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EUROPEAN TERRITORIAL COOPERATION

Internal Rules of Procedure

of the Joint Secretariat (JS)

(Interreg VI-A) IPA CBC Greece –Albania 2021-2027

Decision C(2022) 8883 final of 29.11.2022

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Foreword

The present internal rules describe the organisational and functional procedures of the Joint Secretariat of the Interreg VI-A IPA Greece - Albania 2021-2027 (hereinafter: JS). They include binding provisions regarding the responsibilities and procedures to be respected.

Article 1: The Objective of the Internal Rules of Procedure

The objective of the Internal Rules of Procedure is the provision of a framework of rules for the assurance of:

- the orderly operation of the JS and its structure
- the cooperation with the Managing Authority of the Programme
- the cooperation with the potential Beneficiaries and beneficiaries
- the cooperation with the Audit Authority
- the cooperation with the National IPA Coordinator and the Albanian National Authority (State Agency for Strategic Programming and Assistance Coordination (SASPAC))
- the observance of legislation concerning the implementation of the programme, and
- the transparency of the applied processes

Article 2: Institutional framework

The procedures described herein are regulated by the following legislative framework:

Legal Framework

- The European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations, Delegated and Implementing Acts for the 2021-2027 period, especially:
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021, laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund, and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy, and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 1303/2013, and any amendment;
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1058 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on the European Regional Development Fund and on the Cohesion Fund and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1301/2013, and any amendment.
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III)
 - Regulation (EU) No 2021/1059 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 on specific provisions for the European territorial Cooperation goal (Interreg) supported by the European Regional Development Fund and external financing instruments, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1299/2013, and any amendment;
 - Commission delegated Regulation (EU) No 240/2014 of 7 January 2014 on the European code of conduct on partnership in the framework of the European Structural and Investment Funds;
 - Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR);

- Council Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 of 17 December 2020 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027

- The Cooperation Programme (Interreg VI-A) IPA CBC Greece-Albania 2021-2027 approval by the European Commission on 29/11/2022 under Decision Number C (2022) 8883

- Law 4914/2022 «Management, Control and Application of development interventions for the programming period» (Greek State Gazette 61/A/21.3.2022)

- Common Ministerial Decision No 3411/16-01-2023 (Greek State Gazette B' 183/18-01-2023) «Scope, tasks and internal restructure of the «Special Service Interreg 2021-2027» article 9, par. 8 of article 65 LAW No.4914/2022 and Joint Secretariats of Interreg Programmes article 11 LAW No.. 4914/2022

Article 4: Responsibilities of the Joint Secretariat

The Joint Secretariat supports the Managing Authority the Joint Monitoring Committee and respective Committees of the Programme in fulfilling their respective responsibilities, for the programming Period 2021-2027 as well as programming Period 2014-2020. Furthermore, it may co-operate with the Albanian National Authority for the implementation of information and publicity actions and any other issue of relevance.

The Joint Secretariat provides information to potential beneficiaries about funding opportunities under the Programme and shall assist beneficiaries in the implementation of operations.

In particular, the JS assists the Managing Authority and the Monitoring Committee in the following responsibilities:

1. Assists the Managing Authority in organising the meetings of the Monitoring Committee
2. Assists the Managing Authority for the drafting of the project selection criteria;
3. Assists the Managing Authority for drafting the material concerning the calls for proposals;
4. Provides support to potential beneficiaries during the preparation of proposals. The JS promotes the cooperation and the partnership of bodies from both sides of the border through the organisation of various events that increase programme visibility. In this respect it may cooperate

with the Albanian National Authority for the organisation of seminars and other promotional activities.

