Joint Secretariat

Plac Porozumienia Gdańskiego 1 | 80-864 Gdańsk
tel. +48 58 746 38 55
southbaltic@southbaltic.eu

WWW.SOUTHBALTIC.EU

Questions & Answers on the reporting within the online application system CST2021

Disclaimer:

This document serves as a supplementary source of information on reporting. For official rules and guidelines on reporting and eligibility, please refer to the Programme Manual, its annexes, and the FLC General Principles.

Additional information:

In case of any technical problems in the system that you cannot solve with the help of this document and other manuals, please contact ami.sthb@southbaltic.eu.

Content-related questions and problems related reporting should be communicated by the LP to the Project Officer responsible for the project. We kindly ask project partners not to contact the JS directly, but communicate through the lead partner.

CST2021 is the name for the whole system, that includes several sub-systems for submitting applications (WOD2021), reporting (SL2021/Projekty), etc. The sub-system for reporting is the Projekty module of CST2021 that is called SL2021 as well.

General System Questions

1. What to do if PP did not receive the email with the link to connect to the CST platform for the first time?

1. Please check the “spam” (“junk”) box.
2. Please check the correctness of your e-mail address provided to the JS (i.e., spelling).

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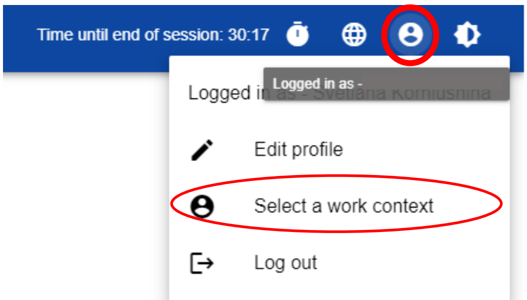
3. Please address the Project Officer in the JS responsible for your project to resend the invitation. The JS contacts can be found here: [Joint Secretariat - Interreg South Baltic]().
   The invitation is active for 7 days.

2. When I log in to the CST system, the Administration/WOD21/Projekty icons do not appear - what should I do?

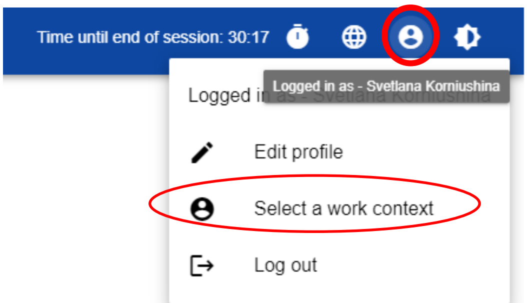
1. Please check if access to the system was granted for you.
2. Please click the icon of user and “Select a work content” (screenshot below).
3. Please try to use a different browser.



You will see WOD2021 and Projekty. The Administration options are for the institution.

3. What to do if I don't see our project after logging in to Projekty module of CST2021?

You must choose the context of work. Please click on the icon of a person on the right top corner and click on “Select a work context” and choose your organization. If you are responsible for more projects and the name of your organization was provided in different ways (e.g. in one project in English in another one in national language), then you have to switch between organisations to see different projects.



4. When entering new users into CST I get a message that "The entered e-mail address or login exists in the system". What should I do in this case?

If such a message appears, it means that the user with the email or login provided already exists in the system. This user should be addressed and confirm the data and you should proceed with that data when granting the access. In case of further issues, please address ami.sthb@southbaltic.eu.

5. Why cannot the system calculate flat rates and eligible costs automatically?

Due to the system limitations, it does not fully satisfy the Programme specifications.

6. Is there a button to report bug?

There is no "report a bug" option in the system.
In the event of any problems with the operation of the system or any errors, please send the information, including a description of the error and screenshots to ami.sthb@southbaltic.eu or the FLC (if relevant).

Reporting Processes and Deadlines

7. Where can I find the updated version of the manual for the reporting system?

The updated manual is available on our website. You can access it using the following link: https://southbaltic.eu/other-implementing-documents

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8. How should we claim the lump sum preparation costs: should it be included in the LP partial report, or does it require a separate report?

You can claim the lump sum preparation costs in two ways:

1. By preparing and submitting a "0-report" that includes only the lump sum. In this case, only the LP needs to prepare the "zero" partial payment claim, which will then be included into the "zero" collective payment claim.
2. By including the lump sum in the first payment claim.

