Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on Project Implementation

for the 1st CfP projects in the Interreg V-A Hungary-Croatia Co-operation Programme 2014-2020

1) Can we start the next beneficiary report right after submitting the previous one?

Yes, it is possible to start to prepare the upcoming beneficiary report while the antecedent one is under approval. However, it is not possible to submit it before the antecedent one is approved and thus the Declaration on Validation of Expenditure (DoVE) is issued.

It is highly recommended not to start the next beneficiary report if the project has to be modified due to any of the beneficiaries participating in the project, because the already started beneficiary report will be dropped if the project is modified by the JS in BO. Before starting the next beneficiary report it is worth to consult with the Lead Beneficiary about foreseen project modification needs and possible scheduling of reporting. For further details please read all questions and answers on project modification.

2) Is it possible to start to prepare and/or submit the upcoming beneficiary report while the project level progress report (Project Report & Application for Reimbursement – PR&AfR) for the antecedent reporting period is under approval?

Yes, it is possible to start to prepare and even to submit it. Beneficiary level reporting (BRs) to the relevant First level Control Bodies and project level Lead Beneficiary progress reporting (PR&AfR) can overlap. However possible project modification needs have to be considered. For further details please read all questions and answers on project modification.

3) Is it possible to the LB to select Declarations on Validation of Expenditures (DoVEs) for different reporting periods when reporting on LB level (submitting PR&AfR)? How about merging reporting periods?

In general LB level reports (PR&AfRs) should cover absolutely the same reporting periods for all beneficiaries (Bs). However, there might be exceptional cases when merging of reporting periods for some Bs is unavoidable. It is when the given beneficiary is reporting on two periods and receives the DoVEn+(n±1) for the merged period while the rest of the partnership receives only the DoVEn. In this

1

case the LB report contains DOVEs for different periods. The LB and the whole partnership has to target that in the next PR&AfR the reporting periods are synchronised and the DOVEs cover the same period. Can I start PR&AfR reporting without all the partner level reports submitted and validated (DoVE issued)?

Due to the integrated reporting approach of the IMIS and the „Lead Beneficiary principle", it is strongly advised to coordinate reporting among beneficiaries (See Figure 1.). Not coordinated reporting might cause delays regarding the validation and reimbursement of costs for the partnership since PR&AfR reporting should be started after all the DoVEs are available (meaning al the beneficiary level reports are approved) for the given period.
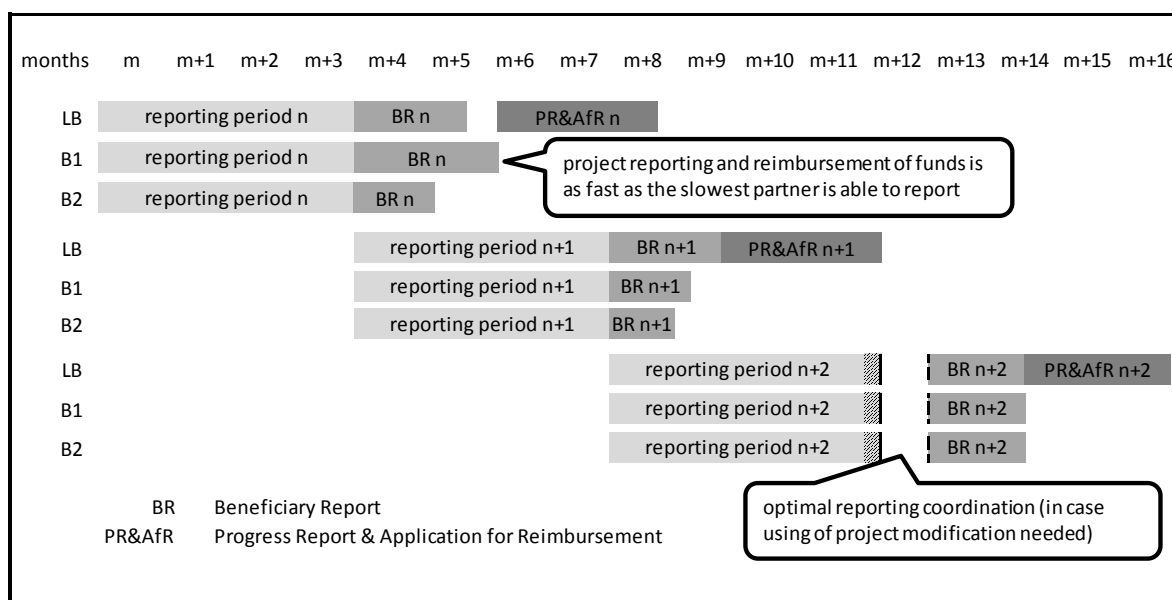

Figure 1. Coordination of reporting

4) When and how can I submit requests for project modifications?

