

PRACTICAL GUIDANCE FOR NATIONAL CONTROLLERS

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The present document is a technical guidance aiming to help national controllers to carryout their tasks¹ in the JEMS on-line monitoring tool.

Among the subjects treated:

- How to access to Jems, the Interreg Euro-MED Monitoring tool
- How to certify partner's expenditure submitted through the Partner Report,
- How to fill-in and finalise the compulsory National Control checklist,
- How to generate and finalise the national control report and certificate to be sent to the PP (and concerned National Authority in the case of Spain and Portugal only)

The document aims to detail, on a step-by-step approach, the actions to be implemented on the system by the controller and indicates, when necessary, where further information can be found.

This Guide should be used jointly to the Interreg <u>Euro-MED Programme Manual</u> available on the Programme website.

The management verifications², here after "certification" process, is carried out by a qualified controller to verify that the expenditure incurred to implement the project complies with the relevant EU, programme, national, regional, and institutional rules as well as with the provisions of the Subsidy Contract and the consolidated Application Form.

The main aim of the controls is to provide a guarantee for the Managing Authority and, for the project itself, that costs reported are eligible in the framework of the management of European funds applicable to projects financed by the Interreg Euro-MED Programme.

For further assistance, do not hesitate to contact your National Authority or the Interreg Euro-MED Secretariat at programme@interreg-euro-med.eu.

¹ National Controller tasks are detailed in the <u>Interreg Euro-MED Programme Manual</u>, <u>Chapter III Financial Issues</u>, <u>Section E. "Control</u>, <u>Audit and Verification"</u>

² In accordance with Art 71 (CPR(EU) 1060/2021) and art 46.3 of Interreg Regulation (EU) 1059/2021,

The context around the National Control (NC) work

During the project lifetime, project partners (including the Lead partner, here after LP) must submit expenditure to NC validation in order to get their expenditures verified and to request the reimbursement of the costs incurred in the framework of their Interreg Euro-Med project.

Once the controller closes its task, a checklist (and possibly External contract checklists) is validated on Jems, and a control report and certificate is issued, signed, and uploaded in the system.

According to a timeframe agreed within each project, the LP gathers all partners information (report on activities and validated National control certificates + national validations³, if the case may be) to prepare the "Reporting package" (full or partial depending on the concerned reporting phase) that is submitted to the JS for assessment.

Each Reporting package presented by the LP is composed of:

- A project report
- A project payment claim
- National controllers' certificates (and related national validation, only in the case of partners from Spain and Portugal)

Please note that the JS and the entities responsible for higher-level controls can access the checklist, as well as the control reports and certificates, in order to verify the work carried out. Controllers should therefore write their comments in a clear and understandable manner to ease the review process.

For more detailed information on the reporting process, please refer to the <u>Programme Manual</u>, Chapter II, section E.) Project reporting and Joint Secretariat monitoring.

³ In the Interreg Euro-MED Programme, the National validation concerns Spain and Portugal only. The document is issued by the entity in charge of this validation and must be attached to the control report and certificate. More information on how to generate the document can be find in the section "Generate Control report and certificate" of the present guide.

PRE-CONDITIONS

I. Procedure for the designation of national controllers

Before entering on the Partner report and control work section, the designated controller must request an access to the project, following the compulsory national procedure⁴ and initiate the creation of her/his user account on Jems in order to:

- get control access rights
- be attached to her/his institution in Jems
- be assigned to each single project partner for which she/he has been designated

The procedure differs depending on the National Control system foreseen at national level (centralised or decentralised) and must be held in cooperation with the **National Authority** in charge of controllers (hereafter NA)⁵.

A. Decentralised system

- 1. **Each partner applies to the NA** for the designation of its controller via the national procedure in force (process to be held out of the Jems Monitoring tool).
- 2. The NA validates the controller.
- 3. The designated controller (hereinafter referred to as NC), and any possible reviewer or certificate signatory (if different from the controller carrying out the certification), creates an account on Jems.
 Once the accounts have been created, the NC (and any reviewer) send(s) a message to the NA confirming the email address used to create his/her account.
- 4. The NA validates the controller and fills in an online form on the Programme website to notify the designation to the JS (web link)
- 5. Upon receipt of the form from the NA, the JS activates the Controller profile on Jems.

