

Interreg



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Greece – Bulgaria

**Internal Rules of Procedure
of the Joint Secretariat**

**CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION PROGRAMME
INTERREG VI-A GREECE – BULGARIA 2021-2027
CCI: 2021TC16RFCB021**

Version 1.0
November 2023

Table of Contents

Foreword 3
Article 1: The Objective of the Internal Rules of Procedure 4
Article 2: Institutional framework 5
Article 4: Job descriptions 11
Article 5: Staff Management 20
Article 6: Location of the JS Structures 21
Annexes 21

Foreword

The present internal rules describe the organisational and functional procedures of the Joint Secretariat of the CBC Programme Interreg VI-A "Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027". They include binding provisions regarding the responsibilities and procedures to be respected.

In accordance with Article 46(2) of the Regulation 2021/1059 on specific provisions for the ETC goal (Interreg), the Managing Authority "Interreg 2021-2027", after consultation with the National Authorities of the participating countries, sets the Joint Secretariat (JS), which is hosted at the Managing Authority "Interreg 2021-2027" premises. The JS supports and assists the Managing Authority (MA), National Authorities and the Monitoring Committee (MC) in carrying out their respective functions. Moreover, it may assist the Audit Authority in organizing the meetings of the Group of Auditors, provides information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the Programme and assists beneficiaries in the implementation of projects. The Rules of Procedure of the existing JS shall be updated by the MA in agreement with the National Authorities of the Member States participating in the Programme, in order to ensure adjustment to the new EU legal framework. The body responsible to set up the Rules of Procedure determining the exact functions and the role of the JS is the MA.

The JS is physically located at the MA registered office and is composed of a balanced number of staff members from the participating Member States.

Article 1: The Objective of the Internal Rules of Procedure

The objective of the Internal Rules of Procedure is the provision of a framework of rules for the assurance of:

- the smooth internal cooperation and coordination of the JS as well as in relation to the MA and other Programme bodies
- the efficient operation of the JS
- the cooperation with the MA and the National Authorities of the Programme
- the cooperation with the potential Beneficiaries
- the cooperation with the Audit Authority
- the observance of legislation concerning the implementation of the Programme, and the transparency of the applied processes.

Article 2: Institutional framework

The procedures described herein are regulated by the following legislative framework:

- The **Cross-Border Cooperation Programme (Interreg VI-A) Greece-Bulgaria 2021-2027** (hereinafter CP), approved by the European Commission Decision Number C(2022)6635, dated 13.09.2022.
- **Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021, laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund, and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013, and any amendment.
- **Regulation (EU) No 2021/1058** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1301/2013, and any amendment.
- **Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1299/2013, and any amendment.
- **Commission delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014** of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds.
- **Regulation (EU) 2016/679** of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR).
- **Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093** of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027.
- **Law 4914/2022** "Management, Control and Application of development interventions for the programming period 2021-2027" (Greek State Gazette 61/A/21.3.2022).
- **Common Ministerial Decision No 3411/16-01-2023** (Greek State Gazette B' 183/18-01-2023) "Scope, tasks and internal restructure of the «Special Service Interreg 2021-2027" of article 9, par. 8 of article 65 Law 4914/2022 and of the Joint Secretariats of Interreg Programmes of article 11 Law 4914/2022.

Article 3: Responsibilities of the Joint Secretariat

The JS supports and assists the MA, the MC and the other Programme bodies in carrying out their respective responsibilities.

In accordance to Article 46 (2) of the ETC Regulation, the MA, after consultation with the participating countries, sets up the JS within an integrated management structure as a separate unit inside its organization. The task of the JS is to support the MA and MC in content related issues, especially to carry out information and communication activities, monitor project implementation, prepare reports on Programme monitoring and overall performance, etc. The JS is the main body to assist beneficiaries in the implementation of projects.

The daily function of the JS shall be set up under the guidance of the MA and supervised by the JS Coordinator.

