

# Eco-AlpsWater

Innovative Ecological Assessment and Water Management Strategy  
for the Protection of Ecosystem Services in Alpine Lakes and Rivers

Priority 3: Liveable Alpine Space. SO3.2 - Enhance the protection, the  
conservation and the ecological connectivity of Alpine Space

## Deliverable D.M.1.3

### Project Handbook: Internal Guidance Manual for the implementation of the Eco-AlpsWater Project

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Work Package	WPM
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## 1. Introduction

This document provides a brief guide for the implementation of the Eco-AlpsWater Project, resuming the official Alpine Space (AS) recommendations (factsheets) and providing directions to PPs regarding general implementation, project steps and deadlines.

A complete and updated guide on the implementation of AS projects can be found at the following links:

Introduction and index: [http://www.alpine-space.eu/project-management/project-implementation-handbook/0\\_introduction-and-index\\_v9.pdf](http://www.alpine-space.eu/project-management/project-implementation-handbook/0_introduction-and-index_v9.pdf)

Full implementation book: [http://www.alpine-space.eu/project-management/project-implementation-handbook/20170816\\_pih\\_allfsandax.pdf](http://www.alpine-space.eu/project-management/project-implementation-handbook/20170816_pih_allfsandax.pdf)

This guide synthetizes the basic aspects and rules to be followed for the implementation of the Eco-AlpsWater project, indicating the relevant fact-sheets to consult, and sections of the book.

## 2. Project implementation: relevant Fact-Sheets

In the implementation manual, the documents relevant for the implementation phase of the project are the Fact Sheets from 4.1 to 4.9.

### *2.1 Fact Sheet 4.1 - First level control manual*

At the first level checking, all programme and project expenses are controlled and those eligible for co-financing are certified; this represents the first level control (FLC). The management of programme, control system, and projects (on a sample basis) are audited on a second level control. In this case, the control is performed by a contracted company. Finally, with a third level control, European Commission can perform audits of the programme to verify the functioning of the system.

All expenses declared by a project participant have to be checked by the responsible first level control (FLC) bodies. FLCs verify the delivery of the products and services co-financed, the reliability of the declared expenditures and their compliance with the programme (for eligibility rules see Fact Sheet 1.4) and national rules. Fact Sheet 4.1 reports in details all the procedures explained for the 6 different countries.

## *2.2 Fact Sheet 4.2: Public procurement*

According to the European structural and investment (ESI) funds regulations, the aim of Public procurement rules is to ensure that the purchase of services, goods and works follows transparent procedures and that fair conditions of competition for suppliers are provided. Fact Sheet 4.2 provides basic information about public procurement law, and programme rules. It is worth highlighting that the manual states “Public procurement law is a complex matter and many findings during financial controls in ESI-financed programmes and projects are related to procurement errors”. Therefore, this Fact Sheet provides further guidance on common procurement errors.

Fact Sheet 4.2 describes procurement rules valid for both public and private partners, highlighting differences in rules among the AS countries. Specific sections are dedicated to the Most common procurement errors and Enforcement of procurement rules and consequences in case of violation.

## *2.3 Fact Sheet 4.3: State aid*

Assistance from the State to individual companies and market operators may distort competition compared to companies/market operators that do not receive assistance. For this reason, State aid could represent a threat to the operation of the internal market. Therefore, the EU has set up a legal framework defining the limits under which public assistance can be provided to companies/market operators (art. 107-109 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union - TFEU).

State aid rules are also relevant for ESI programmes. Fact Sheet 4.3 provides information on the legal framework on State aid, and on the measures taken by the AS program to ensure that these rules are respected during the creation, selection and implementation of projects.

