

Interreg



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IPA Greece – North Macedonia

Internal Rules of Procedure of the Joint Secretariat v2.0

Interreg IPA VI-A CBC Programme
Greece – North Macedonia 2021-2027

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Abbreviations:

(AA) Audit Authority

(CA) Certifying Authority

(CP) Co Operation Programme

(MC) Monitoring Committee

(JS) Joint Secretariat

(LB) Lead Beneficiary

(MA) Managing Authority

(MIS) Management Information System

(NA) National Authority

(PB) Project Beneficiary

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Foreword

The present internal rules describe the organisational and functional procedures of the Joint Secretariat of the “Interreg IPA VI – A CBC Programme Greece – North Macedonia 2021-2027” (hereinafter: JS). They include binding provisions regarding the responsibilities and procedures to be respected.

Article 1: The Objective of the Internal Rules of Procedure

The objective of the Internal Rules of Procedure is the provision of a framework of rules for the assurance of:

- the smooth internal cooperation and coordination of the whole JS system, as well as in relation to the MA and the other Programme bodies
- the orderly and smooth operation of the JS system
- the cooperation with the Managing Authority and the National Authorities of the Programme
- the cooperation with the potential Beneficiaries and the Beneficiaries
- the cooperation with the Audit Authority
- the observance of legislation and
- the transparency of the applied processes

Article 2: Institutional framework

The procedures described herein are regulated by the following legislative framework:

Legal Framework

- The European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations, Delegated and Implementing Acts for the 2021-2027 period, especially:
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021, laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund, and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013, and any amendment;
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1301/2013, and any amendment.
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III)
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial Cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1299/2013, and any amendment;
 - Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/74 setting out the list of Interreg programmes and indicating the global amount of the total support from the European Regional Development Fund and from each external financing instrument of the Union for each programme and the list of the amounts transferred between strands under the European territorial cooperation goal for the period 2021 to 2027;
 - Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/75 setting out the list of Interreg programme areas to receive support from the European Regional Development Fund and

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external financing instruments of the Union, broken down by strand and Interreg programme under the European territorial cooperation goal;

- Commission delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds;
- Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR);
- Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027
- The Cooperation Programme (Interreg VI-A) IPA CBC Greece – North Macedonia 2021-2027 approval by the European Commission on 23/11/2022 under Decision Number C (2022) 8646
- Law 4914/2022 «Management, Control and Application of development interventions for the programming period 2021-2027» (Greek State Gazette 61/A/21.3.2022)
- Common Ministerial Decision No 3411/16-01-2023 (Greek State Gazette B' 183/18-01-2023) «Scope, tasks and internal restructure of the «Special Service Interreg 2021-2027» of article 9, par. 8 of article 65 Law 4914/2022 and of the Joint Secretariats of Interreg Programmes of article 11 Law 4914/2022.

Article 3: Responsibilities of the Joint Secretariat

The Joint Secretariat supports the Managing Authority the Joint Monitoring Committee and respective Committees of the Programme in fulfilling their respective responsibilities, for the programming Period 2021-2027 as well as programming Period 2014-2020. Furthermore, it may co-operate with the National Authority of North Macedonia for the implementation of information and publicity actions and any other issue of relevance.

The Joint Secretariat provides information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the Programme and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

In particular, the JS assists the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee in the following responsibilities:

1. Assists the Managing Authority in organising the meetings of the Monitoring Committee

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2. Assists the Managing Authority with the drafting of the project selection criteria;
3. Assists the Managing Authority in drafting the material concerning the calls for proposals;
4. Provides support to potential beneficiaries during the preparation of proposals. The JS promotes the cooperation and the partnership of bodies from both sides of the border through the organisation of various events that increase programme visibility. In this respect it may cooperate with the National Authority of North Macedonia for the organisation of seminars and other promotional activities.
5. Assists Unit A' in the process of evaluation of the proposals based on the selection criteria, approved by the Monitoring Committee and the selection of operations and ensures that the selection of operations is in accordance with the approved Programme criteria and EU and National Rules.
6. The Joint Secretariat in cooperation with Unit A, carries out the first phase of evaluation, in accordance to the approved selection criteria and follows project implementation through a monitoring mechanism, including, among others, the collection and processing of project reports, on the spot visits, the evaluation of project outputs and results as well as the financial and operational project implementation; During on the spot visits, it can be assisted, if needed, by the info Point or by representatives of the National Authority of North Macedonia
7. Informs the National Authority of North Macedonia accordingly on every problematic identified during the implementation of the projects.
8. Monitors commitments and payments of EU funds at programme level in cooperation with the Managing Authority;
9. Provides technical support to beneficiaries throughout the implementation period of the operations;
10. Supports the Managing Authority in closure controls by Audit Authority/EDEL or other responsible bodies.
11. Supports the Managing Authority in ensuring an effective audit trail at all levels;
12. Prepares reports, on the implementation of the Cooperation Programme, in cooperation with the Managing Authority;
13. Organizes and operates an information Desk (where applicable) in cooperation with Unit A'.
14. Supports the Managing Authority in ensuring that information and publicity requirements are met;
15. Prepares the Technical Assistance annual plan and submits it to the Managing Authority;
16. Contributes in the achievement of targets of the Managing Authority