3.1 Tasks of the Joint Secretariat

The JS:

- Assists the MA and MC in carrying out their respective duties.
- Assists the MA in organizing the meetings of the MC and provides the necessary documents and information to ensure the Programme's effective implementation.
- Supports the MA in drafting of the criteria for selection of projects .
- Assists the MA in drafting the material for the calls for proposals.
- Supports potential beneficiaries in preparing project proposals. In this context, it organizes public information seminars and promotes cooperation and partnership development among cross-border entities.
- Provides information to potential beneficiaries regarding funding opportunities under the Cooperation Programme.
- Assists the MA (Unit A', Programming and Evaluation), in the evaluation and selection process of projects, to ensure that it is based on the approved criteria of the MC and complies with EU and national regulations governing the Programme's implementation.
- Supports Unit A' in the evaluation of project proposals in accordance to the

- approved by the MC Project Selection Methodology. Provides support to beneficiaries throughout the implementation of projects.
- Supports the MA in collecting and electronically recording accounting data for each project . Additionally, assists the MA in gathering implementation data necessary for financial management, monitoring, verifications, accounting audits, and evaluation.
 - Assists in the preparation of the management declaration for each accounting period, following the template provided in Annex XVIII of the 2021/1060 Regulation during the 2021-2027 period.
 - Assists the MA in collecting and maintaining all documents related to expenses, audits, and verifications to ensure an effective audit trail in accordance with regulatory requirements.
 - Assists the MA in setting up the funding procedures for Greek beneficiaries participating in approved projects by including them in the Public Investment Programme and ensures the smooth disbursement of funds for all projects. It monitors the cash flow system of the Programme and ensures the funding flow of the projects.
 - Supports the MA in the closure of audits by the Audit Authority and other competent bodies.
 - Prepares reports, as well as the Final Report of the Cooperation Programme and submits them to the MA.
 - Assists the MA in ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements on information and publicity.
 - Prepares the Annual Technical Assistance Budget of the Programme and submits it to the MA.
 - Contributes to the achievement of the annual targets of the MA.
 - Proposes to the MA (Unit B', Programme Management) the modification or termination of Subsidy Contracts, as well as the administration of project closure procedures.
 - Manages all correspondence in cooperation with and under the supervision of the MA. Monitors the environmental impact of projects implementation in the framework of the programme.

- Assists the MA in the Programme Evaluation as foreseen in the Programme Evaluation Plan.

3.2 Organizational structure

The JS consists of ten (10) staff members with University Degree and one (1) staff member with secondary educational diploma.

- **One (1) Coordinator**
- **Seven (7) Project Officers**
- **One (1) Financial Officer**
- **One (1) Communication and Technical Assistance Officer**
- **One (1) JS Administrative Assistant.**

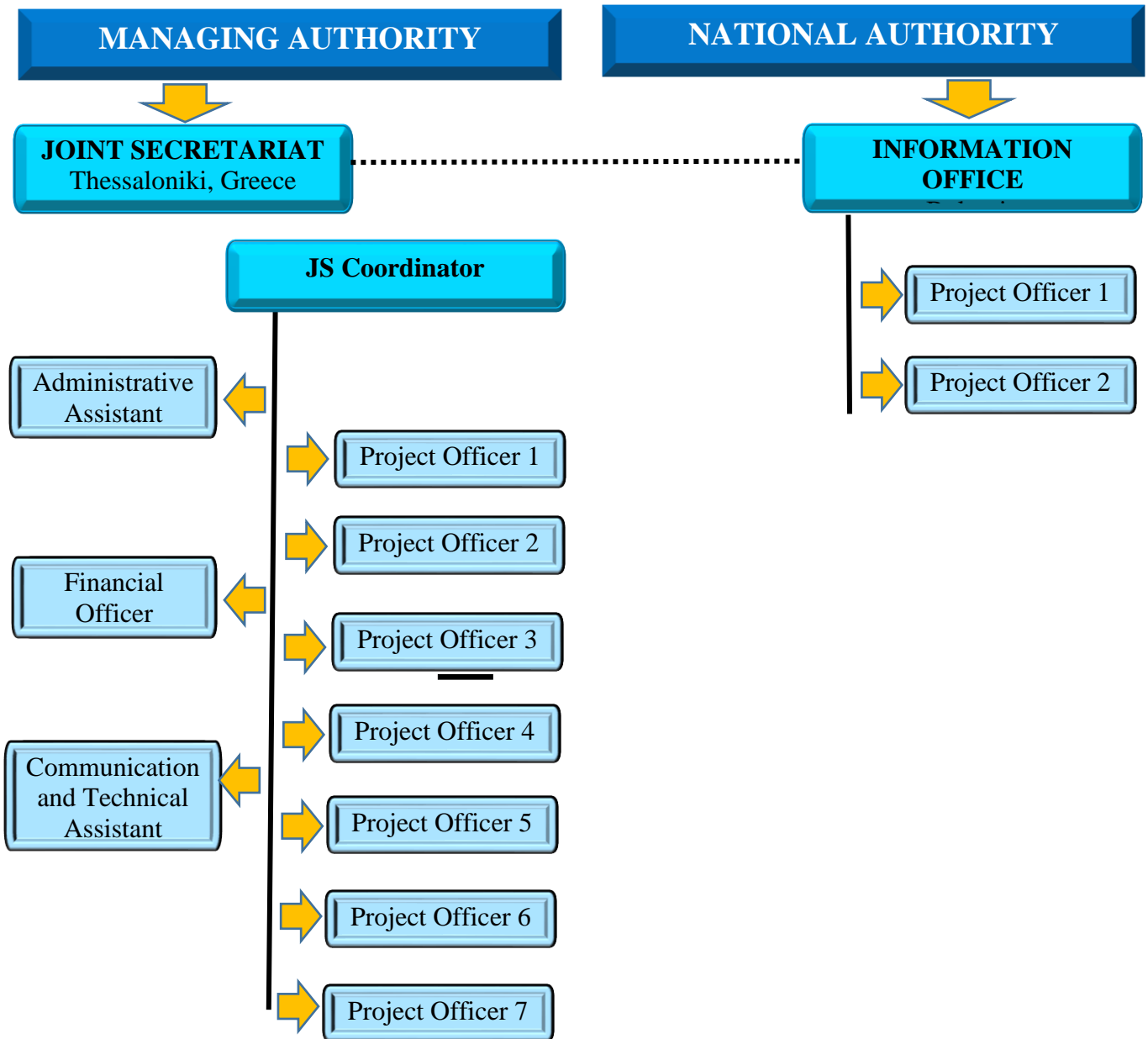
An **Information Office** with 2 staff members with University Degree shall be set up in Bulgaria as part of the National Authority.

