

EACEA can suspend, reject and/or ask for a revised version of the report. In cases where the report is rejected or suspended, the Coordinator will be informed about the reasons of the rejection.

The Partners send their own technical and financial reports to the Coordinator. A template of financial statements in excel format can be found in the Annex I of the document. In that template each participant institution will record all of its expenses as they incur during the project, and at the same time it represents the form of financial report that the Partners are supposed to submit periodically to the Coordinator, according to the schedule defined in Article 6 of the Partnership Agreements (the same template will be used by the Coordinator for the project financial statements/reports to be sent to EACEA, which the Coordinator will compile by aggregating the financial statements/data received from the Partners). "Instructions" sheet in the financial statement template should be read thoroughly.

For ease of reference and assessment, supporting documents should be numbered in conformity with the financial statement. Staff costs filled in financial report must be in line with JD and TS. Travel costs and costs of stay filled in financial report must be in line with ITR.

All documents related to technical progress report and final report on implementation of the action will be available on the EACEA website (https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/grants/2014-2020/erasmus/capacity-building-field-higher-education-2020_en) and in the Annex I of the document.

6.1. Reporting obligations of the Coordinator after the first project reporting period

The Coordinator has to send to EACEA a technical progress report on the implementation of the action (and summary report for publication) within 60 calendar days following the end of the first project reporting period. It has to be filled in and submitted by the Coordinator via

the eReports system, which is an online tool available on the EACEA Participant Portal. Along with this report, the Coordinator has to attach the following:

- financial statement on the costs incurred,
- declaration of honor,
- table of achieved/planned results,
- dissemination plan (if available),
- quality assurance plan (if available).

In case the consortium has spent at least 70% of the first pre-financing instalment, a request for the second instalment can be attached with documents listed above.

Since no financial supporting documents need to be submitted with financial statement at this stage (unless requested by EACEA), the eligibility of the expenses will only be verified following the submission of the final report and the required supporting documents. As a result, the approval of the progress report refers exclusively to the acknowledgement of the project activities but does not imply the eligibility of the indicated expenses.

6.2. Reporting obligations of the Coordinator after the end of the project

Within 60 calendar days after the end of the project implementation period the Coordinator has to send to EACEA a final technical report on the implementation of the action (and summary report for publication), online through the EACEA Participant Portal. Along with this report, the Coordinator has to attach the following:

- final financial statement and request for payment of the balance, including the financial tables for each budget category,
- supporting documents for incurred expenses (if required),
- declaration of honor,
- table of achieved results,
- external audit reports and certificate on the Coordinator's financial statement and underlying accounts.

“Report of Factual Findings on the Final Financial Report – Type II” contains guidance notes related to the exact role and procedures to be respected by the auditor, as well as a mandatory template for the audit report and engagement letter between the Coordinator and the auditor.

Just for transparency and statistical purposes, the financial statement will need to provide an indication on the level and source of own financial contribution of participant institutions, for expenditures which were not specifically foreseen and included in the budget (for dissemination, publishing, translation if not subcontracted, as well as for overheads costs, bank fees, etc), without submitting the related proof of expenditures or supporting documents. In fact, these expenditures covered by the co-financing will not be taken into account by EACEA for the final calculation of the total eligible grant amount and therefore will not have any financial impact on it.

The approval of the final report will be subject to uploading the project's results and the revised project description in Erasmus+ Project Results Platform by the time of its submission. This platform is used also to disseminate and exploit the project's results. The Coordinator must provide a revised text for the project description, stating what has actually been achieved during the project, which will appear in the project description section of the project page on the platform.

6.3. Reporting obligations of the Partners

The Coordinator is responsible for submitting to EACEA all reports on behalf of the consortium. Therefore, the Partners will provide the Coordinator in a timely manner with reports as defined in Article 6 of the Partnership Agreements, as well as with all necessary information and, if applicable, copies of supporting documents needed for drawing up technical reports, financial statements and any other documents required by EACEA.

