

*Article 71***Programme authorities**

1. For the purposes of Article 63(3) of the Financial Regulation, the Member State shall identify for each programme a managing authority and an audit authority. Where a Member State entrusts the accounting function to a body other than the managing authority in accordance with Article 72(2) of this Regulation, the body concerned shall also be identified as a programme authority. Those same authorities may be responsible for more than one programme.
2. The audit authority shall be a public authority. Audit work may be carried out by a public or private body other than the audit authority under its responsibility. The audit authority and any such body carrying out audit work under the responsibility of the audit authority shall be functionally independent from the auditees.
3. The managing authority may identify one or more intermediate bodies to carry out certain tasks under its responsibility. Arrangements between the managing authority and intermediate bodies shall be recorded in writing.
4. Member States shall ensure that the principle of separation of functions between and within the programme authorities is respected.
5. Where a programme provides, in line with its objectives, support from the ERDF or the ESF+ to a programme co-funded by Horizon Europe, as referred to in point (b) of Article 10(1) of the Horizon Europe Regulation, the body implementing the programme co-funded by Horizon Europe shall be identified as an intermediate body by the managing authority of the relevant programme, in accordance with paragraph 3 of this Article.
6. The Member State, at its own initiative, may set up a coordination body to liaise with and provide information to the Commission and to coordinate activities of the programme authorities in that Member State.

*CHAPTER II***Standard management and control systems***Article 72***Functions of the managing authority**

1. The managing authority shall be responsible for managing the programme with a view to delivering the objectives of the programme. In particular, it shall have the following functions:
 - (a) select operations in accordance with Article 73, with the exception of operations referred to in point (d) of Article 33(3);
 - (b) carry out programme management tasks in accordance with Article 74;
 - (c) support the work of the monitoring committee in accordance with Article 75;
 - (d) supervise intermediate bodies;
 - (e) record and store electronically the data on each operation necessary for monitoring, evaluation, financial management, verifications and audits in accordance with Annex XVII, and ensure the security, integrity and confidentiality of data and the authentication of users.
2. The Member State may entrust the accounting function referred to in Article 76 to the managing authority or to another body.
3. For programmes supported by the AMIF, the ISF and the BMVI, the accounting function shall be carried out by the managing authority or under its responsibility.

*Article 73***Selection of operations by the managing authority**

1. For the selection of operations, the managing authority shall establish and apply criteria and procedures which are non-discriminatory, transparent, ensure accessibility to persons with disabilities, ensure gender equality, and take account of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the principle of sustainable development and of the Union policy on the environment in accordance with Article 11 and Article 191(1) TFEU.

The criteria and procedures shall ensure that the operations to be selected are prioritised with a view to maximising the contribution of Union funding towards the achievement of the objectives of the programme.

2. In selecting operations, the managing authority shall:

- (a) ensure that selected operations comply with the programme, including their consistency with the relevant strategies underlying the programme, as well as provide an effective contribution to the achievement of the specific objectives of the programme;
- (b) ensure that selected operations which fall within the scope of an enabling condition are consistent with the corresponding strategies and planning documents established for the fulfilment of that enabling condition;
- (c) ensure that selected operations present the best relationship between the amount of support, the activities undertaken and the achievement of objectives;
- (d) verify that the beneficiary has the necessary financial resources and mechanisms to cover operation and maintenance costs for operations comprising investment in infrastructure or productive investment, so as to ensure their financial sustainability;
- (e) ensure that selected operations which fall under the scope of Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council ⁽⁵¹⁾ are subject to an environmental impact assessment or a screening procedure and that the assessment of alternative solutions has been taken in due account, on the basis of the requirements of that Directive;
- (f) verify that where the operations have started before the submission of an application for funding to the managing authority, applicable law has been complied with;
- (g) ensure that selected operations fall within the scope of the Fund concerned and are attributed to a type of intervention;
- (h) ensure that operations do not include activities which were part of an operation subject to relocation in accordance with Article 66 or which would constitute a transfer of a productive activity in accordance with point (a) of Article 65(1);
- (i) ensure that selected operations are not directly affected by a reasoned opinion by the Commission in respect of an infringement under Article 258 TFEU that puts at risk the legality and regularity of expenditure or the performance of operations;
- (j) ensure the climate proofing of investments in infrastructure which have an expected lifespan of at least 5 years.

As regards point (b) of this paragraph, in the case of policy objective one, as set out in point (a) of Article 3(1) of the ERDF and CF Regulation, only operations corresponding to the specific objectives referred to in subpoints (i) and (iv) of that point shall be consistent with the corresponding smart specialisation strategies.

3. The managing authority shall ensure that the beneficiary is provided with a document setting out all the conditions for support for each operation including the specific requirements concerning the products or services to be delivered, the financing plan, the time limit for its execution and where applicable, the method to be applied for determining the costs of the operation and the conditions for payment of the support.

4. For operations attributed a Seal of Excellence, or operations selected under a programme co-funded by Horizon Europe, the managing authority may decide to grant support from the ERDF or the ESF+ directly, provided that such operations meet the requirements set out in points (a), (b) and (g) of paragraph 2.

In addition, managing authorities may apply to the operations referred to in the first subparagraph the categories, maximum amounts and methods of calculation of eligible costs established under the relevant Union instrument. These elements shall be set out in the document referred in paragraph 3.

5. When the managing authority selects an operation of strategic importance, it shall inform the Commission within 1 month and shall provide all relevant information to the Commission about that operation.

⁽⁵¹⁾ Directive 2011/92/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment (OJ L 26, 28.1.2012, p. 1).