The main responsibilities of the Information Office shall be:

- a) To provide support to beneficiaries from the Bulgarian side during the preparation of proposals and throughout the period of implementation of operations.
- b) To implement information and publicity actions at national level, in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat.

The Information Office shall be financed by the Programme's Technical Assistance Budget.

The diagram below depicts the functional dimension of the Joint Secretariat. It illustrates all the operational flows arising from the structure of the Programme.



3.3 Contracting Authorities

The Contracting Authority of the JS positions is the Management and Organization Unit SA (MOU SA), which is an integral part of the Hellenic Ministry of Economy and Finance.

The recruitment of the Information Office staff in Bulgaria is the responsibility of the Bulgarian National Authority, takes place in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian legislation is applicable for the selection and employment of its staff.

Article 4: Job descriptions

4.1. Coordinator of the JS

The Coordinator is responsible for the overall management and running of the JS tasks to ensure the smooth implementation, efficient and effective technical, administrative and financial management of the Programme. The JS Coordinator reports directly to the MA.

More specifically the JS Coordinator:

- Organizes and coordinates the activities of the JS, and cooperates with the Information Office in Bulgaria.
- Supports the MA in the implementation of the Programme's strategy.
- Sets up and revises, in collaboration with the MA, the objectives or working procedures of the JS for the improvement of the overall implementation of the Programme such as ensuring functions related to the monitoring system by providing templates for reporting, budget shifts, etc., setting up checklists and circuits to ensure that the JS responsibilities are fully respected and traceable.
- Supports the MA in the drafting of the content of the calls for project proposals and the relative Programme documents (project proposal packages, guidelines and implementing manuals, procedures and supporting documents for beneficiaries).
- Represents the JS to the management bodies of the Programme such as: MA, Accounting Authority (CVA) and Audit Authority (AA), Member States, beneficiaries, controllers, other administrative bodies included in the management and control system of the Programme and the European Commission, based on sound Programme management and implementation of EU and national regulatory framework.
- Supervises the execution of tasks of the JS staff concerning: a) the supporting activities for the submission of project proposals; by providing clarifications to applicants regarding the calls, instructions for the correct compilation and uploading on the MIS platform of the documents, as well as the organization of communication and information activities (meetings, workshops, etc.).
- Supports the MA in the evaluation procedure of the project proposals based on