The Partners will regularly provide the Coordinator with all kinds of supporting documents summarized in Table 14, preferably as soon as those documents are produced/issued, and at the latest along with reports foreseen by article 6 of the Partnership Agreements.

6.4. Project implementation monitoring

The phases for project monitoring are provided in Figure 1.

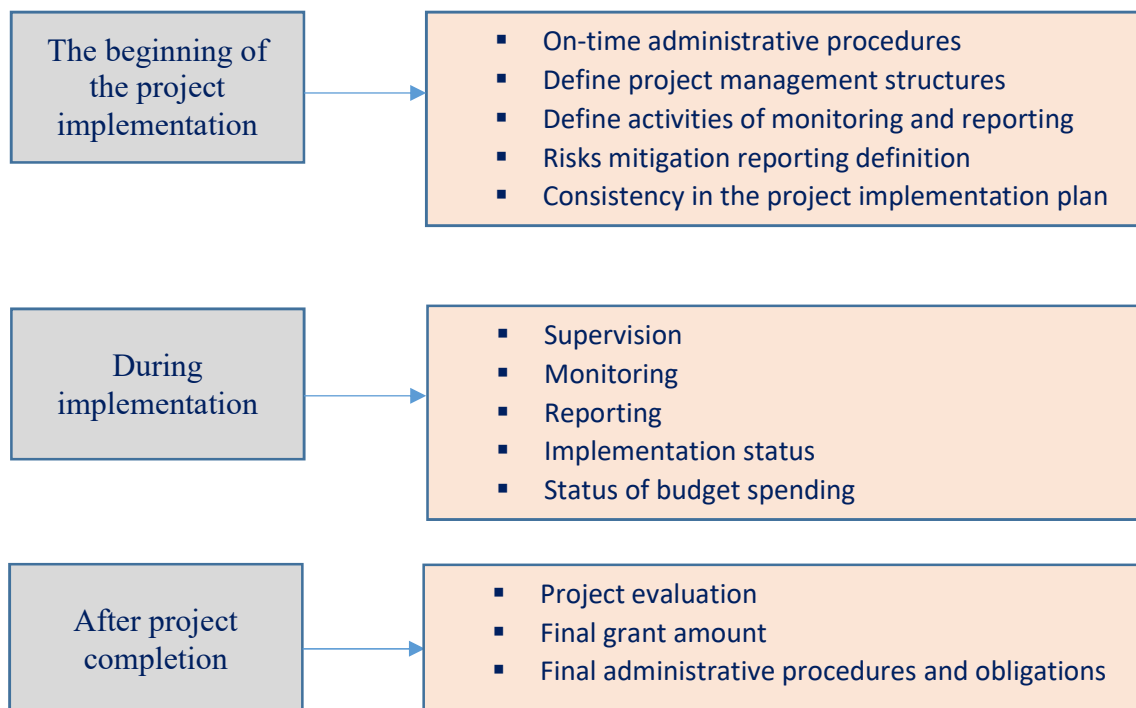


Figure 1. Project monitoring phases

At the moment of submission of reports, for all expenses presented in the financial report the Coordinator has to have received corresponding documentation that can contribute to verify all those expenses. For each of the concrete expenditures the Partners will also provide proof of payments in the form of excerpts from the bank account. All of that will be done in the scanned versions while for other documents the originals will be retained by the Partners and certified copies delivered to the Coordinator.

The Partners will regularly send also the reports on realization of different events (info days, workshops, seminars, conference, meetings, trainings, etc), information related to appearance in media, and preferably the related photos, which may be used for further promotional

purposes for the project. This will be published in hard-copy or on the project website and other related web links.

Day to day monitoring and reporting allows the Coordinator to keep an eye on the project to ensure that project activities and tasks are conducted as planned. It enables identifying actual or potential problems as early as possible in order to facilitate timely adjustments in implementation.

Project implementation plan monitoring is given in Table 15 and it will be fulfilled during the project lifetime. Another documentation for monitoring the related activities for the planning of project reviews and for capturing key elements of project progress will be included in the Internal Quality Control and Monitoring Plan.