Please note that in both cases, the lump sum should be reported under the Simplified Cost Options section in the system.

9. To report on physical progress, do you need to open a payment claim?

Payment claims in the system are the tools used to report physical as well as financial progress, therefore, you have to open and submit a payment claim to report on the physical progress. In case you want to report only the physical progress without any costs, you should create a partial payment claim and in the part Type of the payment claim indicate Reporting. While if you want to report both physical progress and costs then in the part Type of the payment claim you should indicate Reimbursement and than Reporting will be indicated automatically.

10. Is the deadline for the reports the same for the project partner and FLC or does FLC have another deadline?

Each project partner has 15 days after the end of the respective reporting period to submit the partial payment claim for the FLC verification.

The FLCs have a maximum of 90 days for the partial payment claim verification from the date of submission of the partial payment claim by the respective project partner (including the Lead Partner).
Please find more information in the Programme Manual (Section V, sub-section 5,4, Reporting process).

11. Does the deadline of 15th day after the end of the reporting period? Are we able to continue working on the report on the 15th?

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Yes, you can still work on the report on the 15th, i.e. the day of the deadline. The system is not blocked on the date when the deadline expires, you can work on the partial payment claim after if you didn't manage to submit it in time.

12. What should be done if a Project Partner (PP) is delayed in submitting their partial payment claim?

First of all, the partner should inform their FLC about the delay. In case of decentralized system, the partner and the FLC may agree on later submission of the partial payment claim in a way that the FLC still verifies it until the deadline for obtaining FLC verification (90 days after the end of the reporting period).

In case of late submission of the report, the partner should aim at closing the clarifications as soon as possible so the partial payment claim can still be included in the collective payment claim that shall be submitted 120 days after the end of the reporting period.

13. Who should we address if there are some problems with reporting?

The Lead Partner should address the Project Officer in the JS responsible for your project. The JS contacts can be found here: Joint Secretariat - Interreg South Baltic. In case of purely technical issue with the reporting system please contact amisthb@southbaltic.eu.

14. Is it possible for several users to work on the same report at the same time?

Yes, it is possible. However, it is not recommended to avoid overlaps or errors.

15. What role, besides of the manager should be given to the people working with the report?

Task distribution depends on the organization of work and staff duties in the project. The role of manager has the highest level of authorization, e.g., managers can invite other users.

It is a decision of each project partner on what roles to grant to their employees, e.g. if someone is only responsible for reporting they can be granted only the "handling payment applications" role.

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16. **Do we need to report all payments from a certain period in the payment claims that covers that period, or can we include some costs in the next reporting period?**

It is recommended to report all costs for this reporting period. However, if for any reason you are unable to do so, you can include them in the next payment claim. If there are no costs to report, please indicate that as well.

17. **In our project, the Subsidy Contract has already been signed, but the partnership agreement hasn't been signed yet and won't be by the 15th of January. We won't be able to include it in the first report. What should we do in this case?**

FLCs may request the partnership agreement during the checks of the partial payment claim. Nevertheless, it is recommended to report on time while finalizing the partnership agreement. If the FLCs ask for it, you can provide it during the clarification process.
In case of doubts, the lead partner should contact your Project Officer in the Joint Secretariat (JS) to discuss how to proceed.

18. **Does the Joint Secretariat review individual partner progress reports, or do they only assess the compiled report submitted by the Lead Partner?**

The responsibility for approving partial payment claims lies with the FLC. Nevertheless, during the verification of collective payment claim the JS reviews the partial payment claims to some extent, primarily focusing on the sections that impact the collective payment claim and the overall project picture. In the partial payment claims, the JS primarily checks financial and technical aspects, while the physical progress is assessed at the collective payment claim level. Still, you must describe your physical progress in the partial payment claim for the FLC's review. If the JS notices mistakes, we may request corrections from the FLC.

Entering and Managing Data

19. **Should each partner, except the Lead Partner, report indicators section in their partial reports?**

The way of reporting indicators in partial payment claims should be agreed within the partnership as later the achievements are summed up in the collective payment claim. Partners may reflect on the achievement of indicators they contributed to in their partial payment claims. Therefore, e.g. if during the

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reporting period the project supported 50 enterprises, then each partner should report only the number of enterprises they supported. It is also accepted if the lead partner reports the indicators in the name of the partnership.