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17. Proposes to Unit B' the modification or termination of the Subsidy Contracts as well as the closure of the projects.
18. Collects and records in the Management Information System accounting records for all operations and project implementation data required for financial management, monitoring, verification, audit and evaluation;
19. Monitors the environmental impact from project implementation in the framework of the programme;
20. Assist the Managing Authority in the evaluation reports related to the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme on the basis of the evaluation plan.

Article 4: Job descriptions

Coordinator of the Joint Secretariat

The Joint Secretariat Coordinator is responsible for the overall coordination of the Joint Secretariat for the management and monitoring of the Joint Secretariat's tasks and the programme's operation (management of tasks and co-ordination of workflow of the Joint Secretariat) as defined in Article 3. The Joint Secretariat Coordinator ensures that the decisions of the Monitoring Committee, and Certifying Authority of the programme are being respected and implemented.

All staff of the Joint Secretariat report directly to the Coordinator.

The Joint Secretariat Coordinator reports to the Managing Authority.

More specifically:

1. Supports the Managing Authority in the implementation of the Programme's strategy;
2. Sets and revises, in collaboration with the MA, objectives or working procedures of the JS for the improvement of the overall implementation of the programme;
3. Monitors and appraises the operational and financial progress of the projects and the corresponding indicators, of the operational and financial objectives of the Programme and - if necessary – proposes to the MA the appropriate corrective measures;
4. Represents the JS to the management bodies of the programme such as: Managing Authority (MA), Certifying Authority (CA), Audit Authority (AA), Partner States, Beneficiaries, Controllers, other administrative bodies included in the management and control system of the Programme and the Commission, on the basis of sound Programme management and implementation of EU and national regulatory framework;

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5. Prepares the necessary programme reports and submits them to the MA and with the consent of the MA to the respective programme management bodies following their request;
6. Assists the MA in informing the final beneficiaries of any decisions taken by the Monitoring Committee;
7. Coordinates, organizes, allocates and supervises the execution of tasks and guides the JS members aiming to the correct and the timely completion of their work, according to the MA guidance;
8. Identifies the needs and determines the kind of assistance required for the facilitation of the JS tasks and proposes accordingly to the MA;
9. Organizes the basic formation of the JS staff members on subjects that are related to the JS tasks;
10. Cooperates with the members of the JS for the harmonisation of the procedures, the early detection and the resolution of the problems;
11. Ensures a unified way of managing all issues pertaining to the JS operation, according to the MA guidance;
12. Manages human resources issues;
13. Drafts the yearly working plan of the JS;

Project Officer

The Project Officer's responsibilities include the development and the implementation of tools and administrative procedures at programme and project level concerning project implementation, evaluation, monitoring and reporting. More specifically:

1. Drafts, updates and optimizes programme documents (project proposal packages, guides and manuals, procedures and support documents for sound project management for final beneficiaries) and submits them to the JS Coordinator.
2. Supports the procedure of the project proposals submission, by providing clarifications to applicants regarding the calls, and instructions for the correct completion of the documents, as well as by participating in publicity and information activities (meetings, workshops etc.).
3. Prepares reports (tables, statistics) on submitted project proposals and submits them to the JS Coordinator.

