

## EMPIR FAQ Coronavirus (COVID-19)

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EURAMET recognises the ongoing challenges affecting EMPIR projects and our metrology community, as a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The purpose of this FAQ information page is to provide advice for project coordinators and partners, with regards to potential project delays, current project negotiations, the Call 2020 schedule, and other concerns.

Regarding matters beyond reporting on contractual issues, EURAMET cannot offer advice other than to follow the official guidance from your local authorities, employers and national health agencies.

*It is intended that this document will be updated as further information becomes available. As such please consider the following guidance as current, but subject to change. Furthermore, this page does not attempt to fully answer every question but acts as a starting point. Should you have a question that is not addressed below, the most appropriate and expedient form of communication with MSU is by email at [empir.msu@euramet.org](mailto:empir.msu@euramet.org).*

### 1. **Completion of work on our project is being delayed and/or adversely affected as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic. Can we have an amendment to our workplan and/or a contract extension?**

EURAMET expects that you will need to discuss as a consortium what are the implications of the current situation for your project and whether you will need to apply to MSU for a project amendment of any kind. It is likely that you will only be in a position to assess the impact of the current challenges to your project over the next few months, and perhaps only once the pandemic has fully abated.

Therefore, if and at such a time as the consortium have been able to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on your project and have decided that an amendment is necessary, the options available to your consortium are detailed below:

- I. A contract **amendment**. Amendments should in principle not imply changes to the project that would call into question the award decision. However, due to the current situation, a revision to the scope or duration of work, or allocation of activity or resources within your project may be granted (via an amendment), upon request by the consortium (which will be assessed case-by-case by EURAMET). An amendment may take the form of a **revision to planned activity** or an **extension to the contract duration** for work, or both. Project extensions of up to 6 months will be considered.
- II. EURAMET can be notified of a project **suspension**, and later an expected date of resumption. This action would require an amendment after the project restarts. No project costs incurred during the suspension period are eligible to be reimbursed.

Please take particular note that the maximum grant amount for any project cannot be increased.

If you are already in the process of amending your contract with MSU for reasons other than the coronavirus pandemic, please ensure this amendment is either concluded with MSU or if further changes in line with the above are required then the earlier amendment is incorporated into this new request.

In any case, please contact [empir.msu@euramet.org](mailto:empir.msu@euramet.org).

**2. We cannot complete our project reporting on time as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic. How will this affect us?**

You must indicate to EURAMET if there will be a delay in submitting your project reporting. EURAMET will not penalise projects that provide a clear justification for the delay along with a plan for submission.

**3. I can submit our periodic project reporting by email but cannot post original signed finance statements to MSU. Will this prevent my reporting being accepted?**

MSU will consider the report to be “submitted” when the Microsoft Excel report (template 21) is submitted and payment will not be suspended as a result of missing hard copies. Original signed Financial Statements should be sent at a later date. Coordinators should send the statements to MSU by recorded delivery when they have a full set. Partners should send the signed statement to the Coordinator and not direct to MSU.

At Period 1, MSU will, if necessary, accept financial reporting based on the email submissions alone. Payment will then be made to partners once all other technical reporting has been accepted. However, MSU still requires the original signed statements for Period 1 and these must be submitted prior to Period 2 reporting.

At Period 2 financial reporting, MSU will be pragmatic in working with the consortium to seek evidence of the necessary authorisation at a partner level.

**4. Will the Call 2020 project negotiation phase with MSU be delayed or affected by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic?**

The European Commission deadline has not changed. Therefore, Call 2020 projects undergoing contract negotiation should still anticipate completing the negotiation process with their MSU project officer and having the GA issued by the end of May 2021. However, EURAMET expects that the initial face-to-face meetings that the project representative has with their MSU project officer at the start of the negotiation process, will be held virtually over MS Teams this year. If you believe that there may be a particular challenge in your consortium, with any of your partners, which will affect your ability to complete the negotiation process in the allotted time, please contact your Project Officer as soon as possible.