B. Centralised system

- The designated controller (hereinafter referred to as NC), and any possible reviewer or certificate signatory (if different from the controller carrying out the certification), creates an account on Jems
- 2. The NA notifies the JS of the complete list of controllers and reviewers by email
- 3. The JS activates the Controller profile on Jems
- 4. The NA assigns controllers to the relevant project partner in Jems

⁴ For more information on the National Control system foreseen by each participating States, see the Programme Manual, Chapter III, Section E., i. National Control

⁵ Contact details are available to the following address: <u>National Controllers - Programme Interreg Euro-MED (interregeuro-med.eu)</u>

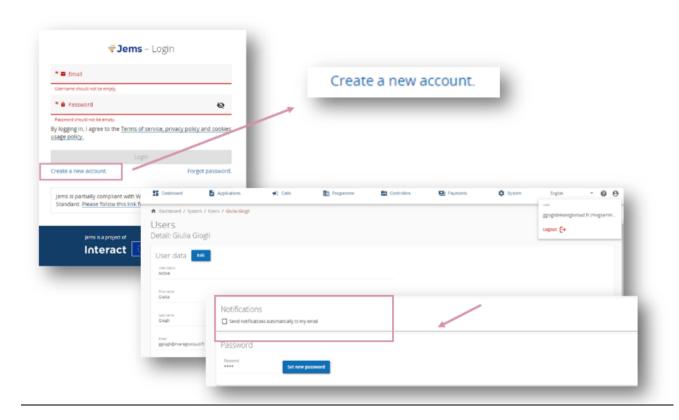
II. How to access to the Programme Monitoring tool

A. Create an account on Jems

The first step before starting the verification of a Partner report on Jems consists of creating a user account.

By defining a login and password, you can enter the system and work on the partner report to which you are assigned.

- 1. Connect to the Jems website: https://jems.interreg-euromed.eu
- 2. Click on create a new account
- 3. Fill in all the information requested
- 4. Find the validation mail in your inbox to validate your account (check your spam inbox if you didn't receive it)
- 5. Fill in your profile and **authorise the reception of notification** in order to be alerted by email once the Partner report is submitted.



IMPLEMENTING THE CONTROL TASK ON JEMS

Key points before starting the control work

Each controller should ensure that he/she has the most up-to-date information concerning the implementation of the project and he/she has all needed information and material to carry out the proper control work, by making sure that:

- All the elements entered in the JEMS monitoring system via the Partner Report are clear and understandable and supported by the needed compulsory documents
- The administrative and financial audit trail of the Partner is up to date (eventual addendum or modification affecting the controlled partner is known by the controller)
- Any other additional material useful for the verification is available
- The controller has access to the most recent version of the Programme Manual,
- A telephone or video conference interview with the PP has been held (or is foreseen),
- An on-the-spot visit has been held (or is foreseen) if necessary⁶

How are control tasks formalised in Jems?

The control work is formalised in Jems through the following compulsory templates and steps:

- A compulsory **control checklist** filled-in and validated in Jems (not signed)
- One or more eventual **external contracts checklist**(s) filled-in and validated in Jems (not signed)
- A Control Report and Certificate (single document) downloaded from Jems, signed and uploaded by the Controller under section "Overview and Finalize" of the Control Report
- Eventual **national validation** (in case of Spain and Portugal only) signed and uploaded by the NA under the same section mentioned above "Overview and Finalize"

⁶ On the spot visits are optional or **compulsory depending on** the national regulation, programme rules, and the **type of costs presented to the NC verification**. For more information refers to the Programme Manual, Chapter III *Financial Issues*, section *E). Control, audit, and verifications*.

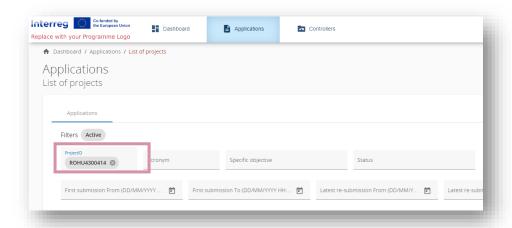
How to access to the "Partner report" information?

After getting the Jems access rights and after having been assigned to a specific partner, the NC is ready to access all the information of a submitted Partner Report.

From "Dashboard/My Application":

enter into the Project for which you want to start the control work.

/!\ Point of attention: when a partner report submission notification is received, the report can also be opened directly from the e-mail, after you logged-in.



Select the project partner on the menu on the left side of the screen section "Reporting"> "Partners reports"> Click on the Partner that you have been assigned to to access to the partner reports dashboard.

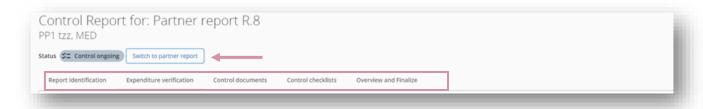


To access the different sections of the control report, click on "Start control" on the right-hand side of the line of the report to be controlled.

/!\ Point of attention : The control work on Jems can only start once the partner report appears under the status "Submitted".



