PROJECT CLOSURE – FINAL REPORTING

Version 4 – August 2013

Background

NSR projects have to undergo a formal closing procedure before the final payment is made. Each project will have to submit a final report on activities and finances to the Programme Secretariat within three months after the approved project end date. The final report replaces the last periodical report and is submitted through the NSR online system.

In contrary to the periodic activity reporting form, there will be *no* beneficiary version of this form equivalent to appendix 10a. Guidance to each section of the form is available in the online form.

In the user area of the NSR online system, you will find the option to 'start a new final activity / finance report'. Please follow this link to enter the form.

Final Financial Reporting

The Final Report on Finances will, in principle, request the same information as the interim report on finances requests. There will be no major changes in the procedure between the periodic and the final report on finances.

The one notable difference relates to the section funding, where entries for ERDF / ERDF equivalent received (table 4 of the finance report) are to be included the final allocation ***as if already paid out***.

In other words, table 4 of the final report must be filled out to show what each beneficiary will have received once the final payment has been made and forwarded to the relevant beneficiaries. Costs for the final audit (first level control) can be included in the final accounts as eligible costs even if the costs incur after the end the eligibility period.

Budgets will be checked for overspendings both at beneficiary and project level. Any overspendings will be deducted from the final payment. We would advise submitting a budget change along with the final report in order to deal with these overspendings on individual budget lines.

Please note that it is not possible to shift funds between beneficiaries, i.e. move unspent amounts from one beneficiary to a beneficiary overspending its budget.

Final Activity Reporting

Reporting on the last six months of project implementation
The Final Report on Activities will replace projects' last periodic report on activities. Part of the report therefore relates to the last 6 months of implementation, the time period that has not been covered by previous periodic reports. This is valid for the section on work package completion (tab 3).

Reporting on the entire project period
All other tabs relate to the entire project period. Therein, the Secretariat is interested in information that gives an overview about the entire lifetime of the project.

The Secretariat will make use of the information provided through the form to evaluate whether the project has successfully implemented its activities against the approved application form. Secondly, the information will be used to communicate project achievements to European stakeholders. Therefore, please bear in mind that you should use an easily understandable language, avoiding administrative details and technical terms.

At this point, the Secretariat is less interested in the projects' individual activities but rather in the achievements, results and impacts that were produced through activities on the project level. All information should not list the individual partner activities but should compile the achievements on a project level.

Final Activity Report Form
The final activity report form consists of the following sections. Final reporting will take place online. Please enter the NSR online system to find the online forms.

1. Beneficiary and project information
2. Time period
3. Work package completion (relating only to the last 6 months period)
4. Project Achievements (all following sections relate to the entire project time)
5. Results and Impacts
6. Material Investments
7. Transnational approach
8. Equal opportunities
9. Lisbon and Gothenburg
10. Innovation
11. Territorial Cohesion
12. Knowledge transfer
13. Long term perspectives
14. Communications and Publicity
15. Programme level achievements
16. Indicators
17. Project Achievements Report
18. Enclosures
19. Feedback
20. Finalise

Additional Guidance for the Final Report

Final payment depends on submission of documents
Experience shows that the main result documents are often very challenging to find once the project is closed. The submission of the relevant documents has therefore been made a pre-condition to have any project closed and final payment(s) made.

Project closure conditions - Communication – Project Section
In addition to the current guidance on the final report procedure for projects, please find below some extra guidance with regards the submission of enclosures. In order to close any project under the NSR Programme, there are a number of conditions which need to be met. This short guidance focuses on the information which needs to be uploaded on to the programme website in the Project Section by the project. Please read these instructions and make sure you follow them when closing the project.

The background to the need for this information is, among other things:

- **Evidence** – There is a need to provide relevant information to stakeholders and the public of the results of the projects,

- **Archive** – Once a project is closed, there is no system for maintaining project websites and the data on those websites so all relevant data / documents need to be collected and uploaded to the programme website,

- **Transparency** – The programme and the projects have an obligation to make information about the work and results of the projects readily available and easily accessible.

Enclosures
You were previously advised to submit **'Enclosures'** as paper copies together with your final report outlining the main project results and findings.

Instead we would now please ask you to upload these enclosures to the project section on the Programme website. Please note though that you should still use the section on enclosures in the final report itself to provide an overview of what you have submitted in the project section online.

Please upload the following:

- **Documents**: All relevant reports and documents with findings from the project from all the work packages – essentially all relevant documentation from the project website about the project,

- **Pictures**: Relevant pictures from different stages of project implementation, with a focus on project relevant work (installations, actions, examples of project implementation being used in real life),

- **Results**: A short bullet point type list of the main results and outcomes of the project (5-10 bullets), which the Secretariat will post online in the Project Section (Results Tab cannot be edited by the projects). You can submit the revised result text by e-mail to your desk officer in the Project Development Unit and they will then transfer this updated information to the results section of the website,

- **Stories**: If you have any good stories about results and outcomes to share, please tell us in a separate word document (with a human touch if possible, not facts and figures - those go in the bullet list ‘Results’).

Titles and names on uploaded pictures and documents

The file name you give a picture or a document is important for two main reasons. Firstly, it makes the picture or document easier to find internally (i.e. people who make dedicated searches for specific documents related to the project). Secondly, it has significant impact on how easy the document or picture will be to find for external sources (i.e. when people google for information).

All search engines scan the web constantly for new files, and if those files are named in a fashion that connects them to the specific project and the North Sea Region Programme, the file itself, the project and the Programme will end up higher on searches made online related to the topics addressed. Suggested structure: Picture / File Name_Project Name_North Sea Region Programme. For example, NewFlood Defences_Seawall Project_North Sea Region Programme.

Avoid
Pictures – Pictures from the project which show conferences, seminars and meetings or working groups or project managers themselves – although sometimes interesting internally, this has limited relevance for an external audience

How to upload the requested documentation
If you for some reason should be in doubt about how to use the Project Section, there is a guidance note in the Key Documents section of the Programme website.

Please, submit these documents as uploads under the sections – ‘Photos’ and ‘Documents’ in the project section of the programme website.

Project logos and other related items <u>must</u> still also be uploaded. For technical reasons videos cannot be uploaded (yet) so please send them to the secretariat on a USB stick or CD-Rom.

Submission in practice

Finally, you might have noticed in your original project contract that you are advised to submit eight copies of the final report and a five page summary. You now only need to submit three copies of the final report to the secretariat and no summary (the original and 2 x copies). ***Please do not bind or seal these submission copies, simply clip them with a paper clip or similar.***

Thank you for your support with this process! If you have any questions about this process pleased do not hesitate to contact your relevant desk officer at the secretariat.