- the projects selection criteria and assessment methodology, approved by the MC.
- Assists the MA in the activities foreseen in the art. 35 Regulation (EU) No 1059/2021;
 - Performs overall monitoring of the projects' implementation taking into account the beneficiaries' obligations, as described in the approved project proposal, in the Subsidy Contract, the Partnership Agreement and according to the management and control system of the Programme.
 - Assesses the problems or the delays in the projects and proposes corrective measures, when required so as to prevent deviations from the operational, time schedule and economic restrictions of the project.
 - Participates in technical meetings with project beneficiaries, for the resolution of problems of the project implementation.
 - Provides to the MA reports and statistics on the financial progress of the Programme and the corresponding indicators and - if necessary - proposes the appropriate corrective measures.
 - Supports the MA in the preparation of administrative acts regarding financial and programming issues to be submitted to the Monitoring Committee and the European Commission.
 - Assists the MA and other bodies to find appropriate solutions to improve the management and control system.
 - Assists the MA in informing the beneficiaries on any decisions taken by the MC.
 - Provides support to the MA in the implementation of information, communication and promotion activities addressed to beneficiaries and stakeholders of the Programme.
 - Supervises the JS staff to plan the contents and prepare the materials related to the training sessions, events and seminars for the Programme' beneficiaries.
 - Represents the JS at meetings and events with the management bodies of the Programme, including facilitation and moderation of seminars/workshops, chairing larger sessions, making presentations, in coordination with stakeholders of the Programme as well as for Lead beneficiaries and project beneficiaries.
 - Supports the MA in performing on-the-spot visits/verifications of projects.
 - Organizes the basic training of the JS staff members on subjects related to the JS

tasks.

- Cooperates with the staff members of the JS for the harmonization of the procedures, the early detection and the resolution of the problems related to JS responsibilities.
- Ensures a unified way of managing all issues related to the JS operation under the guidance of the MA.
- Manages human resources' issues.
- Drafts the yearly work plan of the JS.

4.2. Project Officer

The Project Officer is responsible for the development and application of the administrative procedures at Programme and project level. The JS Project Officers report directly to the JS Coordinator.

More specifically, the Project Officers are responsible for:

- Supporting the MA in drafting, updating and optimizing Programme documents (project proposal packages, guidelines and implementing manuals, procedures and supporting documents for beneficiaries, preparation of FAQs) under the supervision of the JS Coordinator.
- Supporting the procedure of the project proposals submission, by providing clarifications to applicants regarding the calls, instructions for the correct compilation and uploading on the MIS platform of the documents, as well as the organization of communication and information activities (meetings, workshops etc.).
- Supporting the MA in the evaluation procedure of the project proposals based on the projects selection criteria and assessment methodology, approved by the MC.
- Supporting the MA in the organization of the MC meetings and in the implementation of their decisions including preparation and presentation of the outcomes of the selection process.
- Monitoring the projects' implementation taking into account the fulfilment of the beneficiaries' obligations, as described in the approved project proposal,

in the Subsidy Contract, the Partnership Agreement and according to the management and control system of the Programme.

- Identifying the problems or the delays of the projects and proposing corrective measures, when required, to prevent deviations from the operational, time schedule and economic restrictions of the project.
- Monitoring the achievement of project indicators.
- Participating in technical meetings with project beneficiaries, for the resolution of problems arising from project implementation.
- Supporting the MA in the process of project modification requests that are submitted by the Lead Partners as specified in the Programme and Project Implementation Manual. Prepares a reasoned opinion and submits it to the MA, where needed.
- Processing in the MIS all required data at project and Programme level, according to the management and control system.
- Preparing/drafting of reports for information of the MC and the European Commission, on the operational and financial progress of the projects and of the Programme.
- Contributing to the regular transmission of data to the European Commission as per Art.32 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059 and to the preparation/drafting of the Final Performance Report of the Programme.
- Contributing the Programme's Evaluation as foreseen in the Programme Evaluation Plan.
- Monitoring the environmental impact of projects, if requested, and compiling relevant reports under the MA guidance.
- Supporting the MA in performing on-the-spot visits/verifications of projects .
- Monitoring the application of recommendations and corrections from management verifications and/or audits..
- Supporting the MA in the evaluation and capitalization of the Programme results and the collection of good practices, and in the activities that are complementary to other national and European Programmes.
- Supporting the MA in maintaining and archiving of all documents (electronic

version and hard copies where applicable) that are related to the project implementation, the expenses and the audits, so that an effective audit trail is ensured.