Table 15. Project implementation plan monitoring

Outputs	WP	Deliverable	Deadline	Leader	Status of implementation

The table is to be filled in during project implementation.

6.5. Checks, audits and evaluations performed by EACEA

EACEA and/or the European Commission or any other entity authorized by it may, during the implementation of the project or afterwards, carry out technical and financial checks and audits. It may also check the institutions' statutory records for the purpose of periodic assessments of unit cost.

Those checks/audits may be done at any time up to five (5) years, starting from the date of payment of the balance at the end of the project. Therefore, the project participants must keep all original documents, especially accounting and tax records, stored on any appropriate medium, including digitalized originals when they are authorized by their respective national law, during a period of 5 years starting from the date of payment of the balance. This period is longer if there are ongoing audits, appeals, litigation or pursuit of claims concerning the grant, including irregularities, fraud or breach of obligations. In such cases, the project participant institutions must keep the documents until such audits, appeals, litigation or pursuit of claims have been closed.

Where a check, audit or evaluation is initiated before the payment of the balance, the Coordinator must provide any requested information, including information in electronic format. Where appropriate, EACEA and/or the Commission may request that the Partner provides such information directly. Where a check or audit is initiated after payment of the balance, the requested information must be provided by the Partner concerned.

On the basis of the final audit findings, EACEA and/or the Commission may take the measures it considers necessary, including recovery at the time of payment of the balance or after payment of the balance of all or part of the payments made by it.

Possible financial penalties – reduction of the initially awarded grant amount

Penalties in the case of non-compliance with an obligation

Without prejudice to the right to terminate the grant, in case that the project participants fail to fulfil an obligation from the Grant Agreement (Article I.18), particularly if it is the case of non-compliance with publicity obligations, i.e. with the visibility of EU funding, EACEA may apply a 20% reduction of the initially awarded grant amount.

Penalties in the case of poor, partial or late implementation of the action

Penalties shall be applied in case the final technical report provides evidence that the project implementation was not addressed with the required attention and according to the terms laid down in the Grant Agreement.

The final report and the outputs produced by the project (publications, conference papers, presentations, etc) will be assessed and score will be awarded, up to a maximum of 100 points. The score awarded will take into account the existence and seriousness of late, partial, poor, or non-implementation of the project action, and its impact on the achievement of the project objectives. If the total score is below 50 points, a reduction of the initially awarded maximum grant amount will be implemented, according to the following scale:

- 25% reduction if the project scores at least 40 points and below 50 points,
- 35% reduction if the project scores at least 30 points and below 40 points,
- 55% reduction if the project scores at least 20 points and below 30 points,
- 75% reduction if the project scores below 20 points.

The Coordinator will have the possibility to react to the first evaluation of the final report and to provide supplementary information on the project implementation. The Coordinator will be informed about the project performance assessment and about compliance with publicity obligations also after submission of progress report.

Calculation of the final eligible grant amount

The grant may not exceed the maximum amount initially authorized in the Grant Agreement. The final amount of the grant is determined by EACEA prior to a possible payment of the balance, and following examination of the final financial statement and the related verification of the eligibility of the activities implemented and declared expenses. Declared unit costs/expenses that will be identified as ineligible in line with the provisions of the Grant Agreement will be deducted from the total amount declared in the final financial statement. On the other hand, if there are penalties to be applied, these will be deducted from the initially awarded maximum grant amount. Which of the two results of deduction is lower (one obtained after deduction with ineligible costs and the other after deduction with penalties) will represent the final (eligible) grant amount.

Afterwards, it remains to be calculated will there be a balance payment to the Coordinator (if the final grant is higher than the total amount of previous pre-financing instalments), or a recovery payment to EACEA (if the final grant is lower than the total amount of previous pre-financing instalments).

Approval of the final grant and of the accompanying documents shall not imply recognition of the regularity or of the authenticity, completeness and correctness of the declarations and information it contains. This can be subject of further control and audits visits.

