

Interreg Programme Management Handbook

Guide to the 2021-2027 period

The Interreg Programme Management Handbook comprises a series of factsheets. They can be read individually, or collectively, to understand the relevance of certain aspects of Interreg management. They cover the relevance, legal basis, key challenges and approaches to the given subject.

Factsheet | **Monitoring system**

1. What is it? What is the definition of this work?

The programme monitoring system is an IT application which allows programmes to manage calls for proposals, assess and select projects, monitor project implementation, do project payments and aggregate project related data at programme level.

2. Why are we discussing it?

The monitoring system is a central element of the programme management and communication. In the current Common Provisions Regulation (CPR), Article 69 (6) and further explained in Annex XIV of the regulation there is a clear requirement for programmes to have an electronic data exchange system that allows data exchange between programme authorities and beneficiaries. Furthermore, data exchange between programme authorities and the European Commission shall also be carried out through an electronic data exchange platform. In this document however we shall only focus only on the electronic data exchange platform between programme authorities (managing authority (MA), joint secretariat (JS), national contact points (NCP), intermediate bodies and audit authority (AA)) and beneficiaries. It is recommended that the data exchanged includes everything the MA/JS, controllers (C) and AA might ask for during project implementation. For example, once a grant has been awarded, beneficiaries and the JS should be able to fulfil all written information requirements via electronic exchange only, including reporting on project progress, updating of subsidy contracts, etc.

3. What are the Legal references and basis for this topic?

Art 69 (8) from the CPR says that member states (MS) Member States shall ensure that all exchanges of information between beneficiaries and the programme authorities are carried out by means of electronic data exchange systems in accordance with Annex XIV.

Legislative framework:

- EU Regulation 2021/2060 (CPR) Articles 69(8)

Further legal guidance is given through

- CPR: Annex XIV Electronic data exchange systems between programme authorities and beneficiaries - Article 69(8)
- CPR Annex XVII Data to be recorded and stored electronically on each operation, providing all data fields that should be recorded in the monitoring system

4. What are the challenges, key considerations and frequently asked questions?

Technical requirements concerning data to be recorded and stored electronically are defined in the regulations thanks to CPR Annex XVII. Beyond those fields programmes still have to define what fields and workflows shall be implemented in the system in order to make it logically functioning and easy to understand for beneficiaries, while at the same time ensuring the availability of all data required for the transmission to the European Commission via SFC. For programmes working with non-member states the technical requirements for monitoring systems become increasingly complex due to the fact that they have to operate with multiple funding streams coming from multiple sources. They should also make sure that the right amounts are reported to Commission and to the non-EU member states.

5. How are they addressed?

Developing a monitoring system takes time and should be tackled by good planning, in order to give the programme time to procure the services necessary for the development of the monitoring system. Developing a monitoring system shall start immediately when the regulation is out and often is put under pressure since programmes want to start implementation as soon as they are approved. The system should ensure:

- data integrity and confidentiality. Data integrity guarantees that the system will maintain and ensure accurate and consistent data for the programme. This implies a secure exchange of data, version and log controls, traceability of the user, etc.
- authentication of the sender. Here, the European Commission foresees different levels of user identification, authentication and signatures. The most basic option is the user name/password identification, which should be the minimum ensured by the system.
- data storage, in compliance with defined retention rules (Art. Article 74(2) and Annex XIV 1.5 from CPR);
- compliance with the 'encoding once' and 'interoperability' principles. The "encoding once" principle should be applied, as a minimum, in the framework of the same operational programme. This means that if a beneficiary has submitted given information to a programme, the same information should not be requested again by another authority involved in the management and control of that programme. The "interoperability" principle refers to the concept according to which the relevant bodies should work together at organisational, semantic and technical levels, ensuring effective communication, as well as the exchange and re-use of information and knowledge. Interoperability is ideally also incorporating that multiple IT-systems, when necessary, can transmit data to each other without much manual intervention.

6. How does it work in practice?

In practice, each programme should have a monitoring system that will allow the users to create their accounts and use the system for all communication related to their projects. In other words, there are several reasons for using the electronic data exchange system:

- the data is safe from the moment it is encoded into the system. This is not the case when sending data by regular e-mail or post;
- the sender of the information can be easily identified in the system;
- elimination of parallel paper flow reduces storage space and, often, costs;
- providing the data only once saves time for beneficiaries and programme managers, and information is stored in one place. Also, authorised institutions can access necessary pieces of information without the necessity of sending paper documents.
- Systems often also do automatic-checks that save effort and time for beneficiaries and programme managers.

7. Good practice examples, innovative approaches

The benefit of a monitoring system that comprises all the information related to a programme has been felt during the previous programming periods. It facilitates enormously the exchange of information and diminishes the administrative burden, leaving the actors free to concentrate on the content of their projects. A unique monitoring system also eases the traceability and accessibility of data, which in turn covers audit requirements.

To reduce the administrative burden programmes have, in the 2021-2027 period, gone beyond each developing their own system. 48 programmes are currently using Jems, a Joint electronic monitoring system provided on a free license basis by Interact. The benefit of this system is that it streamlines and harmonises workflows of multiple programmes which makes the system easier to understand and more accessible and intuitive for beneficiaries. Jems is also complying with the regulation and had a positive audit result by an independent audit firm.

Disclaimer: Cooperation can be complex, and while Interact's job is to make it easier, Interact cannot offer assurances on the accuracy of our pan-European information in any specific context.

Furthermore, understanding and knowledge evolves throughout the programming period. If you spot something out of date or inconsistent, please contact us at communication@interact.eu

Copyright: This product is licensed under Creative Commons, under the 'Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International' license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0).

You are permitted to share and adapt this work. You are required to attribute the work, indicating if changes were made. You are required to offer revised work on the same license basis. The material cannot be used for commercial purposes.

For more information about this license please visit creativecommons.org

Publisher | Interact programme
Date | 02.04.2025
Author | Pieter Louwers
Contributors | Alexandra Kulmer



Interact



Co-funded by
the European Union
Interreg