

Adjusted FLC Methodology During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Under the social distancing and/or the lockdown measures in the cooperating countries because of the covid-19 pandemic and within the framework of the Programme Management and Control System (MCS) as in force, the Managing Authority suggested specific flexibility rules for verifications, taking into account that “quality” of verifications should not be put at risk. The MA **suggested six (6) adjustment points which considered applicable within the framework of the First Level Control System** of the cooperating countries as described in **the MCS in force**.

The communication between the **competent authorities took place between April 9th and 13th, 2020 and concluded with the approval/acceptance** of the suggested six (6) adjustment points, which are the following:

- 1. Exceptionally during the COVID-19 lockdown/restriction period on national level and starting from the first semester of 2020, the on-the-spot verification for all projects is not considered compulsory.**
- 2. In case of on-the-spot visits planned for the first semester 2020, the FLCs should get sound proof of the implementation of the physical object of the operation by any means which may be applied remotely and provide proof of implementation beyond doubt. These means depend on the nature of each project and may indicatively be photographs and/or videos and/or live (skype) connections accompanied by officially signed declarations from beneficiaries, full package of officially/formally accepted deliverables of studies, officially stamped and signed scanned proof for external expertise services and/or official timesheets and so on. A specific comment should be made in the “Certificate” and/or the “Verification Report, declaring that, even though the verification was desk based is considered equivalent to “on-the-spot verification”. In case of doubt regarding the actual project implementation, the Controller should not proceed, using the above procedure and in cooperation with their national FLC authority and the MA must reschedule the on the spot visit. Regarding the MIS procedures, the Controller follows the same approach according to the guidelines for the on the spot checks.**
- 3. In any case, the Managing Authority reserves the right to request specific on-the-spot verification visits to be performed when the lockdown/restriction period is officially terminated on national level.**
- 4. Administrative verifications will be continued via the MIS. The derived documents “Certificate of verified expenditure” and “Verification Report” are not signed and stamped by the Controllers. The official MIS electronically produced stamp on these documents is considered sufficient proof of FLC originality.**



5. **With the consent of the FLC body of the concerned country, not signed documents will be exceptionally accepted by the Controllers during the lockdown/restriction period in the concerned country. In these cases, the “not signed” documents should be always accompanied by an email from the signatories and an official “Declaration of Authenticity” from the concerned project partner, ensuring the correctness and originality of the specific documents. The Managing Authority shall provide a common Template for “Declaration of Authenticity” to be used by beneficiaries of the cooperating countries, for this purpose. In any case, signed documents should be provided when possible or should be provided as soon as this is possible.**
6. **All the above also apply for the FLC Supervision procedures of each country.**

It was also agreed that the above adjustments **should initially apply for the first semester 2020, while before the end of June 2020, the situation will be re-assessed for potential extension.**