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4. Supports the MA to the drafting of the project evaluation manuals/ procedures according to the selection criteria decided by the Monitoring Committee.
 - Assists Unit A' in the process of evaluation of the proposals based on the selection criteria, approved by the Monitoring Committee and the selection of operations.
 - Prepares reports (classification tables, statistics etc.) on the project proposals evaluation and submits them to the JS Coordinator
5. Monitors the projects' implementation (implementation, reporting, modifications, closure etc.) Participates in meetings with the beneficiaries, at project level, for the resolution of problems of the project implementation. Keeps records and organizes the filing (electronic version and hard copies) of the documents related to the project implementation.
6. Processes requests for modification that are submitted by the Lead Beneficiaries and proposes accordingly to the JS Coordinator.
7. Supports the MA in the process of the requests for modification.
8. Supports the MA in the organisation of the Monitoring Committee Meetings and in the implementation of their decisions, in general.
9. Enters in the management information system all required data regarding the implemented projects, according to the approved control management system and the guidance of the MA.
10. Cooperates with the MA in the preparation of reports to the Monitoring Committee and the European Commission, regarding the operational and financial progress of the projects and of the Programme and submits them to the Coordinator.
11. Contributes in the preparation / drafting of the reports of the Programme.
12. Contribute in the preparation/ drafting of the Evaluation Reports.
13. Monitors the environmental impact of projects (according to the system in force) and compiles relevant reports with the MA guidance.
14. Monitors the application of the recommendations and corrections, after the control of the National or/and European Auditing bodies.
15. Supports the MA in the continuous control of implementation process of the Programme and the timely detecting and tackling problems / obstacles in the implementation of the projects, so that the Programme objectives are achieved.
16. Supports the MA in maintaining and archiving of all documents that are related to the expenses and the audits, so that an effective audit trail is ensured.

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17. Participates in information seminars for beneficiaries, organised by the MA and the JS.
18. Participates in information/ training activities related to his/ her competences / responsibilities.
19. Monitors progress indicators and financial data for each project and submits them to the Co-ordinator.
20. Supports the MA in performing on-the-spot visits of operations.

Project officers may temporarily and additionally undertake financial officer responsibilities (ie. Programme financial monitoring) when additional support is required for the smooth implementation of the programme.

Communication and Technical Assistance Officer

The Communication and Technical Assistance Officer contributes to the implementation of the Communication Plan of the Programme. He/ She supports the Managing Authority in developing, monitoring and evaluating the Communication Plan. The Communication and Technical Assistance Officer is responsible for the management of the Technical Assistance Priority Axis of the Programme. More specifically:

1. Prepares a Communication Plan and supports its implementation, following the EC Regulations.
2. Regularly maintains and updates the programme's webpage and social media accounts.
3. Is responsible for the partner search webpage for the benefit of potential beneficiaries.
4. Ensures that all interested stakeholders have access to the Programme's documents, news and announcements.
5. Develops Programme online, audio and paper publications and promotional materials.
6. Collaborates with the Communication Officer of the MA, the Operating Structure in North Macedonia and external experts for information and publicity activities according to the Communication Plan in force, and adapts it accordingly.
7. Supports the Managing Authority in the preparation of the reports on communication matters addressed to the European Commission (reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the communication plan).
8. Manages Public Relations' issues.

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9. Supports final beneficiaries in the dissemination of information about their projects (strategic support during the development and implementation of project communications plans as well as technical support for the use of Programme communication tools, social networks etc.)
10. Organizes and/or participates in meetings and events in coordination with stakeholders of the Programme as well as seminars for Lead Beneficiaries and Project Beneficiaries, on communication issues.
11. Prepares the Technical Assistance annual plan and forwards it to the MA.
12. Contributes in the drafting of any material produced by the JS (guides, reports and so forth) for calls, project proposal evaluations, project monitoring in cooperation with Project Officers.
13. Ensures both internal and external accessibility of information related to the development and results of the Programme and its projects.
14. Is in charge of the Secretariat's Library (electronic and hard copies) with laws, relevant information etc.
15. Organizes and/or participates in meetings and events of the JS pertaining to his/her duties.

Communication & Technical Assistance Officer may temporarily undertake additional project officer responsibilities (due to the fact that similar qualifications are required for both positions) when additional support is required for the smooth implementation of the programme. Each time the members of the jMonitoring Committee will be informed.

Antenna Office / Info Point

The Joint Secretariat will have an Antenna Office, at North Macedonia.

The Antenna Office responsibilities concern the implementation of tools and administrative procedures at Programme and project level, concerning project implementation, monitoring and reporting.

More specifically:

- a) to provide support to beneficiaries from the IPA country side throughout the period of implementation of operations;
- b) to implement information and publicity actions in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the CP.
- c) To support JS/MA/NA activities as required.