## *2.4 Fact Sheet 4.4: Project communication*

Communication has been integrated at the core of the Eco-AlpsWater project. In the Application Form (AF), the general aims of Work package Communication (WPC) have followed at most the rules reported in the first chapter of Fact Sheet 4.4. (Project Communication strategy). The other two chapters of the Fact Sheet resume communication requirements (logo, ERDF claim, web site and partners’ websites, Project poster, smart promotional material branded with the project logo and the ERDF claim, use social media, public final event).

### *2.5 Fact Sheet 4.5: Ownership of project outputs and intellectual property rights*

The relevance of this topic in AS projects is well described in Fact Sheet 4.5: “When a project is being developed the potential project partners should identify the data, know-how or information whatever its form or nature, tangible or intangible, including any rights – such as intellectual property rights – which they intend to bring into the project (e.g. scientific studies, methods, materials). The project applicants shall (...) regulate the access of the other partners to these elements and for this purpose.”

In the specific case of Eco-AlpsWater, the potential intentional or unintentional misuse of data could be quite relevant in the case of data obtained from analysis of eDNA. For this reason, as stated in the Project Statute (Deliverable D.M.1.2), the Project Steering Group (PSG) will nominate a working group with the aim to draft an Agreement on the rules to be adopted to access freshwater microorganisms and use of eDNA among participating countries. After evaluation by the PSG, the document will be integrated in the statute, as a specific annex.

Further aspects considered in Fact Sheet 4.5 include the issues to be considered during project implementation and during project closure.

### *2.6 Fact Sheet 4.6: Project changes*

The application form is a binding document. Therefore, only specific types of changes are allowed within an approved project. These changes are described in Fact Sheet 4.6. Changes can be done on:

- changes in the project content,
- changes in the budget,
- changes in the project's duration,
- changes in the partnership.

As for the budget, changes are allowed as long as i) the maximum amount of ERDF co-financing the project is not exceeded and ii) certain conditions are fulfilled. In case of changes in the budget, PPs are strongly encouraged to contact their own administration as well as the Finance manager of the project.

### *2.7 Fact Sheet 4.7: Project reporting*

Project reporting is essential to check the implementation of a project compared to the AF. Moreover, it is a required element to receive approved funding. Reporting is an obligation of LP and project partners, as stated in the subsidy contract (SC) and partnership agreement. Payment of ERDF can only be requested after periodic reports have been submitted to JS through the electronic monitoring system (eMS).

### WPM - Deliverable D.M.1.3

Activities and expenditures have to be reported on a regular basis (every 6 months), with two types of reports:

- **status report (SR)**, reporting period from 1 January to 30 June and is due in September/October
- **progress report (PR)**, reporting period from 1 July to 31 December and is due in March/April

In Eco-AlpsWater, period and reporting dates are as follows<sup>1</sup>:

Period	Start date	End date	Reporting date
0	1/1/2017	16/4/2018	31/3/2019
1	17/4/2018	31/12/2018	31/3/2019
2	1/1/2019	30/6/2019	30/9/2019
3	1/7/2019	31/12/2019	31/3/2020
4	1/1/2020	30/6/2020	30/9/2020
5	1/7/2020	31/12/2020	31/3/2021
6	1/1/2021	30/6/2021	30/9/2021
7	1/7/2021	16/10/2021	31/1/2022

The main information requested in the two types of reports are the following:

Project status report (SR)	Project progress report (PR)
Highlights of main achievements	Highlights of main achievements
Level of achievement of the project specific objectives	Level of achievement of the project specific objectives
Project outputs achievement	Project outputs achievement
	Target groups reached
	Description of activities per work packages
	Main deliverables
Justification of possible deviations from original plan (where relevant)	Justification of possible deviations from original plan (where relevant)
Financial tables	Financial tables
First level control certificates	First level control certificates

Reporting is done through the eMS (<https://ems.alpine-space.eu/>):

- Information are provided by each project partner on the eMS.
- The information by PP's are then collected by the LP and compiled into the project reports, providing details.

<sup>1</sup> Including the 6 months extension period

Based on the information provided at PP level, the final project report will be compiled by the LP. The financial tables of the project report are filled in automatically based on the FLC certificates issued by the controllers.