NB: The reporting periods are automatically set up on the system by the JS and each partner select a reporting period when creating its partner report. The numbering in column ID (R.8 here below) is automatically displayed at the level of each PP (e.g even if the project is presenting the 3rd reporting package we're here in the 8th partner report for PP TZZ).



Before starting the control work, the system allows controllers to have an overview of the data filled-in by the partner in the partner report.

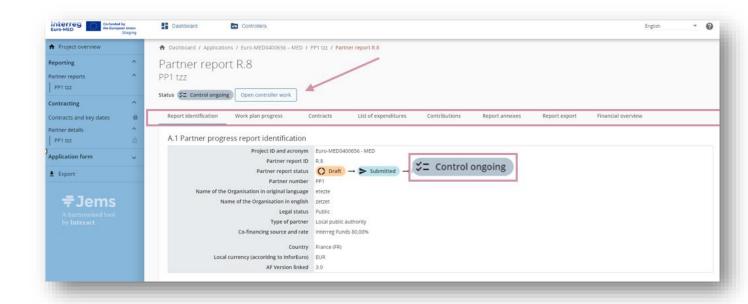
The partner report is composed of different sections accessible from the tabs in the top navigation bar. In the report you can find the following tabs:

- Report identification (all the basic information about the report period: key dates, periods covered by the PR and partner spending profile)
- Work plan progress (to be filled-in by the PP only if requested by the LP)
- External contracts⁷
- List of expenditures
- Contributions
- Report Annexes: this tab gathers all the documents that have been attached in the other sections (expenditures documents, contracts, etc.)
- Report export⁸
- Financial overview

You can freely move from one section to the other through the top navigation bar.

 $^{^{7}}$ For the "External contracts" definition, please refers to the Programme Manual, Chapter III Financial Issues. A. Eligibility of expenditures, vii category of costs, e) external expertise and service costs

⁸ Refer to the Control Work, section B "Expenditure Verification" of the present guide.



I. The control work

Once the Partner Report information revised, the controller can proceed with the control work by clicking on the button "start control" so that the partner report status changes to "control ongoing". Then the controller can access the control report. The report includes the following tabs:

- Control identification
- Expenditure verification
- Control documents
- Control checklists⁹
- Overview and finalise

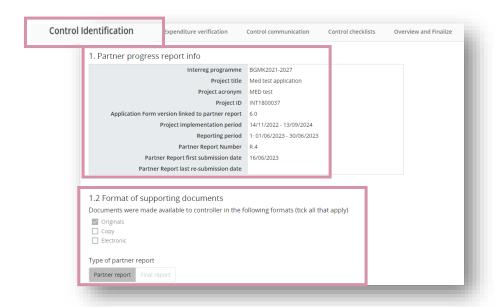
/!\ Point of attention: by selecting " switch to the partner report ", you can consult the different sections of the partner report at any time during the control work (the data entered and saved by the controller will remain in the system).

A. Control identification

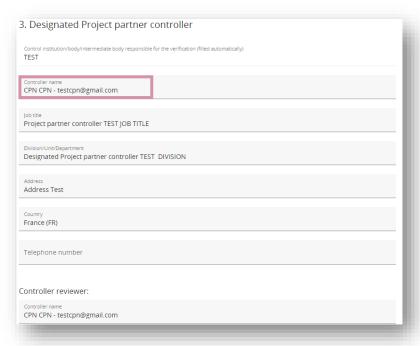
This section is composed of 4 parts.

- 1. The Partner report information (automatically filled with the information of the Partner report).
- 2. Format of supporting documents

⁹ Bear in mind that the controller must validate a general control checklist before finalizing her/his control task; in this tab you also have access to the "external contract checklist". A checklist is compulsory for each external contract you validate for the first time



3. Designated project partner controller: here the name of the controller implementing the control work should be selected through the scrolling menu. Then, the rest of the information is automatically displayed. If relevant, the name and surname of the reviewer must also be added.



/!\ Point of attention! The name of the signatory automatically displayed in the Control Report and Certificate is that of the person who "exports" the document. This automatic display must be taken into consideration, particularly when the signatory is different from the person in charge of carrying out the control in Jems.