It is the task of the Lead Partner to comprehensively reflect the achievement of indicators in the reporting period in the collective payment claim.

20. Should beneficiaries only report the result indicators they directly worked with, or should all PPs report all targets reached in the project during the reporting period?

In general, result indicators should only be reported in the final report. The values reported in the partial payment claims are summarized in the collective payment claim. Therefore, the most effective approach is for the Lead Partner (LP) to report the progress on behalf of the entire partnership. However, if specific work can be directly attributed to a partner, then that partner may report it. Regardless, when preparing the collective payment claim, the LP must carefully review the reported values and make any necessary corrections in the collective payment claim.

21. Do we enter content development data as PP or on behalf of the whole project situation?

No. The partial payment claim should contain information relevant only to your organization. It should reflect activities and expenditures carried out by each PP separately (including the lead partner).

Later, when each partial payment claim is approved by the First Level Controller (FLC), it is the task of the Lead Partner to summarize the whole implementation process in the joint payment claim for the whole reporting period.

22. If data, relevant to the whole development of the project, will be entered by LP, will every PP see those changes in the system?

1. Only the Lead Partner is authorized to introduce changes to the system.
2. As soon as the changes are accepted by the JS in the system, they are visible for each PP.

23. How should we fill the financial documents in?

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There are two options:

1. You can introduce the financial documents directly to the system, one by one.
2. You can add items to the "List of documents" using a MS Excel file, exported from the system (from the partial payment claim). Once you complete the file, you can import it back into the payment claim.

24. What euro exchange rate should be used for calculating the expenses?

Expenditure(s) incurred in a currency other than EUR must be converted into EUR using the exchange rate applied by the EC in the month in which the expenditure is submitted to the FLC for verification (e.g., if you prepare and send the partial payment claim in April, the exchange rate for the month of April must be used).

Official monthly exchange rate can be found at: InforEuro, the exchange rate of the Euro currency (europa.eu).

25. Which numbers should match in the report to avoid any issues?

When preparing the report, the total expenditure should match the eligible expenditure, and the EU co-financing should be exactly 80% of the total/eligible expenditure. Before submitting the report, please cross-check these values between the first page of the payment claim and the "Sources of Expenditure Financing" section to ensure consistency.

26. What is the issuer identification number, and where can I find it?

The issuer identification number refers to the registration number of the company issuing the invoice. You can find this information in the guidelines: Issuer ID Type: Select the type of issuer identification number from the provided list.

27. Where does the document number come from? Or do I start with number one and so on?

The document number is an "invoice number". If it is an internal document and/or no number is introduced, you can use the "accounting number" (the number assigned by your accounting system) as the document number.

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If you have any doubts, it is recommended to contact the FLC.

28. Is "accounting number" our own internal accounting number?

Yes, it is the number given by the beneficiary according to the internal book-keeping system.

29. How to fill the box "Name of product or service" for the payrolls in. What should be written?

The description of "Name of products or service" must present the nature of the cost. In general, descriptions of costs should be consistent throughout the project, i.e., having the same description structure. It should include:

- Nature of costs (e.g., travel to ..., purchase of ..., salaries for ...)
- Subject (who/ what they relate to, e.g., the name of a staff member, the name of product/ service)
- Purpose (e.g., to carry out analysis of..., to attend an event...).
- For travel or meetings costs in case of external experts: adding location and date.
- For staff cost: name, month(s) and role of the employee.

For example: "Salary for April 2024, project manager Jane Smith"; "Purchases of promotional gadgets (umbrellas, notepads and pens) for the workshop participants (Activity 3.1.) in Gdansk".

30. Where to upload the part-time contracts and the documents from our FLC.

Please use the "Attachments" block to add files. Documents should link to the specific ones indicated in the "List of documents" under given cost item as well as you can attach other documents (e.g., photos, reports etc.).