It is important to highlight, as stated in the AS implementation manual, that reporting by PPs according to the programme deadlines is a contractual obligation. “...those projects and their partners lagging behind their spending targets risk losing funds if this results in insufficient spending at programme level (please see factsheet 3.3 Decommitment of funds).”

FLC certificates can be excluded by LP from the project report when activities performed by the partners are not sufficiently justified (missing information, not allowing reconciling the report on activities and costs).

The report is checked by JS, which evaluates activities, finance, communication. When information provided are not clear, JS will ask to revise, within 7 days, the project report. Once the report is accepted, the JS will inform LP. Then the Managing Authority (MA) will instruct the Certifying Authority (CA) to initialise the ERDF payment.

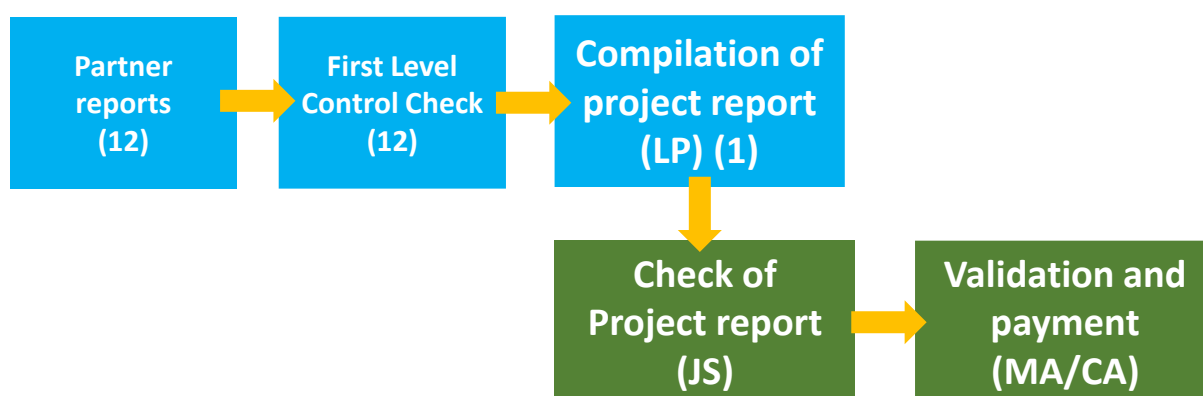


Fig. 1 – Reporting workflow; adapted from Fact Sheet 4.7

## 2.8 Fact Sheet 4.8: Project greening

The Alpine Space projects have to follow ecofriendly practices for all daily activities, especially concerning events and meetings. Participants to AS projects are encouraged to apply energy efficient and sustainable principles to their activities. The guidance on simple greening measures that should be applied to contribute to sustainable growth in the European Union is provided in Fact Sheet 4.8.

## 2.9 Fact Sheet 4.9: Project management

Project management structures and procedures are described in Fact Sheet 4.9. Project management in the Eco-AlpsWater project, including composition of the Project Steering Group, Project management team, and work package responsible has been described in Deliverables D.M.1.1 and D.M.1.2.

### 3. Project implementation: relevant Annexes

Relevant annexes that should be consulted for the implementation of the project are:

- FS 1.4 annex 1.1: Project assignment
- FS 1.4 annex 1.2: Project assignment guidance
- FS 1.4 annex 2.1: Six monthly task report
- FS 1.4 annex 2.2: Six monthly task report guidance
- FS 4.1 annex 1: Technical guidance online first level control system
- FS 4.2 annex 1: Procurement documentation, guidance for public project partners
- FS 4.2 annex 2: Template purchase form for private partners
- FS 4.3 annex 1: Template de minimis aid declaration
- FS 4.7 annex 1: Guidance for reporting
- FS 4.7 annex 2: Technical guidance online reporting

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