Use of an electronic signature
Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021 - 2027

1. Which documents can be signed with an e-signature?

From the application stage to the end of the project duration, the projects in the framework of Interreg Baltic Sea Region have to sign different documents. The only document requiring **an original handwritten** signature is the **subsidy contract concluded between the lead partner organisation and the Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat (MA/JS)**. In all other cases, **the MA/JS accepts both the original handwritten signature and the valid electronic signature (e-signature)**. For example, the following documents can be signed with the e-signature:

- Appointing document for BAMOS+ access (Programme's template to be used for creation of the initial user account);
- Partner declaration (Programme's template for each project partner as a part of the application package);
- De-minimis declaration (Programme's template for project partners applying for de-minimis aid);
- Report of hours and employment confirmation (Programme's template for documentation of declared staff costs).

2. Electronic signature acceptable by Interreg Baltic Sea Region

The EU Regulation No 910/2014 on electronic identification and trust services for electronic transactions in the internal market (eIDAS) provides the basis for electronic signatures and describes their concepts and types.

There are three e-signature types defined under eIDAS:

Electronic Signature (Simple Electronic Signature)

Data in electronic form which is attached to or logically associated with other data in electronic form and which is used by the signatory to sign (eIDAS Article 3, Section 10).

Advanced Electronic Signature

shall meet the following requirements:
  a) it is uniquely linked to the signatory;
  b) it is capable of identifying the signatory;

c) it is created using electronic signature creation data that the signatory can, with a high level of confidence, use under his sole control;
and

d) it is linked to the data signed therewith in such a way that any subsequent change in the data is detectable.

(eIDAS Article 26)

Qualified Electronic Signature

It is an advanced electronic signature that is created by a qualified electronic signature creation device, and which is based on a qualified certificate for electronic signatures (eIDAS Article 3, Section 12).

Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme accepts any of the nationally acceptable standards of electronic signature from the category:

- **Advanced Electronic Signature or**
- **Qualified Electronic Signature**.

The e-signature used must comply with Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation).

Electronic signatures that do not qualify as "advanced" or "qualified" electronic signatures in the given country, for example Simple Electronic Signature (SES) **are not accepted by Interreg Baltic Sea Region.** The use and acceptability of the electronic signature must be in line with the national rules.

I M P O R T A N T

When using any of the above-mentioned acceptable standards of electronic signature, it is important that the MA/JS can check whether the document was signed, by whom and if the e-signature was valid at the moment of signature of the document. Such a check can usually be done via an open-access online validation tool, e.g.:

https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/DSS/webapp-demo/validation;

https://www.eparaksts.lv/en/Produkti/Privatpersonam/eParakstsLV/mapp_apraksts;

https://weryfikacjapodpisu.pl/;

https://validator.edusign.sunet.se/.

When the validation of an e-signature cannot be run by the MA/JS due to technical limitations, i.e. there is no open-access online validation tool available for the given e-signature system, the metadata of the e-signature has to be provided in the same file together with the document that has been signed with the e-signature. Metadata refers to additional data related to the electronic signature containing details of the signer's identity, the date and time of signing, and the used authentication methods. For the documents that are supposed to be uploaded to BAMOS+, the file with the signed document, including e-signature metadata, should be uploaded to BAMOS+.

Please do not sign the document by simply copying and pasting the scanned signature. This type of signature is considered neither a handwritten signature nor a valid advanced or qualified e-signature.

3. E-signature files (containers) used

There are several types of <u>files/data containers</u> with different <u>file extensions</u>.

A common file data container on the EU level is the "**ASiCe**" file data container, which contains a group of file objects and digital signatures. The European Telecommunications Standards Institute updated and standardised the technical specification of ASiCe.

Further associated signature data containers fulfilling the standards are, for example "**ADoc**", "**BDoc**", "**EDoc**", "**XADES**" or "**PDF**".