

Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII)

1. Proposed on 13 March, Regulation (EU) 2020/460 adopted on 30 March, entry into force on 1 April
2. Providing **flexibility** through:
 - a) Extended scope of the ERDF:
 - investments necessary for strengthening the crisis response capacities in health services under TO1 (R&I)
 - working capital in SMEs – temporarily and where necessary
 - b) COVID-19 related expenditure eligible as of 1 February 2020
 - c) Small transfers within programmes within the same Fund and category of regions can be done via notification procedure
3. Providing **liquidity** through not recovering the 2019 annual pre-financing
4. Regulation (EU) 2020/461 – extended scope of the European Solidarity Fund to cover a public health crisis

Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus (CRII Plus)

1. Proposed on 2 April, Regulation (EU) 2020/558 adopted on 22 April, entry into force on 24 April
2. Providing **liquidity** through 100% EU co-financing rate for ERDF, ESF and CF in the next accounting year
3. Providing **flexibility** through:
 - a) 2020 allocations can be transferred between ERDF, ESF and CF and between categories of regions, no more checks of thematic concentration
 - b) 10% flexibility at closure within programmes as regards the EU contribution
 - c) Selection of retrospective projects is allowed, even outside of the programme content
 - d) Alignment of approach to undertakings in difficulty with State aid and de minimis aid
4. Providing **simplification** through:
 - a) No further amendments of the Partnership Agreement
 - b) Simpler use of financial instruments
 - c) Easier use of non-statistical sampling in audits
 - d) Annual implementation reports to be submitted by 30 September
 - e) Aggregation of smaller force majeure cases

Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative

Task Force

1. A dedicated Task Force was set up in the Commission to assist Member State in implementation of CRII and CRII Plus.
2. Questions and answers available on [a dedicated platform on Sharepoint](#), accessible to the managing authorities.
3. Since 18 March 425 questions received, 400 replies published.
4. Please check the platform first, before submitting a question.
5. **The easiest way to search:**
 1. Download a page as pdf file
 2. Search for keywords in the pdf file.

Questions and answers (1)

Question: Several Interreg programmes predict problems with achieving in the year 2020 decommitment limits.

Should programmes refer to force majeure and follow procedure described in Art 87(1)(b) of the CPR, referring to COVID-19 or there will be introduced other extraordinary approach?

Answer:

1. Application of the 100% co-financing rate in the 2020-2021 accounting year should facilitate faster absorption. It can be applied to any priority axis.
2. 10% flexibility between priority axes within a programme at closure should provide additional room for manoeuvre.
3. **Force majeure can be only applied on a case-by-case basis!**
4. No extraordinary approach is envisaged.
5. See “COVID-19 and Force Majeure” and “Decommitment” sections for details.

Questions and answers (2)

Question: Do limits of 8% and 4% of the total programme budget refer to all potential transfers within a programme?

Does it mean all (if more than one) transfers executed should add to maximum limits of 8% and 4%?

Answer:

1. Yes. It's a double limit: 8% of the allocation of the outgoing priority and no more than 4% of the programme allocation **in total for all transfers**.
2. For this purpose, for CP tables 16, 17 and 18 have to be modified and notified to the Commission. No modification of the Financing Plan at table 15 for CP is required. The transfers cannot affect the previous years.
3. To note: these transfers can be used only during the programming period, while the 10% flexibility between priority axes applies only at closure.
4. See "Transfers - Article 30(5) and Article 25a(5) CPR" section for details.

Questions and answers (3)

Question: As regards 100% co-financing rate for one or more priority axis during the accounting year 1 July 2020 – 30 June 2021, what does it mean in practice?

Answer:

1. The co-financing rate applies at the level of a priority axis, not at an operation level.
2. It can be applied to any priority axis.
3. Once the request is approved, it will be applied to all expenditure declared for that priority axis during the 2020-2021 accounting year, i.e. it is not linked to any specific operations.
4. Indicate the relevant priority axes in table 16. No additional changes in the financing plan are necessary.
5. No need to compensate with additional national contribution in the next years, i.e. as a result, the real co-financing will be higher and the total volume of investments will be lower than initially planned.
6. See “Co-financing rate - Article 25a(1) CPR” section for details.

Questions and answers (4)

Question: New operations, as well new actions within the on-going operations responding to the COVID-19 must be in line with the provisions of CPs. In particular, with the programme logic – including selected thematic objectives, investment priorities and activities.

The new operations may have to be introduced into programmes, following the CP change procedure.

Such changes will have to be accepted by the COM. Does the COM foresee any extraordinary (meaning speed –up) procedure of approval of such changes?

Answer:

1. The CRII and CRII Plus provided some flexibility as regards the COVID-19 – related operations, even before the programmes amendments.
2. Programme amendments can be done once a full extent of the necessary changes is clear.
3. The deadlines for the programme amendment were not changed, but the Commission will make efforts to speed up the process. Close cooperation between the programme authorities and the Commission is key!
4. See “Programme amendments” section for details.

Questions and answers (5)

Question: Current situation hinders significantly implementation of projects.

Projects are not only facing delays but simply can implement activities on very limited scale (online). But some activities and outputs simply cannot be delivered within originally forecasted time frame.

Are there any other recommendations from the COM on how programme institutions can support projects on the basis of CRII and CRII+ regulations?

Answer:

1. Resources can be redirected to other operations, e.g. COVID-19-related ones.
2. Programme authorities may consider adjusting affected projects in accordance with the applicable rules, in order to minimise the impact of force majeure (delayed performance or substitute performance):
 - a. A dedicated section “COVID-19 and Force Majeure”
 - b. A reply: “Flexibility to adjust affected operations – General”
 - c. A reply “Eligibility of expenditure affected in operations – General”

Questions and answers (6)

Question: (...) If not all problems with projects will be solved and will implicate also programme underperformance, what are the communication channels programmes should use with the COM to report on progress/challenges in the programme implementation?

Answer:

1. The current channels of communication remain valid and open.
2. All efforts should be made to ensure that programme targets are met. The Commission will cooperate with Member States to that end.
3. When there is a serious failure to achieve targets of the performance framework, the Commission **may** apply financial corrections.
4. Article 22(7) CPR clarifies under which circumstances the financial correction **cannot be** applied, and this includes force majeure.
5. A Member State may propose a revision of the milestones and targets through a programme amendment in duly justified cases. (Point 5 of Annex II CPR)
6. See “Monitoring, reporting, performance framework” section for details.