- Organizing and participating in meetings and events (e.g. info-days, mid-term and final Programme conferences, thematic workshops, European Cooperation Day, thematic fairs, trainings sessions, seminars, external conferences, etc.) in coordination with stakeholders of the Programme as well as for Lead and project beneficiaries.
- Supporting the MA in the organization of the MC meetings and in the implementation of MC decisions. Participating in MC and internal Programme meetings.
- Participating in information/ training activities related to Project Officers competences / responsibilities.
- Supporting the Communication Officer by providing relevant material for the programme's website and newsletters.

Project officers may temporarily and additionally undertake financial officer's responsibilities (i.e., Programme financial monitoring) when additional support is required for the smooth implementation of the Programme.

4.3. Communication and Technical Assistance Officer

The Communication and Technical Assistance Officer contributes to the implementation of the Communication Strategy of the Programme. He/she supports the MA in developing, monitoring and evaluating the Communication Strategy. The Communication and Technical Assistance Officer is responsible for the management of the Technical Assistance of the Programme. The Communication and Technical Assistance Officer reports to the JS Coordinator and is responsible for:

- Developing, updating, implementing and evaluating the Programme communication strategy in coordination with programme stakeholders and following the EC Regulations.
- Contributing to the drafting of any material produced by the JS (guides, reports

and so forth) for calls, project proposal evaluations, project monitoring in cooperation with Project Officers.

- Maintaining and updating the Programme's website.
- Developing online and paper publications including leaflets, brochures, newsletters, audio-visual materials etc., including all stages from the conception, the collection of data and information, writing, edition and illustration.
- Contributing to the development and implementation of the Programme social media activities, including its day-to-day maintenance and updating.
- Responsible for the operation of the online partner search.
- Ensuring that all interested stakeholders have access to the Programme documents, news and announcements.
- Collaborating with the Communication Officer of the MA, for information and communication activities according to the Communication Strategy and adapting it accordingly.
- Supporting the MA in the preparation of reports on communication matters addressed to the European Commission (reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Communication Strategy).
- Ensuring the visibility of the Programme towards various groups in a targeted and thematic approach, in the media and with relevant institutions across the cooperation area.
- Collecting, organizing, editing and disseminating efficiently the information on the Programme, its themes and its funded projects.
- Ensuring both internal and external accessibility of information related to the development and results of the Programme and its projects.
- Supporting beneficiaries in the dissemination of information about their projects (strategic support during the development and implementation of project communications plans as well as technical support for the use of Programme communication tools, social networks etc.).
- Organizing and/or participating at meetings and events (e.g. launching, mid-term and final Programme conferences, thematic workshops, European Cooperation Day, thematic fairs, trainings, external conferences, etc.) in coordination with stakeholders of the Programme as well as seminars for Lead and project

beneficiaries, on communication issues.

- Managing Public Relations' issues.
- Contributing to the drafting of the Final Performance Report.
- Participating in MC and internal Programme meetings.
- Supporting the MA and JS staff in reporting to the MC and the European Commission bodies, with reference to Programme communication issues.

4.4 Financial Officer

The Financial Officer participates in the financial monitoring of projects' activities (implementation, reporting, modifications, closure, etc.). Moreover, he/she contributes to the management of Programme's budget. The Financial Officer reports to the JS Coordinator. More specifically, the Financial Officer is responsible for:

- Providing support to Lead Beneficiaries and beneficiaries concerning financial reporting.
- Supporting the Project Officers to collect and review financial reports of the project beneficiaries.
- Contributing to the preparation of financial progress reports.
- Managing the Programme's budget and preparing reports on request of any competent authority on Programme's financial implementation.
- Organising and contributing to the Lead beneficiaries' seminars on financial matters.
- Monitoring financial data through the Public Investments Programme vis-a-vis the beneficiaries and the projects' financing.
- Participating in the project selection procedure along with the Project officers.
- Monitoring the projects' implementation (implementation, reporting, modifications, closure etc.) as the Project officers;
- Supporting the MA in the organisation of the MC meetings and in the implementation of MC decisions.
- Processing in the monitoring information system all required financial data regarding the implemented projects, according to the approved Management

and Control system under the guidance of the MA.

