

Guidance of the Managing Authority with regard to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on projects

in the frame of the

**INTERREG V-A SLOVAKIA-HUNGARY
COOPERATION PROGRAMME**

Date of publishing:

17 March 2020

The Managing Authority (MA), the National Authorities (NAs), the Joint Secretariat (JS) and the First Level Controls (FLCs) of the Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme have recently received a number of queries related to cancelled events, travels, undelivered equipment, etc. because of the COVID-19 pandemic. In many cases, the questions are linked to the eligibility of related expenditures. In this regard, the MA/JS provide the following guidance to all lead beneficiaries, beneficiaries and control bodies of the programme.

General instructions

In general, the MA/JS advises to assess the situation and act in accordance to the instructions of the relevant authorities responsible for public health, such as WHO or national health organisations. In case of official travel ban/warnings for the region the projects might be forced to cancel the project related travels and events. You should avoid travelling if:

- There is an official travel ban or travel warning for the region, by your organisation, or at any relevant territory;
- A partner organisation restricts travels for meetings;
- You have justified medical conditions.

Eligibility of expenditure already occurred

In the situation that, because of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the meeting or an event would be cancelled/ postponed or costs or delays incur regarding equipment purchase or works, we recommend that you ask for reimbursement quickly and according to contractual terms.

Expenditure related to the cancelled travel, event, etc. (e.g. tickets, pre-paid accommodation, event services, other procurements) that has occurred before the cancellation shall be eligible and the responsible FLCs shall accept them if:

- They cannot be recovered by any means. The travelling persons and organisers are obliged to minimize such expenditure;
- They are subject to inevitable external circumstances (force majeure) e.g. official warnings by WHO or national authorities, or to the COVID-19 related medical condition or its suspicion of some participant;
- This expenditure and the relevant instructions of the authorities for such a decision or the medical condition are properly documented.

In case the expenditure is reimbursed by other means (by the provider, insurance, etc.), it cannot be claimed in the framework of the programme.

Further changes in the implementation of the projects

In general, projects are advised to continue implementing their activities as originally planned. Due to the constantly and rapidly changing situation, the MA/JS recommend:

- For future travels and events make use of flexible booking options and contractual arrangements allowing refundable cancellations;

- In order to avoid negative impact to the project implementation, wherever possible it is recommended to replace cancelled meetings, events by on-line meetings/video-conferences, targeted online promotional campaigns, videos, online presentation of results, use of social media and website, etc.;
- In case project activities other than travel and events are concerned due to the COVID-19-virus situation, projects are requested to properly document those cases and to identify alternative solutions to implement the activities in question.
- Please use the proposed alternative measures to reduce the delay in project implementation to the possible minimum – project prolongation is possible only in individually and duly justified cases within the framework of the general timewise eligibility rules of the programme.
- Please to try to reach the goals and indicators of the projects to the best of the present possibilities. The MA/JS will be open to case-by-case solutions with regard of each project that has had issues with attaining certain goals, indicators or any outputs planned in the project.

Should you need any further information or clarification, please contact your designated Programme Manager by e-mail or phone.

Best regards,

Managing Authority

Interreg V-A Slovakia-Hungary Cooperation Programme