Reporting on beneficiary level and on LB level are overlapping in time. However, reporting (whichever level B or LB) and modifying in IMIS cannot run as overlapping/parallel processes thus a so called artificial gap in reporting has to be inserted (see Figure 2.). Among others the Lead Beneficiary bears the responsibility to inquire information from all its beneficiaries about needs of modification practically after every beneficiary level reporting, at the time when the PR&AfR is prepared. If there is a need for modification of <u>any</u> of the beneficiaries then the LB should immediately notify <u>the whole partnership</u> about not to start the upcoming beneficiary level reports (BRs) by <u>any</u> of the beneficiaries; since during the modification process in IMIS the already started beneficiary reports will be automatically dropped.

The Lead Beneficiary should collect <u>all</u> modification needs from <u>all</u> beneficiaries and submit the "Summary of Modification" table (template can be downloaded on the Programme web page: http://www.huhr-cbc.com/en/project-implementation-documents) certified by the LB and scanned along with the modified/updated AF to the relevant JS manager via e-mail. It is advisable to notify the relevant JS manager right after the modification need occur. Timing of the modification is important, please check the diagram below (see Figure 2.).

The upcoming reporting process on beneficiary level should be halted until the modifications are approved and even adapted in IMIS. Depending on the type of modification (in this respect please consult the Project Implementation Handbook, PIH article 2.3) the approval process might take weeks. In this manner there might be a couple of weeks delay in beneficiary-level reporting (BRs). Consequently the original deadlines on reporting cannot be kept. The JS will inform the LB when the project modification is done in IMIS. The LB has to inform all the Beneficiaries about the approval of the modification request and so preparation of the upcoming beneficiary reports can be started.
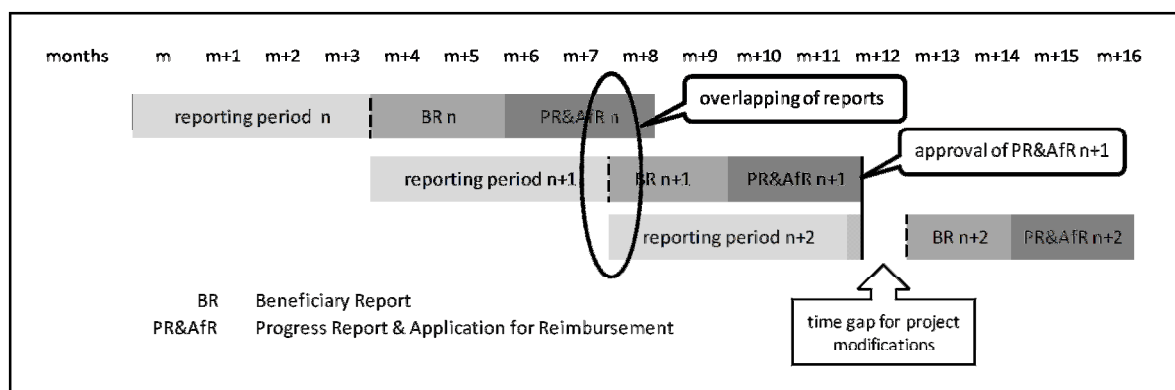

Figure 2. Timeframe of reporting and project modification

IMPORTANT NOTE: To avoid overlapping processes a request for modification can be submitted only after the approval of a given LB-level report (PR&AfR).

5) **Is it possible that the same person is both The Recording user and The Signatory user? Is there any prerequisite for the 'signatory' user role to be obtained? ie. has/have to be statutory representative(s)?**

The **Recording User** is primarily responsible for the **management (upload and modification) of** the project (part) related data inside the IMIS system, therefore the person should have a day-to-day insight into project activities and should be familiar with the details of project implementation as well as all the supporting documents to be submitted during the reporting procedure.

The **Signatory User** is the person **certifying the outcomes of the project (part) management process** (the upload and modification of data due to the reporting) and acting as a safeguard of the reporting process.

In order to keep the four-eye principle, the two roles should be distributed according to the internal rules and procedures (or agreement) of the Beneficiary organisations, in line with the level of responsibilities the two roles entail.

6) Can the two roles be performed by subcontracted external experts?

While it is recommended that internal staff is nominated for the IMIS related roles, it is down to the Beneficiary to organise access to the system to the persons performing the tasks in their name. Please note that the Signatory User should always be an internal staff member, responsible for the implementation of the project part.
However since the e-mail addresses of the recording and signatory users are given in order to receive automatic e-mails and receive information about the processes related to beneficiary reports (LBs on the project level report as well), it is worth to consider not leaving out the Contact person from the information flow.