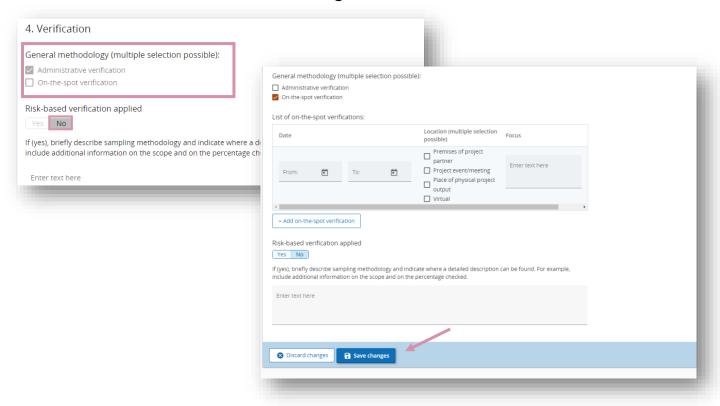
NB: Reviewers can sign the document on their behalf or add a signature next to the controllers' one, depending on the method agreed with the body responsible of controller designation. In case of doubt concerning the signatory person, a question will be raised by the JS.

4. **Verification:** the controller must select the methodology carried out for the verification. It is possible to select both options.

If "On the spot verification" is selected, you must click to "add on the spot verification" button and specify the dates and the location of the visit.

No risk-based sampling method is foreseen by the Programme so the controller must always reply "NO" to the question "Risk based verification applied".

Remember to click on "Save Changes".



B. Expenditure verification

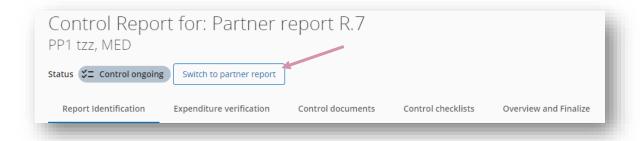
This section lists all the expenditure submitted by the partner. Controllers can enter corrections and comments on each expenditure line.

For each expenditure item, the controller can:

- 1. Select the expenditures taking part in the sample (as no sampling is expected, the option "part of sample" must always be active for all expenditures)
- 2. Deduct an amount and select a typology of error
- 3. Park an expenditure item
- 4. Add a comment

At that stage, the system gives the possibility to export the list of expenditures:

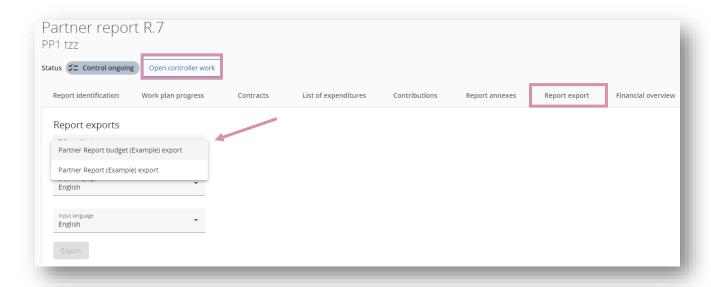
• Switch back to the Partner report



click on Report export section

Two exports are possible:

- 1. "Partner Report" content in PDF format
- 2. "Partner Report budget" i.e the partners expenditure list in Excel format

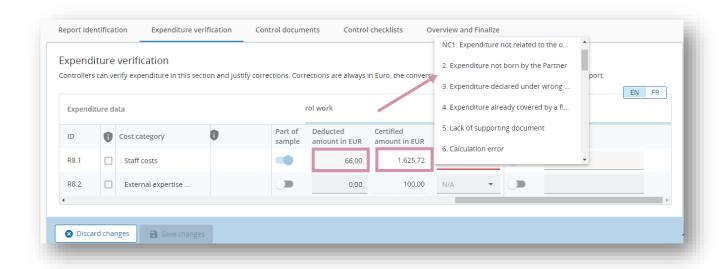


Deduct an amount and select a typology of error

For each expenditure item, the "deducted amount" is by default pre-filled with 0,00€ in the system, in case of ineligible amount, the controller should insert the amount to be deducted and Jems will automatically calculate the eligible amount.

Deductions must be entered in Euro.

/!\ Point of attention: only positive value shall be filled-in in the system under column "deducted amount in EUR". The system will prevent the insertion of negative value (amount preceded by a – sign; Ex: - €10).) with a blocking pre-submission check.



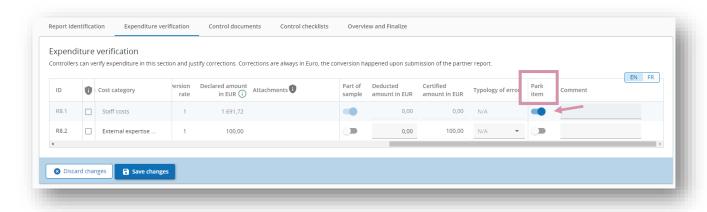
The certified amount is automatically calculated as the difference between declared and deducted amount. Once an amount has been deducted, the linked typology of error must be selected from the drop-down menu, as reported on the screenshot here above.

ii. Park an expenditure item

In some cases, controller can decide to "park an expenditure", in that case the item is blocked¹⁰ and remains in the system. Once the control work has been completed, the parked expense will appear in the list of expenses in the next partner report – "Parked items waiting list". The partner will then decide what to do with the expenditure in question (either delete it or reinstate it in the partner's new report, with or without modifications).