**5. I have incurred costs for a project activity which has now been cancelled as a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Can the cost be reimbursed?**

Project beneficiaries should view the [Horizon 2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement \(AGA\)](#) and its article on *force majeure*. As per AGA section 4, article 51, page 347, *force majeure* relates to an extraordinary event or situation that is beyond the party’s control and that prevents it from fulfilling its obligations under the GA. If the reasoning for the cancellation of the action or activity fulfils the criteria of article 51 (and article 6) then costs incurred may be eligible to be reimbursed.

**6. The duration of my project has been extended as a consequence the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. How will this affect when my project’s reports are due?**

There are 2 possible outcomes:

- i) The amended Annex 1 to the Grant Agreement (reporting task) will show the new dates when your project’s reports are due.  
or
- ii) If your project received an amendment letter (i.e. without the Annex 1 itself being revised), please refer to the reporting due dates stated in the amendment letter.

If the duration of your project has not been extended, the dates when your project's reports are due will remain the same. Please note that due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, this might mean that you will be reporting on less work than was originally planned (e.g. a report covering a 9-month period, might only report on 4-5 months' work).

**7. The duration of my project will be extended as a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. How will this affect when my project's deliverables are due?**

We understand that an extension of the project duration may lead to deliverables being completed later than initially planned in the Annex 1 of your Grant Agreement. In this situation there are 2 possible outcomes:

- i) If your project received an amendment letter, this will not include new dates for the deliverables (i.e. their official due dates will remain as stated in the current version of the Annex 1).
- ii) If your project required an amended Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement, this will show the new dates when your project's deliverables are due.

**8. My project has been delayed as a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. How should I report these delays in my project's Technical Report (Progress)?**

First, please read the answers to questions 6 and 7 above.

- i) **If your project received an amendment letter:** as this letter does not include new dates for the deliverables, tasks, etc., please report against the dates stated in the project's most recent Annex 1 (i.e. **do not** calculate and use new dates in the Section 3 "Delivery date in Annex 1", Section 4 "Task end date in Annex 1", etc. columns). You will then need to report all coronavirus (COVID 19) pandemic-related delays, using the usual process for reporting delays, as specified in Part 2a of the Reporting Guidelines. Further guidance is provided in iii) below.
- ii) **If your project required an amended Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement:** please use the new dates stated in the project's most recent Annex 1 in the Technical Report (Progress). Further guidance is provided in part iii) below.
- iii) Delays that were a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic should be reported, as follows, in your project's Technical Report (Progress):
  - *Section 1: Summary (periodic reports only):* The second paragraph on "issues" should not include issues that were a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, unless these could not be resolved by extending the project's duration (if your project's duration has not been extended yet – please complete this section). If your project has other, non-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic issues, please include these.
  - *Section 3: Deliverable status and progress towards objectives:* The final column of the table might include delays that were a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For such delays it is sufficient to state that the cause was the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, but make it clear what the revised delivery dates are, if any deliverable is at risk of non-completion, or objective at risk of non-fulfilment due to this delay. Revised delivery dates should be reported in column 7 "Status" of the table in the usual format "delayed to *month year*" (also see question 8.i).
  - *Section 4: Explanation of the work carried out:* The final column of the table might include delays and deviations that were a consequence of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. For such delays and deviations, it is sufficient to state that the cause was the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic but make it clear what the revised delivery dates are or if any task is at risk of non-completion due to this delay. Revised delivery dates should be reported in column 4 "Status:" of the table in the usual format "delayed to *month year*" (also see question 8.i).
  - *Section 6: Deviations from Annex 1 (tasks not fully implemented), the consequences and proposed corrective actions:* The table should not include "deviations from Annex 1" that were a consequence

of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. If your project has other, non-coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, “deviations from Annex 1” include them in this table.

For examples on how to report delays as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, please read [EMPIR Reporting Guidelines, Part 2a – Writing a Technical Report \(Progress\)](#).