7) Does the 'recording' user fill in every different type of data, i.e. financial report, academic report, HR modification etc.? Or will there be differentiated roles within the 'recording' users for different scopes of work usually present at Beneficiary organization (like financial manager, project manager, communication manager, academic/vocational leader etc.)?

Only one user will be given access to IMIS for each role within the organisation, while the individual tasks can be shared according to the internal arrangements in each Beneficiary organisation. **Exceptionally (in case of legal requirement),** additional Signatory users can be nominated where the internal rules of the organisation make it necessary.

The import of one (received) certificate, log-in and work (editing the report data) from several locations is possible (using the same entry data), it should be avoided working on the same progress report in multiple browser windows (by multiple persons on multiple locations) at the **same time** is not supported.

8) As the LB of the project, we need to have 4 persons/users – 2 on project level and 2 on beneficiary level – is it possible that the same persons function as users on project- and beneficiary level?

The two roles should be distributed according to the internal rules and procedures of the Beneficiary organisations (or agreement), in line with the level of responsibilities the two roles entail. From the system point of view there are no obstacles to have the same persons nominated on both the B and the LB reporting user levels. Please note that **each individual role** (whether performed by one or more people) will receive separate log-in data (meaning the person could as in case described above hold min. 1 and max. 4 IMIS access certificates for the same project: 1 Recording and 1 Signatory for BR Front

Office, and 1 Recording and 1 Signatory for PR&AfR Front Office). The JS suggests having internal registry of entry data (electronic or paper format) for all reporting levels user roles held inside the (Lead) Beneficiary organization. Please note, restart of used browser is required when the change of user roles and connected certificate in IMIS FO is to be performed.

9) After starting new project part level beneficiary report (BR), we noticed that the VAT status is not in line with the one we obtain in reality. Is there a way for the beneficiary to change the VAT status of his organization?

VAT status of the given Beneficiary, even if changed before submission of the first beneficiary report, is required to be reported (VAT status statement – please consult "National guidelines HR FLC" and "National guidelines HU FLC" on http://www.huhr-cbc.com/en/project-implementation-documents) alongside other documentation requested to be submitted with given Beneficiary report. Thus, if entering the expenditure data in case the VAT status in IMIS is different than in reality, IMIS will give the "Warning message" while entering a new invoice data, which you can resolve by clicking on it whereupon the invoice entered data can be successfully saved.

10) IMIS system does not allow us to report full amount of the expenditure planed and reported accordingly in the given budget item. Can we use other budget item planed amount to report on the rest of the expenditure with the same supporting documents?

In general, the expenditure of a given budget item that occurred within the reporting period can be reported within the financial frame as planned for that respective budget item. Therefore in case the cost is overstepping the planned amount, the Beneficiary should report until the budget item is allowing (until the maximum amount available) and the rest should be reported either in the next reporting period or in the final beneficiary report the latest, after the project is modified and the missing amount is reallocated to the given budget item. When the overstepping amount can be reported it is important to clearly identify the overstepping costs and support it with the same circle of documents that were provided for the first time when the majority of the cost was reported.

In several cases, starting the project part level beneficiary report in one month and submitting the report in the next month will cause automatic update of the exchange rate. Expenditures incurred in a currency other than the Euro shall be converted into Euro by the Beneficiaries using the monthly accounting **exchange rate** of the EC (InforEuro) in the month during which that expenditure was submitted for verification to the FLC body. Please consult "National guidelines HR FLC" and "National guidelines HU FLC" on http://www.huhr-cbc.com/en/project-implementation-documents. Consequently, the risk exists that the update will negatively influence the expenditure amount when inserted in IMIS and the reported amount will exceed the planed amount. If possible to foresee the risk and influence it, JS is suggesting beneficiaries to signal the necessary reallocation need to the Lead Beneficiary who will in connection with the JS coordinate an overall project modification request. Project modifications can be initiated after the project level report (PR&AfR) of the previous period is submitted. The finalised

modification request will be inserted through the Back Office after the previous PR&AfR is approved. For further details please read all questions and answers on project modification.

11) **How to submit BR and get approved DoVE report if the expenditure in the reported period was 0,00 EUR?**

In case of submission of beneficiary report with 0,00 expenditure, please note that lump sum simplified cost options applied on budget line 1. Preparation costs and budget subline 6.2. Equipment for general (office) use is possible to request as reimbursement in the given beneficiary report if at least one other budget (sub)line is reported with 0 (zero) costs (entered in IMIS Invoice sheet). When filling in the Invoice screen, please indicate in the descriptions cells as text: ' 0,00 expenditure' and upload into the invoice folder a blank page with the same text: "0,00 expenditure reported in order to reimburse the office equipment lump sum and the preparation costs within the 1st Beneficiary Report".