This functionality can be used in case partner needs time to provide clarification or collect the required supporting document.

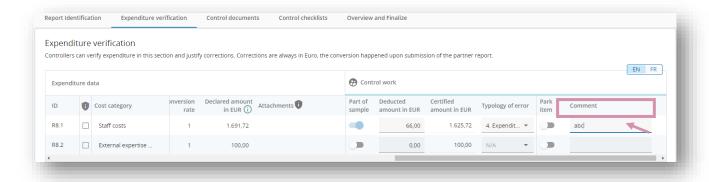
The controller can park expenditure by switching on the toggle button in the park item column.



¹⁰ When an expense is parked, its ID, exchange rate and currency are frozen so that it remains identifiable from one control to the next. For more information, please refer to the guidelines for partner reports on Jems.

iii. Add a comment

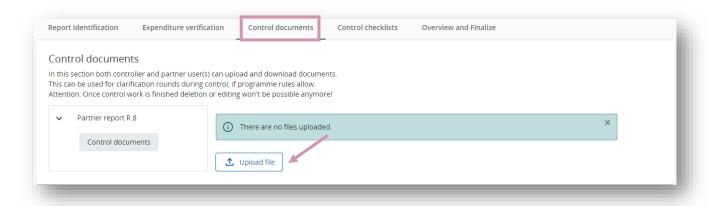
Any time a deduction is made by the controller, a comment is expected in the corresponding text field. This section can also be used to provide other explanations that may be deemed necessary for the LP or during JS verification.



C. Control documents

From the screen here below, both controllers and partners can **upload** and **download** documents. When a report is in status **"Control ongoing"**, both controller(s) and partner user(s) can:

- Upload and download documents
- Edit the description of their own uploadings
- Delete their own uploaded files



D. Control checklists

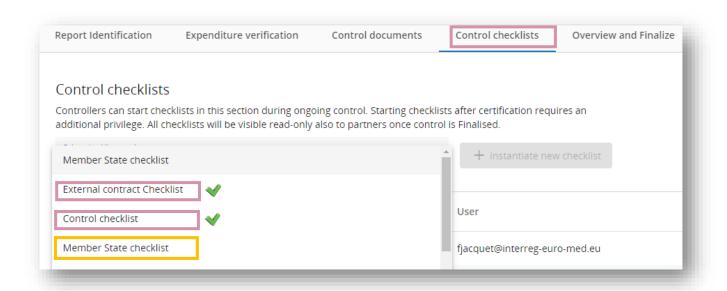
The control checklists must be created, filled in and finalised by the controller at the end of the control work.

In this page and through the predefined drop-down menu two checklists are available for controllers:

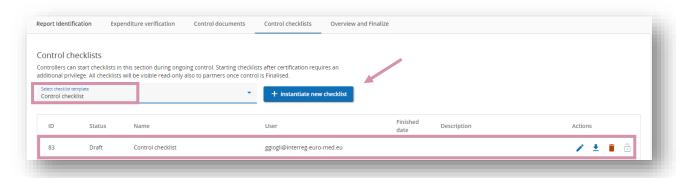
- 1. Control checklist (compulsory)
- 2. **External Contract checklist** (mandatory in case new external contracts have been reported by the PP in the external contract section of the Partner report)

 $^{^{11}}$ A pre-submission check will prevent finalizing a control if the control checklist is not finalised by the controller

/!\ Point of attention: there is a third checklist called "Member State Checklist" !! It should not be used by National Controllers as it is reserved exclusively to the National Authorities representatives responsible for validating controls in Spain and Portugal.



To create a checklist, you must select from the drop-down menu the type of checklist that you want to create. Then click on the button "+ instantiate new checklist".



The created checklist appears below the scrolling drop-menu. To access the content of the checklist, you must click on it.