5. Assists Unit A' in the process of evaluation of the proposals based on the selection criteria, approved by the Monitoring Committee and the selection of operations and ensures that the selection of operations are in accordance with the approved Programme criteria and EU and National Rules.
6. The Joint Secretariat in cooperation with Unit A, carries out, the first phase of evaluation in accordance to the approved selection criteria and. Follows project implementation through a monitoring mechanism including, among others, the collection and processing of project reports, on the spot visits, the evaluation of project outputs and results as well as the financial and operational project implementation; During on the spot visits, it can be assisted, If needed, by the info Point or by representatives of the Albanian National Authority.
7. Informs the Albanian National Authority accordingly on every problematic identified during the implementation of the projects.
8. Monitors commitments and payments of EU funds at programme level in cooperation with the Managing Authority;
9. Provides technical support to beneficiaries throughout the implementation period of the operations;
10. Supports Managing Authority in closure controls by EDEL or other responsible bodies.
11. Supports the Managing Authority in ensuring an effective audit trail at all levels;
12. Prepares reports, on the implementation of the Cooperation Programme, in cooperation with the Managing Authority;
13. Organizes and operates an information Desk (where applicable) in cooperation with Unit A'.
14. Supports the Managing Authority in ensuring that information and publicity requirements are met;
15. Prepares the Technical Assistance annual plan and submits it to the Managing Authority;
16. Contributes in the achievement of targes of the Managing Authority
17. Proposes to Unit B' the modification or termination of the Subsidy Contracts well as the closure of the projects.

18. Collects and records in the Management Information System accounting records for all operations and project implementation data required for financial management, monitoring, verification, audit and evaluation;
19. Monitors the environmental impact from project implementation in the framework of the programme;
20. Assist the Managing Authority in the evaluation reports related to the assessment of effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the programme on the basis of the evaluation plan.

Article 5: Organizational structure

The Joint Secretariat consists of eight (8) staff members, namely:

- one (1) coordinator,
- three (3) project officers,
- one (1) financial officer,
- one (1) communication and technical assistance officer,
- one (1) administrative assistant, and
- one (1) Antenna officer.

The Joint Secretariat is located in Thessaloniki, Greece.

The Antenna Office will be located in in Albania

The basic structure is presented in the following diagram:

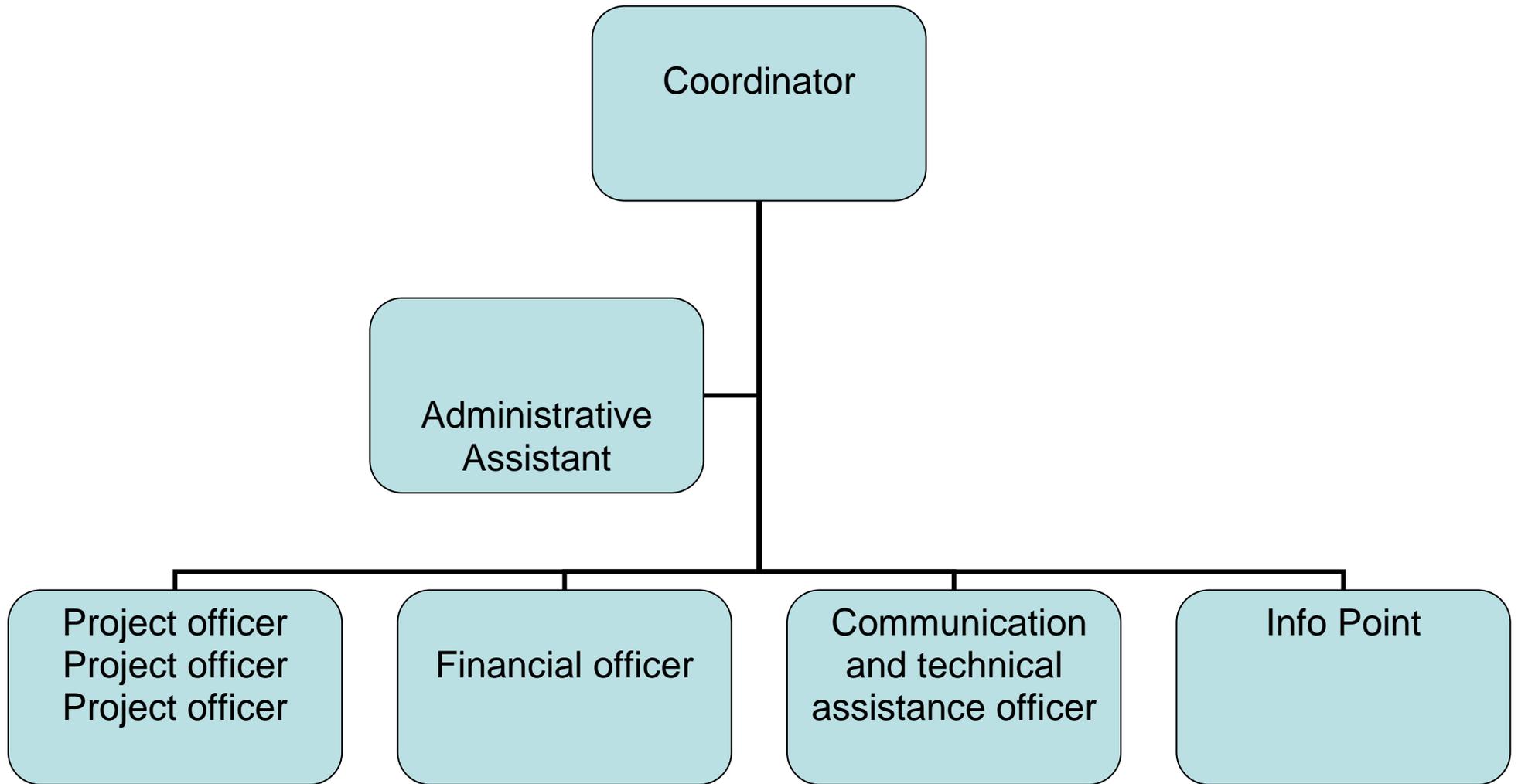


Figure 1: Organizational Structure

Article 6: Job description

Coordinator of the Joint Secretariat

The Joint Secretariat Coordinator is responsible for the overall coordination of the Joint Secretariat for the management and monitoring of the Joint Secretariat's tasks and the programme's operation (management of tasks and co-ordination of workflow of the Joint Secretariat) as defined in Article 4. The Joint Secretariat Coordinator ensures that the decisions of the Monitoring Committee, and Certifying Authority of the programme are being respected and implemented.

All staff of the Joint Secretariat report directly to the Coordinator.

The Joint Secretariat Coordinator reports to the Managing Authority.

More specifically:

1. Supports the Managing Authority in the implementation of the Programme's strategy;
2. Sets and revises, in collaboration with the MA, objectives or working procedures of the JS for the improvement of the overall implementation of the programme;
3. Monitors and appraises the operational and financial progress of the projects and the corresponding indicators, of the operational and financial objectives of the Programme and - if necessary – proposes to the MA the appropriate corrective measures;
4. Represents the JS to the management bodies of the programme such as: Managing Authority (MA), Certifying Authority (CA), Audit Authority (AA), Partner States, Final Beneficiaries, Controllers, other administrative bodies included in the management and control system of the Programme and the Commission, on the basis of sound Programme management and implementation of EU and national regulatory framework;
5. Prepares the necessary programme reports and submits them to the MA and with the consent of the MA to the respective programme management bodies following their request;
6. Assists the MA in informing the final beneficiaries of any decisions taken by the Joint Monitoring Committee;

7. Coordinates, organizes, allocates and supervises the execution of tasks and guides the JS members aiming to the correct and the timely completion of their work, according to the MA guidance;
8. Identifies the needs and determines the kind of assistance required for the facilitation of the JS tasks and proposes accordingly to the MA;
9. Organizes the basic formation of the JS staff members on subjects that are related to the JS tasks;
10. Cooperates with the members of the JS for the harmonisation of the procedures, the early detection and the resolution of the problems;
11. Ensures a unified way of managing all issues pertaining to the JS operation, according to the MA guidance;
12. Manages human resources issues;
13. Drafts the yearly working plan of the JS;

Project Officer

The Project Officer's responsibilities include the development and the implementation of tools and administrative procedures at programme and project level concerning project implementation, evaluation, monitoring and reporting. More specifically:

1. Drafts, updates and optimizes programme documents (project proposal packages, guides and manuals, procedures and support documents for sound project management for final beneficiaries) and submits them to the JS Coordinator.
2. Supports the procedure of the project proposals submission, by providing clarifications to applicants regarding the calls, and instructions for the correct completion of the documents, as well as by participating in publicity and information activities (meetings, workshops etc.).
3. Prepares reports (tables, statistics) on submitted project proposals and submits them to the JS Coordinator.
4. Drafts the project evaluation manuals/ procedures according to the selection criteria decided by the Joint Monitoring Committee.
 - Evaluates the project proposals.
 - Prepares reports (classification tables, statistics etc.) on the project proposals evaluation and submits them to the JS Coordinator