- Cooperating with the MA in the preparation of the regular transmission of data to the European Commission as per Art.32 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1059.
- Contributing to the preparation / drafting of the Final Performance Report of the Programme.
- Contributing to the preparation/ drafting of the Programme Evaluation as regards financial data.
- Monitoring the environmental impact of projects, as the Project Officers, and compiling relevant reports under the MA guidance.
- Monitoring the application of recommendations and financial corrections arising from management verifications and audits.
- Supporting the MA and continuously monitoring the implementation process of the Programme.
- Timely detecting and tackling of problems/obstacles in the financial implementation of projects, for the achievement of Programme financial objectives.
- Supporting the MA in maintaining and archiving of all financial documents that are related to the expenses and the audits, so that an effective audit trail is ensured.
- Participating in information seminars on financial issues for beneficiaries, organised by the MA and the JS.
- Participating in information/ training activities related to his/ her competences / responsibilities.
- Monitoring the progress on financial indicators and financial data for projects.

4.5. Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant provides administrative support to the JS and secretarial support to the Programme. The Administrative Assistant reports to the JS Coordinator. More specifically the Administrative Assistant is responsible for:

- Supporting the Coordinator and the other JS staff members in their daily activities (Keeping minutes, organizing archives, managing the telephone centre, drafting the official correspondence, contacting external collaborators and suppliers).
- Keeping a complete archive with individual files for all documents, after the required distribution and the necessary actions that have to be performed concerning the documents.
- Processing the official correspondence of the JS and keeps an archive with contact details of organisations and institutions with which the JS communicates.
- Contributing to the preparation of meetings and provides secretarial support to the Monitoring Committee as well as in the organisation of meetings of the team of auditors.
- Providing organisational and operational support to the JS activities (organization of seminars, meetings, conferences);
- Supporting the implementation of the Technical Assistance projects of the Programme, in general.
- Keeping the attendance sheets and leave plans of the JS members under the JS Coordinator's guidance.
- Monitoring the timetable of the JS activities, in collaboration with the Coordinator.
- Fulfilling administrative responsibilities and human resources issues of the JS.

Article 5: Staff Management

1. Employment contracts are concluded under Greek law in Greek and English for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. Personnel files and payroll accounting for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. are administered by M.O.U. S.A. with the assistance of Unit D (Organization and Support) of the MA.
2. The employment contract for the Information Officer in Bulgaria will be concluded under Bulgarian law in Bulgarian language and will be signed by the Minister or regional Development and Public Works of Bulgaria or authorized by him/her person.
3. Employment issues such as leaves, working hours etc. lie with the contracting authority of the staff.
4. The daily function of the JS is in cooperation, in agreement and under the supervision and guidance of the MA. The whole JS system supports all units of the MA in any related issue concerning the Programme and reports to it. In compliance with the above, the day-to-day management procedures of the MA that stem from Greek Public Law and the requirements of the MA's ISO system (e.g., annual/monthly working plan and reports) are applicable to all the members of the JS.
5. The expenditure deriving from the functioning of the whole system of the Joint Secretariat is paid from the Programme's Technical Assistance budget.

All labour issues of the core JS remain the sole responsibility of M.O.U. S.A. in collaboration with Unit D "Organization and Support" of the MA.

The responsibilities, tasks and workflow of the JS and its members can be adjusted, after the approval of the M.A., according to the current administrative needs and obligations of the Programme Management.

Article 6: Location of the JS Structures

The address of the JS office is:

Zeda Building, 65, Georgikis Scholis Avenue, Entrance 2, 2nd floor
57001, Thessaloniki, Greece

Tel: +30 2310 469 695

Email: jts_grbg@mou.gr

The above mentioned office location is the place of employment.

Internal rules of procedures of JS are adopted and entered into force on the date of their approval.

Annexes

1. Information Office Responsibilities

ANNEX 1

Information Office (Info Point)

The main responsibilities of the Information Office are:

- a) to provide support to beneficiaries from the Bulgarian side during the preparation of proposals and throughout the period of implementation of operations;
- b) to implement information and publicity actions in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the OP.
- c) To support JS/MA/NA activities as required.

The staff of the Information Office comprises two experts. As the recruitment is the responsibility of the Bulgarian National Authority and takes place in Bulgaria, the Bulgarian legislation is applicable for the selection and employment of its staff.

The Information Office staff may use the office of NA in Sofia and the regional office in Smolyan.

The addresses of the Information Office are:

In Sofia:

Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works

9, "Stefan Karadzha" str.

1202 Sofia, Bulgaria

Phone: 00 359 2 94 05 557

Email: dsadonkova@mrrb.government.bg;

In Smolyan:

14, "Bulgaria" boulevard

3rd floor, office 309

4700 Smolyan, Bulgaria

Phone: 00 359 301 81209

E-mail: VKostadinova@mrrb.government.bg