On the right side of the checklist table, three buttons are available:

- 1. Edit description (to fill-in/modify the description of the checklist)
- 2. Export checklist
- 3. Delete entry (only active for checklist in draft status)

¹² The Member State Checklist concerns Spain and Portugal only. This document is the national validation document that must be downloaded by the NA and attached to the control certificate.

i. The control checklist

The "control checklist" is composed of 5 sections:

- 1. General consideration/eligibility criteria
- 2. On-the-spot verifications (if applicable)
- 3. Eligibility along cost categories
- 4. Compliance with information and publicity requirement
- 5. Compliance with other EU rules

/I\ Point of attention : Controllers MUST complete all sections of the checklist and section 2 is compulsory in case of On the spot visit only

General approach:

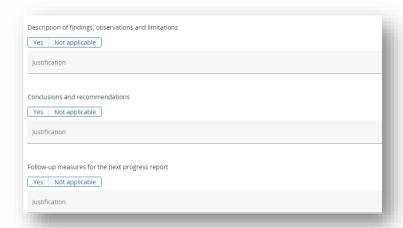
For each question of the control checklist the controller is expected to select Yes or No (by switching on the toggle button) and to provide a comment whenever necessary. Guidance is provided in *italics*.

You only need to complete the sections relating to costs that have been submitted for certification.

Please keep in mind that the controller checklist will not be systematically verified by the JS, in that sense, each controller assumes the risk in case of uncomplete information provided in the checklist or missing information in case of further level of control.

Pre-submission checks have been implemented to help controllers in their task but it's the controller responsibility to detail the comment each time it's needed.

/!\ Point of attention: in case of deduction implemented by the controller in one or more categories, a comment is mandatory. This same comment must be synthetized and inserted by the controller in the document "Control report and certificate" which will be systematically verified by the JS.



NB: If any point should be reported or assessed by the JS, it should be summarised and/or copied in the "control report and certificate".

2 key questions and compulsory comments:

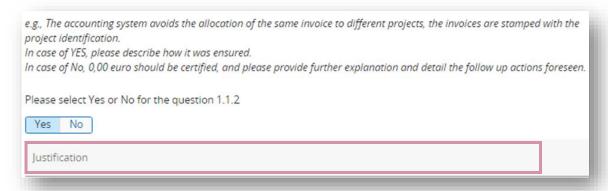
In case of a negative answer to one of those question, 0.00€ should be certified as the key principle to guarantee a sound financial management of EU funds would not be respected by the PP.

For the 2 following questions a justification from the controller is mandatory and must be repeated in each control checklist:

(1.1.1) Project partner maintains separate accounting record/system, or accounting code, for all transactions related to the project (ensuring separation of project expenditure for all transactions relating to the project).

[according to Article 74 1a(i) CPR]
In case of YES, please describe the tangible mechanism putted in place by the PP to ensure the respect of this principle and related documents (internal procedure, etc.). In case of No, 0,00 euro should be certified and please detail here the follow up actions foreseen.
Please select Yes or No for the question 1.1.1
Yes No
Justification

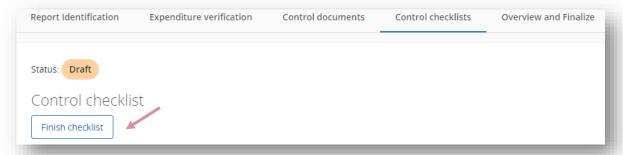
(1.1.2) Confirm that there was not Double-Financing



Finalise the checklist:

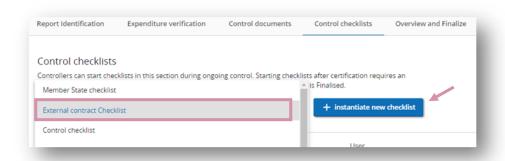
When the control checklist is completed with all the information, you can submit the document by clicking "Finish checklist" on the top of the page. The checklist and all the tabs in the control report become available in read-only mode for:

- The National Authority in charge of the control validation (in Spain and Portugal)
- The controlled PP
- The LP of the project



ii. The external contract checklist

For each existing external contract reported by the PP, an "external contract checklist" must be created. Make sure to select the correct document template "external contract checklist" in the scrolling menu. The document must be duplicated and filled in for each contract or public procurement for which a formal contract is signed.¹³.



Please make sure to add in the description tab the ID of the contract for which the checklist has been instantiated (to be found in the "external contract" section of the Partner report).



The external contract checklist is composed of 2 sections, and you must select which section must be filled in.

Depending on the status of the partner and the amount of the contract:

1. Section A

To be filled for partners falling under the scope of application of the public procurement laws or for partners not falling under the scope of application of the public procurement laws but awarding a contract above EU thresholds.

2. Section B

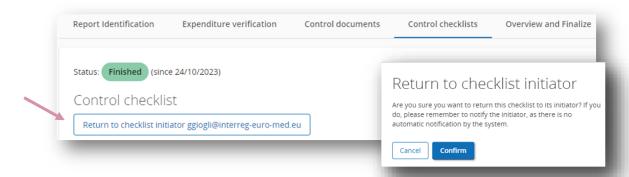
To be filled in for partners not falling under public procurement rules and awarding a contract below the EU threshold for which a formal contract is signed. You must ensure that the basic principles on which the procurement standards are based are respected.