5. Monitors the projects' implementation (implementation, reporting, modifications, closure etc.) by examining the fulfilment of the obligations of the beneficiaries, as these are described in the respective contracts, in the approved proposal, the partnership agreement. Identifies the problems or the delays. Has continuous contact with the beneficiaries of approved projects and especially with the Lead Beneficiary, proposing corrective actions, when it is required, for the prevention of diversions from the operational, timing and economic restrictions of the project and monitors the application and the effectiveness of these actions. Participates in meetings with the beneficiaries, at project level, for the resolution of problems of the project implementation. Keeps records and organizes the filing (electronic version and hard copies) of the documents related to the project implementation.
6. Processes requests for modification that are submitted by the Lead Beneficiaries and proposes accordingly to the JS Coordinator.
7. Supports the MA in the process of the requests for modification.
8. Supports the MA in the organisation of the Joint Monitoring and in the implementation of their decisions, in general.
9. Enters in the management information system all required data regarding the implemented projects, according to the approved control management system and the guidance of the MA.
10. Cooperates with the MA in the preparation of reports to the Joint Monitoring Committee and the European Commission, regarding the operational and financial progress of the projects and of the Programme and submits them to the Coordinator.
11. Contributes in the preparation / drafting of the reports of the Programme.
12. Contribute in the preparation/ drafting of the Evaluation Reports.
13. Monitors the environmental impact of projects (according to the system in force) and compiles relevant reports with the MA guidance.
14. Monitors the application of the recommendations and corrections, after the control of the auditing body.
15. Supports the MA in the continuous control of implementation process of the Programme and the timely detecting and tackling problems / obstacles in the implementation of the projects, so that the Programme objectives are achieved.

16. Supports the MA in maintaining and archiving of all documents that are related to the expenses and the audits, so that an effective audit trail is ensured.
17. Participates in information seminars for beneficiaries, organised by the MA and the JS.
18. Participates in information/ training activities related to his/ her competences / responsibilities.
19. Monitors progress indicators and financial data for each project and submits them to the Co-ordinator.

Financial Officer

The Financial Officer's responsibilities include the development and the implementation of tools and administrative procedures at programme and project level concerning financial implementation, evaluation, monitoring and reporting. More specifically:

The Financial Officer participates in monitoring the projects' activities (implementation, reporting, modifications, closure etc.). Moreover, he/she contributes to the management of Programme's budget.

More specifically, the Financial Officer is responsible for:

- Providing support to Lead Beneficiaries (LB) and Beneficiaries concerning implementation, and financial reporting;
- Supporting the Project Officers to collect and review financial reports submitted by the project beneficiaries;
- Contributing to the definition of internal rules for the review of financial progress reports;
- Managing the Programme budget and reports to any competent authority concerning financial data on a Programme level
- Organising and contributing to lead beneficiary seminars concerning legal and financial matters.
- Monitoring the whole system concerning the Public Investments Program vis-a-vis the beneficiaries, the projects' financing and the JS
- Participates in proposal evaluation in the same capacity as the Project officers
- Monitors the projects' implementation (implementation, reporting, modifications, closure etc.) in the same capacity as the Project officers

- Supports the MA in the organisation of the JMC/JSC meetings and in the implementation of their decisions, in general.
- Enters in the MIS all required data regarding the implemented projects, according to the approved control management system and the guidance of the MA.
- Cooperates with the MA in the preparation of reports to the JMC/JSC and the European Commission, regarding the operational and financial progress of the projects and of the Programme and submits them to the Coordinator.
- Contributes in the preparation / drafting of the reports of the Programme.
- Assist the MA in the evaluation reports.
- Monitors the environmental impact of projects (according to the system in force) and compiles relevant reports with the MA guidance.
- Monitors the application of the recommendations and corrections, after the control of the auditing body.
- Supports the MA in the continuous control of implementation process of the Programme and the timely detecting and tackling problems / obstacles in the implementation of the projects, so that the Programme objectives are achieved.
- Supports the MA in maintaining and archiving of all documents that are related to the expenses and the audits, so that an effective audit trail is ensured.
- Participates in information seminars for beneficiaries, organised by the MA and the JS.
- Participates in information/ training activities related to his/ her competences / responsibilities.
- Monitors progress indicators and financial data for each project and submits them to the Co-ordinator

