



Funded by  
the European Union and  
Russian Federation



LITHUANIA - RUSSIA  
CBC 2014-2020



Managing Authority Guidance Note for Projects financed by  
the Lithuania-Russia Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020  
implementation during COVID-19 pandemic

The Programme's Managing Authority (hereinafter – MA), the National Authorities and the Joint Technical Secretariat (hereinafter – JTS) with the branch office in Kaliningrad region of the Lithuania – Russia cross-border cooperation programme 2014-2020 (hereinafter – Programme) have received a great number of questions regarding difficulties in implementation of project activities, traveling and questions regarding eligibility of costs due to COVID-19 pandemic. The short explanations are therefore provided below for project implementers (beneficiaries) and control bodies.

### General instructions

- Please assess the situation based on the advice from national public authorities, World Health Organisation (WHO), your embassy, national health organisations and partner organisations.
- Please avoid travelling if there is an official ban or travel warning for the region or when partner organisations restrict travels for meetings or events.
- Please use remote work methods and online communication whenever possible.
- In assessing the situation and further actions, please note that beneficiaries affected by the force majeure conditions are not exempted from obligations to pay, deliver, render services, but rather are exempted from responsibility for untimely fulfilment of such obligations.
- The information regarding pandemic in **Lithuania** is published on the website [www.koronastop.lt](http://www.koronastop.lt), the free twenty-four-hour coronavirus hotline is **1808** (when calling from a foreign country **+370 (37) 367 963**). In order to help to stop the virus spreading much quicker, it is recommended to install a **Mobile app "Korona Stop LT"** (Engl. Corona Stop LT). Through the "Korona Stop LT" app, an infected person can quickly inform all people with whom they have been in close contact during the infectious period.
- The information regarding pandemic in the **Russian Federation** is constantly updated on the website [www.rospotrebnadzor.ru](http://www.rospotrebnadzor.ru), telephone line for questions is + 7 800 555 49 43 (Joint support centre of Rospotrebnadzor). Relevant information is available on the website [www.стопкоронавирус.рф](http://www.стопкоронавирус.рф), joint hotline is +7 800 2000 112. The twenty-four-hour coronavirus hotline in the **Kaliningrad region** is **112**.

### Eligibility of expenditure already occurred

In the event of payment for hotels, tickets, catering, conference rooms, etc., reimbursement must be requested as soon as possible in accordance with the terms of the contract. In the case of non-refundable funds, please contact your auditors immediately in order to assess the case. The auditor may, in cases of force majeure and based on the partner's documented recovery efforts, consider the expenditure incurred as eligible for the project. However, all documentation and justification on the efforts taken shall be available.

If you have more questions, please contact your Project or Financial Manager within JTS.

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

## Guidance Note of the Managing Authority during COVID-19

- 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 decision or the medical condition are properly documented.

In case the expenditure is refundable (from the provider, insurance, etc.), it cannot be claimed in the framework of the programme.

### **Provisions regarding the implementation of the projects**

Due to the changing situation and conditions, the MA and JTS recommend:

- To continue with implementation of activities (even if modified) in order to reach the goals and indicators of the projects to the best of the present possibilities.
- However, the health and safety of people during the pandemic should be seriously taken into account. Thus, the persons involved shall keep to the requirements of quarantine and national restrictions in their country (i.e. home office, travel limitations, online meetings<sup>1</sup>, etc.); the possibilities of electronic documents and e-signature should be used as much as possible in order to reduce physical traveling and contacts to a minimum during pandemic.
- 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 online meetings / video-conferences, targeted online promotional campaigns, videos, online presentation of results, use of social media and website, etc., if the quality of project results will not be reduced; as well keeping the cross-border nature of events as much as possible. Please note, that the online activities shall be properly documented as well.
- In order to ensure the proper reporting and documentation of online activities (events, meetings, trainings and etc.), please take the screenshots or photos as an evidence of performance of events. Regarding the participants list, it is recommended to have a screenshot or a picture of all attendees or in case the external event is planned to have the list of registered participants as well. Please, remember to inform JTS in advance as required according to the Guidelines for Applicants and Beneficiaries.

---

<sup>1</sup> When organising and hosting digital events, it is recommended to use such online platforms as Zoom, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, Adobe connect, Whatsapp, Viber, Messenger, Google Hangout or others.

## Guidance Note of the Managing Authority during COVID-19

- In case project activities other than travel and events are concerned to COVID-19 pandemic situation, project beneficiaries are requested to properly document those cases and to identify alternative solutions to implement the activities in question.
- The project managers and coordinators are advised to carefully review the agreements with suppliers in order to identify any risks in timely delivery and possibility of temporary suspension of the agreements, if parties agree.
- It is advised to transfer payments to the suppliers after delivery as fast as possible.
- The auditors of the projects are to use the online methods for verification of project's costs (checking evidence documents, photos, video and audio recording, etc.) and postpone the-on-the-spot verifications until the end of the pandemic and before approval of the final reports of the projects.
- The MA/JTS will provide online guidance and website presentations for the implementation related requirements instead of physical meetings.

### **The procedure of changes and modifications:**

The modifications within the projects shall be made on case by case basis with prior agreement of MA/JTS.

The procedure is as follows:

1. Contact your project manager at the JTS. In case the project identifies the need to postpone or modify the project activities, the Lead Beneficiary shall contact its responsible project manager in the JTS and inform on the situation as well as provide a written proposal on how the activities shall be implemented or modified.
2. In case the changes proposed (regarding online solutions instead of face-to-face meetings, etc.) do not affect the project outputs and do not increase the budget allocated for the proposed activity and no reallocations are needed in the Project Budget, the Lead Beneficiary notifies JTS about any changes prior to implementation of the activity as described in Section "Types of amendments to the project" of the Guidelines for Applicants and Beneficiaries.
3. In case the changes proposed affect the project outputs and/or exceed the allocated budget for the activity, the request for minor amendment shall be submitted prior to implementation of the activity via "Minor amendments" procedure as described in Section "Types of amendments to the project" of the Guidelines for Applicants and Beneficiaries.
4. As a general rule the prolongation of the project is to be requested during the last reporting period of project implementation. 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

## Guidance Note of the Managing Authority during COVID-19

of the Programme. Project duration including any possible prolongation cannot be accepted longer than 31 December, 2022.

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