

- (b) drawing up and submitting the accounts confirming completeness, accuracy and veracity of the accounts in accordance with Article 98, and keeping electronic records of all the elements of the accounts, including payment applications;
  - (c) converting the amounts of expenditure incurred in another currency into euro by using the monthly accounting exchange rate of the Commission in the month during which the expenditure is registered in the accounting systems of the body responsible for carrying out the tasks set out in this Article.
2. The accounting function shall not comprise verifications at the level of beneficiaries.
  3. By way of derogation from point (c) of paragraph 1, the Interreg Regulation may establish a different method to convert the amounts of expenditure incurred in another currency into euro.

#### Article 77



#### Functions of the audit authority

1. The audit authority shall be responsible for carrying out system audits, audits on operations and audits of accounts in order to provide independent assurance to the Commission regarding the effective functioning of the management and control systems and the legality and regularity of the expenditure included in the accounts submitted to the Commission.
2. Audit work shall be carried out in accordance with internationally accepted audit standards.
3. The audit authority shall draw up and submit to the Commission:
  - (a) an annual audit opinion in accordance with Article 63(7) of the Financial Regulation and with the template set out in Annex XIX to this Regulation and, based on all audit work carried out, cover the following distinct components:
    - (i) the completeness, accuracy and veracity of the accounts;
    - (ii) the legality and regularity of the expenditure included in the accounts submitted to the Commission;
    - (iii) the effective functioning of the management and control system;
  - (b) an annual control report fulfilling the requirements of point (b) of Article 63(5) of the Financial Regulation, in accordance with the template set out in Annex XX to this Regulation, which supports the annual audit opinion referred to in point (a) of this paragraph and sets out a summary of findings, including an analysis of the nature and extent of errors and deficiencies in the systems as well as the proposed and implemented corrective actions and the resulting total error rate and residual error rate for the expenditure entered in the accounts submitted to the Commission.
4. Where programmes are grouped for the purpose of audits of operations pursuant to the second subparagraph of Article 79(2), the information required under point (b) of paragraph 3 of this Article may be grouped in a single report.
5. The audit authority shall transmit to the Commission system audit reports as soon as the contradictory procedure with the relevant auditees is concluded.
6. The Commission and the audit authorities shall meet on a regular basis and, unless otherwise agreed, at least once a year to examine the audit strategy, the annual control report and the audit opinion, to coordinate their audit plans and methods, and to exchange views on issues relating to the improvement of management and control systems.

#### Article 78

#### Audit strategy

1. The audit authority shall, after consulting the managing authority, prepare an audit strategy based on a risk assessment, taking account of the management and control system description provided for in Article 69(11), covering system audits and audits of operations. The audit strategy shall include system audits of newly identified managing authorities and authorities in charge of the accounting function. Such audits shall be carried out within 21 months of the decision approving the programme or the amendment of the programme identifying such an authority. The audit strategy shall be prepared in accordance with the template set out in Annex XXII and shall be updated annually following the first annual control report and audit opinion provided to the Commission. It may cover one or more programmes.
2. The audit strategy shall be submitted to the Commission upon request.

## Article 74

**Programme management by the managing authority**

1. The managing authority shall:
  - (a) carry out management verifications to verify that the co-financed products and services have been delivered, that the operation complies with applicable law, the programme and the conditions for support of the operation, and:
    - (i) where costs are to be reimbursed pursuant to point (a) of Article 53(1), that the amount of expenditure claimed by the beneficiaries in relation to these costs has been paid and that beneficiaries maintain separate accounting records or use appropriate accounting codes for all transactions relating to the operation;
    - (ii) where costs are to be reimbursed pursuant to points (b), (c) and (d) of Article 53(1), that the conditions for reimbursement of expenditure to the beneficiary have been met;
  - (b) ensure, subject to the availability of funding, that a beneficiary receives the amount due in full and no later than 80 days from the date of submission of the payment claim by the beneficiary; the deadline may be interrupted if information submitted by the beneficiary does not allow the managing authority to establish whether the amount is due;
  - (c) have effective and proportionate anti-fraud measures and procedures in place, taking into account the risks identified;
  - (d) prevent, detect and correct irregularities;
  - (e) confirm that the expenditure entered into the accounts is legal and regular;
  - (f) draw up the management declaration in accordance with the template set out in Annex XVIII.

For point (b) of the first subparagraph, no amount shall be deducted or withheld and no specific charge or other charge with equivalent effect shall be levied that would reduce amounts due to beneficiaries.

For PPP operations, the managing authority shall make payments to an escrow account set up for that purpose in the name of the beneficiary for use in accordance with the PPP agreement.

2. Management verifications referred to in point (a) of the first subparagraph of paragraph 1 shall be risk-based and proportionate to the risks identified *ex ante* and in writing.

Management verifications shall include administrative verifications in respect of payment claims made by beneficiaries and on-the-spot verifications of operations. Those verifications shall be carried out before submission of the accounts in accordance with Article 98.

3. Where the managing authority is also a beneficiary under the programme, arrangements for the management verifications shall ensure separation of functions.

Without prejudice to paragraph 2, the Interreg Regulation may establish specific rules on management verifications applicable to Interreg programmes. The AMIF, the ISF and the BMVI Regulations may establish specific rules on management verifications that are applicable where an international organisation is a beneficiary.

## Article 75

**Support of the work of the monitoring committee by the managing authority**

The managing authority shall:

- (a) provide the monitoring committee in a timely manner with all information necessary to carry out its tasks;
- (b) ensure the follow-up of the decisions and recommendations of the monitoring committee.

## Article 76

**The accounting function**

1. The accounting function shall consist of the following tasks:
  - (a) drawing up and submitting payment applications to the Commission in accordance with Articles 91 and 92;