Once all information is filled, the checklist can be finished by clicking on "Finish checklist".

¹³ For more detailed information on the type of external contracts to be integrated on Jems, and for which a specific checklist is needed, please refer to the programme Manual, Chapter III Financial issues, section A. Eligibility of expenditures, vii. Categories of cost, e) external expertise and service costs (CC5)

ii. Re-open a checklist already finalised

A checklist (control checklist or external contract checklist) can be re-opened by the controller who carried out the control work also after its finalisation by returning to the top of the page and clicking on "return to checklist initiator", and "confirm".



The checklist is now re-opened and can be edited or removed.



/!\ Point of attention: only the controller who created the checklist can modify the information.

II. Overview of the control work

This tab corresponds to the final step before submitting the control work.

The following information is available in this page:

1. Overview of control work for current report (in Euro)

This first table outlines the amounts of the current report for which the control work has been carried out.



It includes the following information:

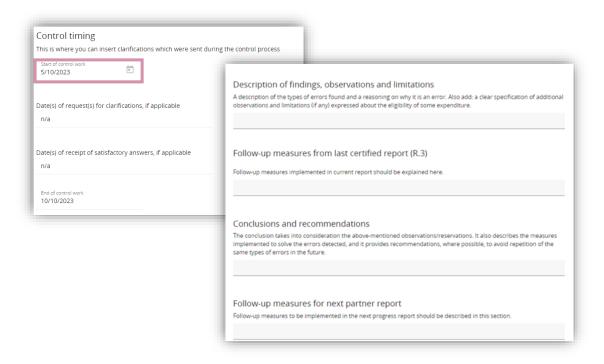
• <u>Total declared by partner</u>: is automatically transferred from the partner report and flat rates based on the settings in the AF are displayed in a separate row.

- <u>Total parked in current report</u>: sums up the declared amount in EUR of the expenditure items parked in the "Expenditure verification" section. Flat rates are added on top and calculated according to the partner budget rounding settings (2 decimals, rounded down).
- <u>Total deducted by control</u>: is calculated as difference of Total declared by partner minus Total eligible after control minus Total parked in current report. In this way, potential rounding differences (if any) will always go to Total deducted by control column.
- <u>Total eligible after control</u>: sums up the certified amount in EUR of the expenditure items from the "Expenditure verification" section. Flat rates are added on top and calculated according to the partner budget rounding settings (2 decimals, rounded down).
- <u>% total eligible after control</u>: provides the percentage of Total eligible after control out of Total declared (both including also flat rates).
- **2.** Overview of control deductions for current report, by type of errors (in Euro) This second table displays the deductions made during the control, broken down by type of errors. Flat rates are calculated only once on top of totals, as follows: Total declared Total eligible after control Parked.

is is the summary of control deductions only for current report, broken down by type of errors. Flat rates are calculated ly once on top of totals, as follows: Total declared - Total eligible after control - Parked.							
Type of errors	Staff costs	Office and administrative	Travel and accommodation	External exp			
		15%	15%				
Expenditure not related to the operation/Dépense non liée à l'opération	0,00	0,00	0,00				
Expenditure not born by the Partner/Dépense non supportée par le partenaire	0,00	0,00	0,00				
3. Expenditure declared under wrong Cost Category/Dépense déclarée sous une catégorie	0,00	0,00	0,00				
4. Expenditure already covered by a flat rate/Dépense déjà couverte par un taux	0,00	0,00	0,00				
5. Lack of supporting document/Absence de pièces justificatives	0,00	0,00	0,00				
6. Calculation error/Erreur de calcul	0.00	0.00	0.00				

After having checked that all the information is correct, you can move on to the last 5 sections to be filled in:

- 3. Control timing: to add the dates of the request of clarifications to the PP, if relevant. The rest of the information is automatically filled in upon finalisation of the control work
- **4. Description of findings, observations, and limitations:** to summarise the main findings and highlight any information of interest to the JS
- 5. Follow up measures from last certified report: to detail eventual follow-up measure taken from the last report
- 6. Conclusion and recommendations
- 7. Follow-up measures for next partner report

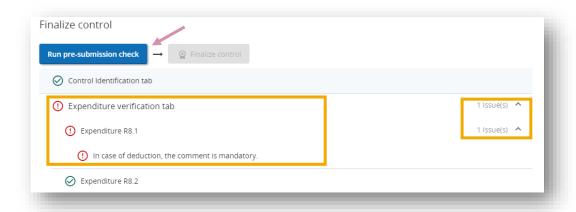


III. Finalise the Control work

Once all the sections have been correctly filled in, you must click on "run pre-submission check".