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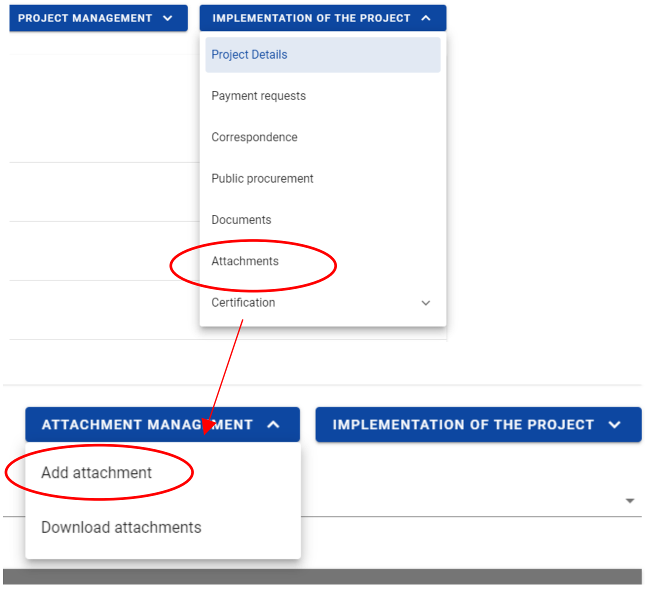

31. How often can the percentage of employee time dedicated to the project be changed?

The percentage of time set for a part-time employee dedicated to the project should remain consistent throughout a full reporting period. However, changes may be made during the project implementation period if justified by modifications in the employees' tasks or responsibilities.

You can find detailed information about the percentage of time dedicated to the project in the Programme Manual, particularly on page 65, which addresses how to handle changes in the percentage of time allocated to the project - Programme Manual v7.0.

32. Do payrolls have to be presented per month, or per person for the whole reporting period?

Please refer to the national requirements, accounting, and the book-keeping system rules of your organization, as well as the requirements of the FLC.

As a rule, each cost item should be presented per accounting document.

33. Is the limit of 4000 characters in description boxes granted for every project partner or per all partners?

Yes. The limit of 4000 characters is available for each partner (including the Lead Partner) in the respective partial payment claims. When preparing the collective payment claim the lead partner should rewrite these sections in the physical progress and provide the information for the whole project.

34. Where do we find the excel sheet excel sheet for the "List of documents"?

You should enter the payment claim and under the "List of documents" section click on "Management of payment claim" and then export the excel.

35. For invoices, is it possible to upload an Excel file containing a list of invoices with all the requested information (one invoice per row, one piece of information per column) instead of manually entering each number from the economy system printout or Excel file into the program?

Yes, if you prepare the Excel file correctly, you can import it directly into the system, eliminating the need to manually enter each item. This option is available under "Management of Payment Claim."

Staff Costs and Employment

36. How should the employee who has a contract be qualified, as external expense or involved as a staff of the project?

1. The staff cost category refers to the costs of staff already employed in the organization of PP and assigned for the project implementation. Or staff specifically contracted (employed in the organisation) for the project.
2. The external experts and service providers are subcontracted via relevant procurement to carry out certain tasks or activities which are essential for the implementation of the project procedures (e.g., studies and surveys, translation, promotion and communication, services related to meetings and events).
3. External expertise and service costs are paid based on the terms of contracts or written agreements upon issuing invoices or requests for reimbursement.

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Please note that it is not allowed to subcontract other partners and associated partners of the same project and their employees to perform the tasks of the project.

37. For staff costs, can the "Document Number" and the "Accounting or Record Number" be the same?

Yes, this is possible, but it depends on the specific rules and regulations in your country. In some cases, the two numbers may indeed be the same.

38. How should the salaries be allocated to the WP?

1. To fill in the “Budget data” block, please add a work package (WP) to a project.
2. To report staff costs as well as other costs, please choose relevant WP for each cost item.
3. If dividing a full-time on two or three WPs is needed, you can provide a supporting document justifying the task shared each WP.

39. Should personnel working on the project be included in the "Project Personnel" field on CST2021?

Please consult this matter with your FLC.

40. If a person is employed under an additional work contract with an hourly rate calculated from their actual salary, can their monthly hours be divided between WP1 and WP2, or is it better to assign one person to WP1 and another to WP2?

The salary of personnel working on the project should be reported in the work package (WP) where they actually perform their tasks. If the person works on both WP1 and WP2, their monthly hours can be divided between the two work packages based on the time spent on each.

41. How to report costs related to the time the team spent on the project? How should we report costs that are not linked to external invoices but are part of our internal operations?