Communication and Technical Assistance Officer

The Communication and Technical Assistance Officer contributes to the implementation of the Communication Plan of the Programme. He/ She supports the Managing Authority in developing, monitoring and evaluating the Communication Plan. The Communication and Technical Assistance Officer is responsible for the management of the Technical Assistance Priority Axis of the Programme. More specifically:

1. Prepares a Communication Plan and supporting its implementation, following the EC Regulations.

2. Supports the MA in the regular maintenance and the updating of the programme's webpage.
3. Is responsible for the partner search webpage for the benefit of potential beneficiaries.
4. Ensures that all interested stakeholders have access to the Programme's documents, news and announcements.
5. Collaborates with the Communication Manager of the MA, the Operating Structure in Albania and external experts for information and publicity activities according to the Communication Plan in force, and adapts it accordingly.
6. Supports the Managing Authority in the preparation of the reports on communication matters addressed to the European Commission (reporting, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the communication plan).
7. Manages Public Relations' issues.
8. Assists the beneficiaries on issues of information and publicity
9. Organizes and participates in meetings and events as well as in seminars for Lead Beneficiaries and Project Beneficiaries, on communication issues.
10. Prepares the Technical Assistance annual plan and forwards it to the MA.
11. Contributes in the drafting of any material produced by the JS (guides, reports and so forth) for calls, project proposal evaluations, project monitoring in cooperation with Project Officers.
12. Is in charge of the Secretariat's Library (electronic and hard copies) with laws, relevant information etc.
13. Organizes and/or participates in meetings and events of the JS pertaining to his/her duties.

Communication & Technical Assistance Officer may temporarily undertake additional project officer responsibilities (due to the fact that similar qualifications are required for both positions) when Joint Secretariat is understaffed or additional support is required for the smooth implementation of the programme. Each time the members of the joint Monitoring Committee will be informed.

Info Point

The Joint Secretariat will have an Info Point, in Albania.

The Info Point responsibilities concern the implementation of tools and administrative procedures at Programme and project level, concerning project implementation, monitoring and reporting.

More specifically:

- a) to provide support to beneficiaries from the IPA country side throughout the period of implementation of operations;
- b) to implement information and publicity actions in cooperation with the Joint Secretariat of the CP.
- c) To support JS/MA/NA activities as required.

Administrative Assistant

The Administrative Assistant provides administrative support to the Joint Secretariat and secretarial support to the Programme. Specifically:

1. Supports the Coordinator and the JS members in the processing of the daily activities (Keeping minutes, organizing archives, managing the telephone centre, drafting the official correspondence, contacting external collaborators and suppliers).
2. Keeps a complete archive with individual files for all documents, after the required distribution and the necessary actions that have to be performed concerning the documents.
3. Processes the official correspondence of the JS and keeps an archive with contact details of organisations and institutions with which the JS communicates.
4. Contributes in the preparation of meetings, provides secretarial support to the Joint Monitoring Committee as well as in the organisation of meetings of the team of auditors.
5. Provides organisational and operational support to the JS activities (organization of seminars, meetings, conferences).
6. Supports in the implementation of the Technical Assistance projects of the Programme, in general.
7. Keeps the attendance sheets and leave plans of the JS members under the JS Coordinator's guidance.
8. Monitors the timetable of the JS activities, in collaboration with the Coordinator.
9. Fulfils administrative responsibilities and human resources issues of the JS.

The responsibilities, tasks and workflow of the JS and its members are presented in the Annexes.

Staff Management

1. Employment contracts are concluded under Greek law in Greek and English for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. Personnel files and payroll accounting for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. are administered by M.O.U. S.A. with the assistance of Unit D of the Managing Authority. The employment contract for the Info Point will be concluded under Albanian law in Albanian and English language and will be signed by State Agency for Strategic Programming and Assistance Coordination (SASPAC).
2. All labour issues for the members of the JS that will sign a working contract with MOU S.A. remain the sole responsibility of M.O.U. S.A. in collaboration with Unit D of the Managing Authority.

Article 7: Location of the JS

The address of the JS office is:

65 Georgikis Scholis Ave.

570 01, Thessaloniki, Greece

Tel: +30 2310 469-680 Fax: +30 2310 469-602,

Email: jts_gral@mou.gr

Website: www.greece-albania.eu

The address of the Antenna office is:

Albania

The above mentioned offices location is the place of employment.

Internal rules of procedures are adopted and entered into force on the date of their approval.