6.6. Amendments to the Grant Agreement

The Grant Agreement may be amended only in writing. Any request for amendment must be sent to EACEA before any changes are implemented in the project, and not retroactively. It must be sent in due time before it is due to take effect, and in any case at least one month before the end of the project implementation period.

A request for amendment on behalf of the project consortium must be submitted by the Coordinator. If a change of Coordinator is requested without its agreement, the request must be submitted by all other Partners and must be accompanied by the opinion of the Coordinator or proof that this opinion has been requested in writing. Amendment may be made also at the initiative of EACEA.

As soon as changes are envisaged by the consortium (to the project and/or the partnership composition), the Coordinator should contact the EACEA Project Officer in charge and ask for an advice on the proposed changes.

Depending on the nature of the modification, amendments have to be made following specific procedures in one of the following ways:

- Via the EACEA Participant Portal,
- Via e-mail,
- By scanned formal letter sent via e-mail.

Some minor changes which do not lead to an amendment of the Grant Agreement still require a request to EACEA (by letter or e-mail sent by the legal representative and/or the contact person). For example, while the change of the legal representative of the coordinating institution, or of the contact person, requires an amendment, changes in their contact details (phone number, e-mail address, etc) just need to be notified in writing to EACEA in order to update its records. The same applies in case there is a modification to the contact person's details of the Partner.

Any related requests or notifications from the Coordinator must be sent to the following e-mail address: EACEA-EPLUS-CBHE-PROJECTS@ec.europa.eu.

Once the amendment is made, it becomes an integral part of the initial Grant Agreement. When changes affect the legal commitment and the working modalities defined and endorsed by the partnership in its Partnership Agreement(s), the latter must be amended accordingly and this amendment must be officially endorsed by all the Partners concerned.

Amendments via the EACEA Participant Portal

The Participant Portal is the platform where the authorized LEAR (Legal Entity Appointed Representative) registers the grant beneficiary institution as well as any changes related to its legal status, address and name.

The Coordinator must inform the EACEA by e-mail of the changes introduced via the Participation Portal so as to ensure a better follow-up of the project.

The following modifications must be made via the Participant Portal:

- legal status of the Coordinator and/or other Partners,
- legal name of the Coordinator and/or other Partners,
- address of the Coordinator,
- address of the Partner.

Amendments via e-mail

For the following modifications, an amendment request must be sent by e-mail from the legal representative of the Coordinator, or at least with the latter in carbon copy (Cc):

- contact person of the Coordinator,
- deadline for submission of reports.

Amendments via an exchange of formal letters

The modification by means of exchange of letters implies that it will not be reached by countersigning the very same document between the two parties, but by exchanging two separate documents/ scanned letters via e-mail.

The letter (amendment request) must be signed by the legal representative of the Coordinator and must clearly explain the nature of the proposed amendment and the necessary modifications to the Grant Agreement. It must be submitted in this way for the following modifications:

- change of the coordinating institution,
- change of the eligibility period of the project,
- change in the budget breakdown,
- change in the partnership composition,
- change of the legal representative of the coordinating institution,
- change of the bank account of the coordinating institution,
- major changes to the work program.

7. PROJECT RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

The MEP&M project will recognize assumptions and risks during the implementation. This handbook defines risk as a threat or uncertainty associated with an event that may have a negative effect on the achievement of the results defined in the work plan and Logical Framework Matrix (LFM). Therefore, the consortium recognizes that adopting risk management practices is critical to enhance performance of the project and added value to all of its target groups. In Table 16 is given a risk identification and management matrix – a template that will be used in order to mitigate and manage the risk situation in the project realization of deliverables and outputs.

The risk identification and management matrix represents an operational tool aimed at supporting project risk assessment and management in order to allow delivery of the project on time, on budget and with the expected quality results. In particular, it helps to identify, manage and record specific risks and mitigation measures.

This matrix applies to risks understood as:

- an uncertain event that could have a negative (or positive) effect on project performance or
- an existing situation (issue) that could have a negative effect on project performance.