Costs such as salaries should be reported under the "Staff Costs" category.

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42. Can a person employed under a contract of mandate and considered part of the project staff be added to the "Personnel" section in SL2021? The "Form of Involvement" field only allows options for Employment, Self-employment, and Volunteering.

In principle, yes, it should be included, you may choose "employment" option. We recommend consulting with the First Level Controller (FLC), as they are responsible for financial verification and checking this database.

43. Do we need to add all project members to the "Personnel Base" on the project settlement?

Partners should consult their FLC regarding this matter, the JS does not perform checks on the Personnel Base.

44. Should staff costs be reported monthly, or is it acceptable to report them as a single line for a longer period, such as 6 months?

In general, staff costs can be reported either monthly or as a total per person for a longer period. However, it is recommended to confirm this with your First Level Controller (FLC), as they may have specific preferences.

Technically, multiple attachments can usually be submitted for one cost item, so you could provide proof for each month either separately or bundled in a ZIP file. However, keep in mind that if costs are divided across multiple work packages (WPs), you may need to ensure that the amounts are properly allocated and justified for each WP and month. Consult your FLC for guidance on the preferred approach.

45. How should I accurately divide the costs between work packages?

When reporting in the CST2021 system, you should estimate the amount of time dedicated to each work package (WP) in a given month. Then, divide the monthly staff cost proportionally between the WPs that the person worked on. Ensure that your estimates are supported by accurate records and documentation of time spent on each WP.

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46. Do we have to attach all salary lists and the annex to the contract?

The following documents are required to support the staff costs:
- Payroll document(s).
- Employment contract(s).
- Proof of payment(s).

Please address the respective FLC to confirm the list of documents needed for the verification of staff costs.

47. If a person works on both WP1 and WP2, can I allocate part of their costs to WP1 and part to WP2 by attaching only the general payroll document and providing an explanation in the notes?

Yes, the reported costs should reflect the actual work performed by the employee. For example, if the person works part-time on management tasks, those costs should be attributed to WP1, while content-related work can be reported in other work packages.

However, you must provide supporting documents that verify the actual costs and explain how these are divided between work packages.

You need a clear and documented approach to allocate costs between WPs. It is recommended to consult your First Level Controller (FLC) in advance to ensure compliance.

48. Should the allocation of work between work packages be noted in the employment contract, or can it be managed using timesheets?

According to the Programme Manual, timesheets are no longer accepted for this purpose. The allocation of work between work packages should be fixed in the employment contract. For detailed guidance, please refer to page 64 of the Programme Manual.

49. Should we enter the total cost of this person in the gross field and the gross amount in net?

In the case of staff costs, the gross and net amounts shall be equal to each other and must reflect the total amount indicated in the payroll document.

50. Question for Swedish partners: When uploading payroll documents under the list of documents, how should we fill in the gross vs. net amounts? Additionally, when using the "Personalkostnadssammanställning" template, how do we fill in fields such as document type, date of issue, and date of payment?

1. You should use the template provided by your FLC, called "Personalkostnadssammanställning." Typically, you report one row per person and work package, either for the entire reporting period or per month.
2. The "Personalkostnadssammanställning" serves as a supporting document compiling staff costs. For document type, it would likely be classified as "payroll," but please confirm with your FLC.
3. The date of payment will depend on whether you report per month or for the entire reporting period in one row.

E-Signature and Verification

51. When forward for signature - are there the same alternatives as in SL2014?

Yes, there are two signature options:

1. Qualified certificate and PKI infrastructure - signature in XADES format.
2. Non-qualified signature - available when a qualified signature is not possible, or the user represents a non-Polish entity (the system sends an authorisation code to the user's email address, which must be entered in the "confirmation of the one-time code" window).

52. Do you know if there exists a verified system for e-signature on EU level, also approved by the programme?

To verify e-signatures, primarily respective function in Adobe is used.

In addition, the following tools are used:

1. The EC: DSS Demonstration WebApp at https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/DSS/webapp-demo/validation.
2. The Polish public tool: https://puesc.gov.pl/wer/.
3. The Swedish tool: Edusign at https://validator.edusign.sunet.se/

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Please note that if a document is e-signed by more than one person, then all signatures must be verifiable in order for the document to be accepted as valid