

# Capacity-building for the Implementation of Interreg and Cohesion Policy

Study Visit Report – Madrid

- Programme performance for members of groups of auditors and staff from AFCOS

19-23 January 2026

## Contract

Capacity-building for the Implementation of Interreg and Cohesion Policy

Contract No: 2024CE160AT081

This project is implemented by a Particip-led consortium, in partnership with SZPO



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# **Programme performance for members of groups of auditors and staff from AFCOS**

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## 1. Summary

Activity	Overview
<b>Project task</b>	Task 3.2 – Preparation and execution of study visits
<b>Aim</b>	Providing participants with practical exposure to audit and anti-fraud
Event	Overview
<b>Event name</b>	Study trip
<b>Date of activity/duration</b>	19-23 January 2026
<b>Location</b>	Madrid
<b>Country</b>	Spain
<b>Target Audience</b>	Members of groups of auditors and staff from AFCOS

Participants		
Guest List/Participants	Number (all in person)	
Number of participants	14	
Guest list Breakdown	Programme cycle management	%
Government officials	14	100%
Local/regional government officials	-	-
Other (JS, Info Point)	-	-
EUD/EU Staff	-	-
Project experts	-	-
Female	8	57%
Male	6	43%
Not identified	-	-

## 2. Implementation

### 2.1. Agenda

Agenda audit and anti-fraud (1,5 days)	
Day 1	Content
20:00-22:00	Welcome dinner
Day 2	Content
10:00–11:00	Welcome session: institutional and legal framework for managing Interreg programmes and EU funds in Spain
11:30–14:00	Audit strategies: risk analysis and implementation System and thematic audits: tools and approach
16:00–18:00	Audit on operations: tools and approach
Day 3	Content
10:00-11:00	System audit and audit on operations: use of databases. Communication of irregularities to OLAF via IMS.
11:30–14:00	System audit and audit on operations: use of databases. Communication of irregularities to OLAF via IMS. (continuation) Audit on operations: more frequent irregularities
16:00-18:00	Antifraud strategy and complementarity with national strategies. Peer exchange and discussion among auditors and antifraud bodies
Day 4	Content
09:00–11:00	Embedded training on internal control principles
11:30–14:00	Wrap up on the assessment of the management and control systems and audit on operations
15:30-16:30	Eligibility rules of expenditure and simplified cost options in the context of audit. Reminder of procurement rules for beneficiaries
17:00-18:00	Wrap up on audit strategies
Day 5	Content
09:00 onwards	<b>No sessions</b> - return flights for all participants, in accordance with schedule

## 2.2. Comments on training delivery

Study Visit 5 in Madrid was delivered as an intensive, practice-oriented activity focusing on audit and anti-fraud systems in the context of Interreg programmes and EU funds. The training combined expert-led sessions with peer exchange, allowing participants to engage directly with audit methodologies, risk analysis, system and operational audits, and the communication of irregularities to OLAF through the IMS. The structure of the agenda ensured a logical progression from the institutional and legal framework to applied audit tools, internal control principles, and eligibility rules, supporting a strong link between theory and operational practice.

The combination of expert presentations and peer exchange created a dynamic and engaging learning environment, helping to sustain participants' attention and interest throughout the sessions. Participants actively raised and discussed several substantive questions, reflecting a high level of engagement and practical interest in the topics addressed.

Participant feedback confirmed the relevance and quality of the training delivery. Out of 14 participants of this training, the evaluation forms were filled by 13 (93%), and they showed a high level of satisfaction with the training and its correspondence to the needs of participants. **13 participants stated that the study visits were "Very useful".**

The detailed scoring is as follows:

On the sessions	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor	Average (on 5)
Were the scope and the coverage of the training responsive to your needs?	12	1				4.9
Was the training material clear and adequate?	12	1				4.9
Was the level of information given for each topic sufficient?	12	1				4.9
Was the distribution of presentations and group work appropriate?	12	1				4.9
Was the time dedicated to each topic adequate?	11	2				4.8
Were the trainers well prepared?	13					5
Was the overall organisation adequate?	12	1				4.9

The detailed scoring for on acquired knowledge and skills (5 being the highest mark) is as follows:

Acquired knowledge & skills	5	4	3	2	1	Average (on 5)
Institutional & legal framework in SP	12	1				4.9

Acquired knowledge & skills	5	4	3	2	1	Average (on 5)
Audit strategies: risk analysis and implementation	12	1				4.9
System and thematic audits: tools and approach	13					5
System audit and audit on operations: use of databases	13					5
Communication on irregularities to OLAF via IMS	12	1				4.9
Audit on operations: more frequent irregularities	12	1				4.9
Antifraud strategy	12	1				4.9
Internal control principles	13					5
Eligibility of expenditure	13					5

## 2.3. Challenges

N/A



Question	Comments
What aspects of the study visit did you find to be of the greatest value?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The presentation about risk of fraud and check verification</li> <li>2. Shared experience of audit system, procedures and antifraud measures</li> <li>3. All the information was valuable</li> <li>4. The tools for data analysis were an opening to me! It would be very useful for my audit work and I am very thankful for this share from the Spanish colleagues</li> <li>5. All aspects were useful and well delivered</li> <li>6. We take a great experience of this event and share with my colleagues in our structure</li> <li>7. Very well exploited in terms of using EU funds, the differences between the programme tools for conflict of interest, databases and using IMS for AFCOS and so on...</li> <li>8. Training</li> <li>9. Risk assessment and antifraud plan for beneficiaries</li> </ol>
What could be potentially improved ?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Perhaps shorter presentations, and in English</li> <li>2. A streamed agenda; it is difficult to concentrate all day</li> <li>3. Longer days in training</li> <li>4. Great thanks to Albert for English translation of Spanish presentations. I guess translation of presentations in English would also be very useful</li> <li>5. To have more opportunity to participate to projects like this with experts like Albert</li> <li>6. Pre-ready examples</li> <li>7. More topics about error evaluation</li> </ol>
On which other issues would you like to receive more information in the future?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. About double finance</li> <li>2. Quality control of management system</li> <li>3. Collaboration between national authorities and the bodies involved in control, audit and antifraud subjects. Coordination between AFCOS , AA and NC</li> <li>4. Antifraud investigation issues</li> <li>5. The transposition of laws in candidate countries and who affects the dynamic of their implementation</li> <li>6. The procedure for recruitment of staff in public institutions</li> <li>7. Everything is clear and understandable. Great thank for the organisation of the event</li> <li>8. More information online on antifraud and irregularities</li> <li>9. For the new programming period the role and responsibilities of operating structures and also the AA, AFCOS, OLAF, DGs,...</li> <li>10. Verification of expenditure</li> <li>11. Risk assessment of fraud</li> </ol>

### **3. Lessons learned/ Recommendations**

Based on both the trainers' observations and participants' feedback, the study visit successfully achieved its initial goals. It provided a valuable information on the issues touched upon and all participants appreciated both the presentations of the staff from the Spanish ministries and the embedded trainings within the study visit.

## 4. Annexes

*Powerpoint presentations, exercises and other materials, list of participants and pictures.*