Defining project risks/issues requires a good appreciation of project context and therefore consultations and dialogue with project target groups to ensure that risks are identified and managed.

On the other hand, the following assumptions in accordance to the application form and the main project objectives are:

- In the process of joining the European Union, Montenegro and Albania must meet many environmental criteria.
- National laws and strategies in field of maritime environmental protection are in line with those in EU, but posing hurdles for full implementation due to lack of highly qualified professionals.
- Appropriateness of data gathered through surveys.
- Readiness of PC HEIs for development of master curricula in field of MEP&M.
- Competence of administrative staff for efficient project implementation.
- Approval procedures in HEIs represent a good basis for curricula development.
- Engagement of competent staff to deliver curricula.
- Teaching staff from MNE and ALB HEIs motivated to be trained.
- Technicians properly trained for new equipment.
- Timely availability of human and technical resources.
- Efficient procedure of acquisition, VAT exemption and installation of the equipment.
- Monitoring activities reduce the risk of WPs implementation.
- Timely advertising and media promotion reaching target groups.
- National funding strategies to support climate change and environmentally oriented project ideas.
- Realization of financial transactions from EC and distribution among Partners, within deadline specified in contracts.

Table 16. Risk identification and management matrix

Type of risk	Risk impact (low, medium, high)	Mitigation measures	Status
Institutional risks			
Realization of financial transactions from EC and distribution among Partners, within deadline specified in the contracts			
Readiness of PC HEIs for development of joint MSc program in field of MEP&M in English language			
Staff from PC HEIs motivated to be trained			
Timely availability of human and technical resources			
Lack of interested actors to be enrolled in MSc program (students graduating BSc studies and professionals)			
Time-consuming accreditation procedure of joint MSc program due to internal procedures at Partner countries HEIs and due to long procedures at ministries/agencies in charge for accreditation			
Technical risks			

Complex and long legal procedures for the equipment procurement			
Delivery delay of equipment			
Efficient procedure of acquisition, VAT exemption and installation of equipment			
Human resource and organizational risks			
Appropriateness of data gathered through surveys			
Quality procedures too complex, causing lack of commitment to follow them			
Late responses of Partners on reporting			
Timely advertising and media promotion reaching target groups			
Lack of wider public knowledge on the subject may cause insufficient interest in the project achievements			
Competence of administrative staff for efficient project implementation			

The table is to be filled in during project implementation.

ANNEX I. LIST OF DOCUMENTS/TEMPLATES FOR THE REPORTING

The following documents have to be used by the consortium members and the templates can be found at:

https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/grants/2014-2020/erasmus/capacity-building-field-higher-education-2020_en

Project Management

- Programme Guide (version 2020)

Projects (Joint Projects and Structural Projects)

- Guidelines for the Capacity Building Partnership Agreement

Contractual documents

- Grant Agreement and Annexes

Reporting

Instructions for Operational & Financial Reporting

The use of the forms and templates below is mandatory.

Reporting forms

- 1.a Financial Statements (including "Statement on the use of the previous pre-financing instalment and Request for Payment" and "Final Financial Statement")
- 1.b Reporting table for unit costs - Covid-19 (only to be attached to the Final Report, if applicable)
2. Technical Implementation Report (All documents will be available at a later stage)
3. Final report on implementation of the action (All documents will be available at a later stage).
4. (Audit) Certificate on the financial statements and underlying accounts (Report of Factual Findings on the Final Financial Report – Type II). - *Documents will be available at a later stage*

Other documents

1. CBHE Joint Declaration
2. Individual Travel Report
3. Time-Sheet

To open the documents "Time-Sheet" and "Financial Statements", please right click on the words "en" and select "save target as" or "save link as" to download the document. When saving the file on your hard disk, please choose the file extension .xlsm to activate the macros necessary to delete rows in the file.

Dissemination and visual identity

Visual identity

More information can be seen at: <https://cbhegrantholders2021.eu/resources>