

Fact Sheet 5 – External Experts and Services

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Core message: External experts and services can be an important part of many projects. It is necessary to define in the application which contracts the project intends to offer. During implementation it is essential to ensure that all of the correct tendering procedures are followed and documented.

Background

Many project partners make use of external assistance when implementing a project. This fact sheet provides guidance on the principles and rules for purchasing external services.

Definition

Any and all costs for external expertise and services provided by a public or private body or an individual outside of the partner organisation belong in this cost category. These rules also apply to costs for Controllers, when these are paid by the partner and are external to the partner organisation. All external expertise and service payments must be made on the basis of contracts or similar written agreements and supported by invoices or requests for reimbursement linked to the tasks carried out.

General Principles

- All partner organisations, both public and private, are responsible for ensuring that EU and national public procurement rules are respected and that all contracts comply with the basic principles of transparency, non-discrimination and equal treatment. More information on this issue can be found in Fact Sheet 12 - Tendering Procedures.
- The work carried out by external experts and service providers must be directly related to the project. Examples include technical experts, communications support, Controllers, and/or project management support.
- The costs of the services must always be proportionate to the value added to the project.
- If (in exceptional cases), as part of a project, a partner provides a service to another partner for payment, all such transactions must be based on a zero-profit basis and can only reflect the actual costs incurred by the service provider.
- Partners and inactive partners of a project are **not permitted** to bid on contracts offered by that project and its partners.

- If a partner organisation has relevant framework contracts in place, these may be used, provided that the framework contracts have been subject to public procurement rules.

Detailed rules¹

External expertise and service costs shall be limited to the following services and expertise provided by a public or private legal body or a natural person other than the partner and all partners involved in the project:

- studies or surveys (e.g. evaluations, strategies, concept notes, design plans, handbooks)
- training
- translations
- development, modifications and updates to IT systems and website
- promotion, communication, publicity, promotional items and activities or information linked to the project
- financial management (not covered by in-house staff)
- services related to the organisation and implementation of events or meetings (including rent, catering or interpretation)
- participation in events (e.g. registration fees)
- legal consultancy and notarial services, technical and financial expertise, other consultancy and accountancy services
- intellectual property rights
- Control costs²
- the provision of guarantees by a bank or other financial institution where required by European Union or national law or in a programming document adopted by the monitoring committee
- travel and accommodation for external experts, speakers, chairpersons of meetings and service providers
- other specific expertise and services needed for operations

Additional specifications

- All costs related to external experts (including, for example, their travel and accommodation expenses) must be reported under this budget line "External Experts and Services".
- Costs for experts provided in-house or by affiliated companies are eligible, but all such costs must be reported under the staff costs budget line.
- Any contract extensions or offers of additional contracts to the same supplier must also comply with all European Union, national and organisational procurement rules.
- Rules on costs for alcohol vary from country to country. Some countries do not consider costs for alcohol to be eligible expenditure. Check your national rules!

¹ Interreg Regulation No. 2021/1059 Article 42

² Interreg Regulation No.2021/1059 Article 46(6)

References

- Interreg Regulation No. 2021/10592021 Article 42