/!\ Point of attention: after clicking on the button "run pre-submission check", the system alerts you in case of missing information in one or more of aforementioned sections. in that case, you MUST go back and integrate the missing information to proceed to the finalisation of the control.

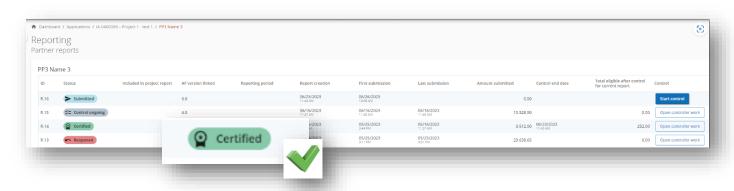
Please bear in mind that the checklist may be concerned by the problem, in this case you should re-open it to modify see **point iv.c** here above.



If everything is correct you can finalise the control by clicking on "Finalise control".



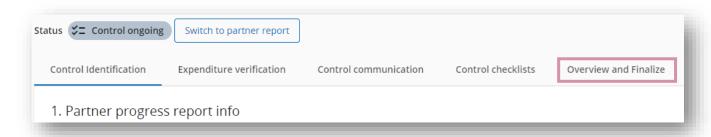
The control has been finalised and the partner report appears as "certified".



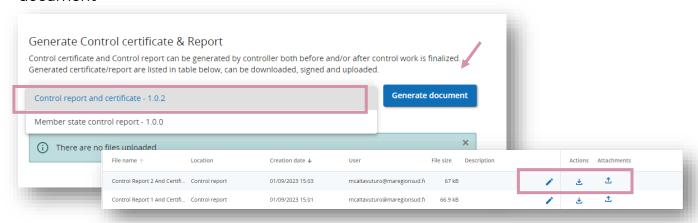
IV. Generate the Control report and certificate

After the control has been finalised, you must generate and download the finalised version of the control report and certificate.

To do so, you should access to tab "overview and finalise"



Select the "control report and certificate" from the scrolling menu and click on "generate document"



Generated files are displayed in the list. Next to the generated entry, on the right side you can find three buttons:

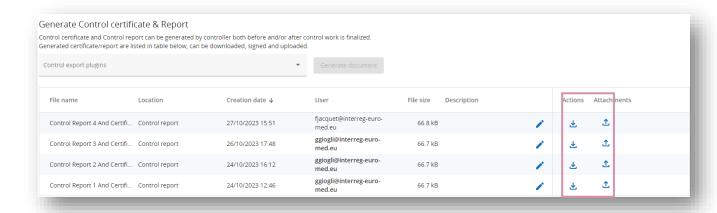
- 1. Cedit
- 2. Download file
- 3. Dpload file

In the PDFs generated, there is automatically displayed the status of control work when the document was generated (draft or finalized).

Check that you have correctly **finalised the Control before signing the PDF** if it's not the case the document will appear in "draft status."



The finalised exported document must be signed and uploaded in the system under the chapter "Generate control certificate & Report" of the section "Overview and Finalise" through the button "Attachment", as shown in the screenshot below:



Once the control report has been signed and uploaded, the control work can be considered finalised. A notification is automatically sent to the controlled PP, to the project LP and to the PO referent for the concerned project.

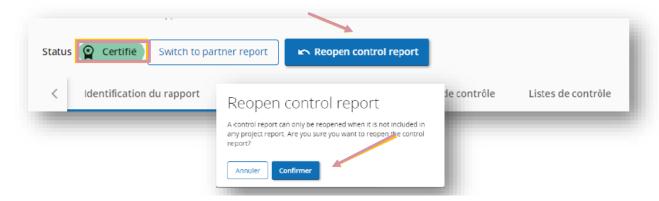
V. Re-open the control work

In case of mistake or if a controller wants to amend the document and the certificate is not yet integrated in a validated payment claim (or validated by the National authority in Spain or Portugal), the JS is authorized to re-open a control work finalised and in status "certified". This can **only** be done upon formal request of the **Project Lead Partner** to the responsible JS project officer.

/!\ Point of attention: No additional cost can be integrated in a partner report that would have been re-opened, the only possibility offers to the controller at that stage is to edit or amend a correction or to park an expenditure.

A certified report that has been reopened moves to the status "control re-opened" allowing you to:

- Edit a correction
- Park an expenditure



/!\ Point of attention: The control work can be re-opened only if the certificate has not been integrated in the Project Report by the Lead Partner.