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Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant provides administrative support to the Joint Secretariat and secretarial support to the Programme. Specifically:

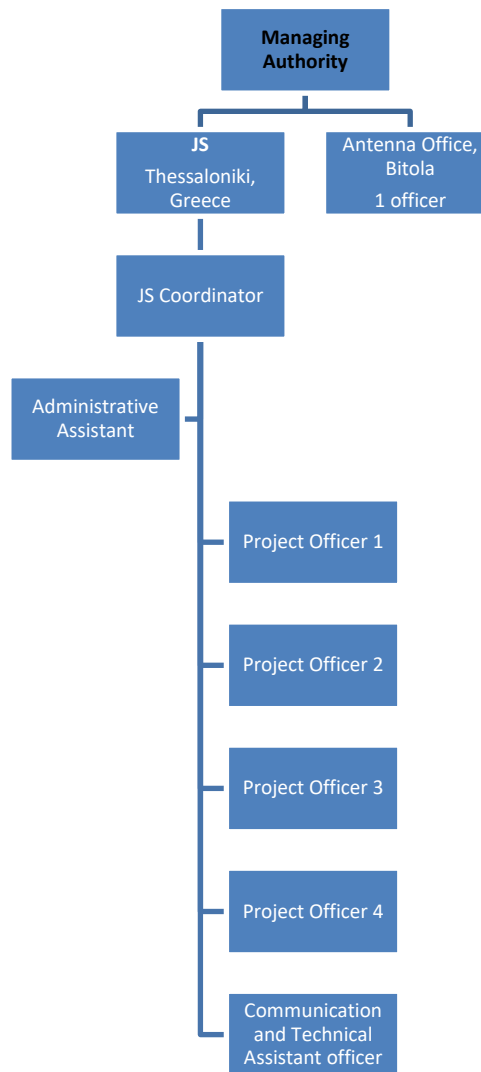
1. Supports the Coordinator and the JS members in the processing of the daily activities (Keeping minutes, organizing archives, managing the telephone centre, drafting the official correspondence, contacting external collaborators and suppliers).
2. Keeps a complete archive with individual files for all documents, after the required distribution and the necessary actions that have to be performed concerning the documents.
3. Processes the official correspondence of the JS and keeps an archive with contact details of organisations and institutions with which the JS communicates.
4. Contributes in the preparation of meetings, provides secretarial support to the Monitoring Committee as well as in the organisation of meetings of the team of auditors.
5. Provides organisational and operational support to the JS activities (organization of seminars, meetings, conferences).
6. Supports in the implementation of the Technical Assistance activities of the Programme, if needed..
7. Keeps the attendance sheets and leave plans of the JS members under the JS Coordinator's guidance.
8. Monitors the timetable of the JS activities, in collaboration with the Coordinator.
9. Fulfils administrative responsibilities and human resources issues of the JS.

Article 5: Organizational structure

The Joint Secretariat consists of eight (8) staff members, namely: one (1) coordinator, four (4) project officers, one (1) communication and technical assistance officer, one (1) Antenna Office officer and one (1) administrative assistant.

The JS shall be hosted by the Managing Authority. The staff of the JS consists of members with University or/and Technical education and is supported by an Administrative Assistant. The whole JS system is presented in the following diagram:

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Article 6: Staff Management

1. Employment contracts are concluded under Greek law in Greek and English for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. Personnel files and payroll accounting for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. are administered by M.O.U. S.A. with the assistance of Unit D of the Managing Authority. The employment contract for the Info Point will be concluded and signed under the law in North Macedonia, also in English language.
2. All labour issues for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. remain the sole responsibility of M.O.U. S.A. in collaboration with Unit D of the Managing Authority.

The responsibilities, tasks and workflow of the JS and its members can be adjusted, after the approval of the M.A., according to the current administrative needs and obligations of the Programme Management.

Article 7: Location of the JS Structures

The address of the JS office is:

Joint Secretariat

65, Georgikis Scholis Av.

ZEDA Building, Entrance 4, 2nd floor

57001 Thessaloniki, Greece

Tel: +30 2310 469648

Fax:+30 2310 469670

Web: www.greece-northmacedonia.eu email: jts-ipa-cbc@mou.gr

The address of the Antenna Office is:

Shirok Sokak" no.65, 3rd floor,

7000 Bitola

Tel/fax: +389 (0) 47 220 107

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e-mail : antennaofficerbitola@gmail.com

The above mentioned office location is the place of employment.

The Internal Rules of Procedures of the JS are adopted and entered into force on the date of their approval.