

CLUSTER CLOSURE

1.1. Context

Once the cluster reaches the end of its implementation, it will have to provide an overview of cluster and partnership achievements at the moment of closure (both in terms of finance and content) and the potential durability of these achievements.

The Final Report is therefore a key set of documents for communication and capitalisation purposes and represents the cluster business card.

1.2. Composition of the Final report

The documents required at the end of a cluster are the followings:

1. **Progress Report** (within 2 months after the end date of the cluster's activities)
2. **CD-ROM** or USB stick (within 2 months after the end date of the cluster's activities)
3. **Administrative Closure Checklist** (within 2 months after the end date of the cluster's activities unless an additional Financial Report is requested by the cluster, in which case, this checklist shall be submitted within 5 months after the end date of the cluster's activities)
4. **Additional Financial Report for the +3 months** (within 5 months after the end date of the cluster's activities)

The **last Progress Report** is the report corresponding to the last phase (normally phase 2) of your cluster implementation as indicated in the approved Application Form. It has to be submitted within 2 months after the end date of the cluster's activities.

The **CD-ROM** shall contain all the main representative products developed by your cluster, in terms of communication and concrete achievement.

An **Administrative Closure Checklist** will have to be submitted:

- together with the last Progress Report, if the cluster does not request an additional financial report (please, see below for further information on the additional financial report).
- together with the additional financial report if it has been requested by the cluster (please, see below for further information on the additional financial report)



The Administrative Closure Checklist shall contain as annex the following documents:

- **Bank statements** or equivalent legal document reporting the ERDF flow until the last paid progress report, notably the ERDF flow:
 - a. from the Certifying Authority to the LP
 - b. From the LP to the cluster partners (PPs)
 - c. Of each PP confirming the good receipt of their ERDF share per claim.

- An **Action Plan** providing an estimation of the net revenues that will be generated by the Cluster in the 5 years following the Cluster's end (only for Clusters generating revenues after the Cluster's end).

The bank statements should normally be documents generated by the partner's bank. This document should clearly report the origin of the cash flow (=>who has transferred the money), the beneficiary (=>the account holder), the exact amount transferred (preferably expressed in €) as well as the reason of the flow (e.g. Cluster X, claim 1).

What if the partner cannot send a bank statement?

If, for whatever reason linked to the internal rules of the organisation, a partner cannot send such a document, an equivalent legal document reporting the same type of information listed above should be produced, signed by a legal representative or a person in the organisation entitle to legally bind the latter, shall be sent together with the Administrative Closure Checklist.

An **additional Financial Report** shall also be produced if the cluster has requested to be able to report costs relating to:

- Management costs incurred and paid in the framework of the 3 months covered by the additional report
- and/or any costs incurred the cluster implementation BUT paid in the framework of the 3 months covered by the additional report (with the exception of costs related to the translation and printing of the cluster publication, for which applies the same flexibility as stated in the previous point)

In this case, the additional financial report template will have to be requested to the JTS at the time of the submission of the last progress report.



1.3. Cluster closure procedure

Submission of the Final report

1. If the cluster does not intend to claim costs for the extra 3 months beyond the end of the cluster implementation:

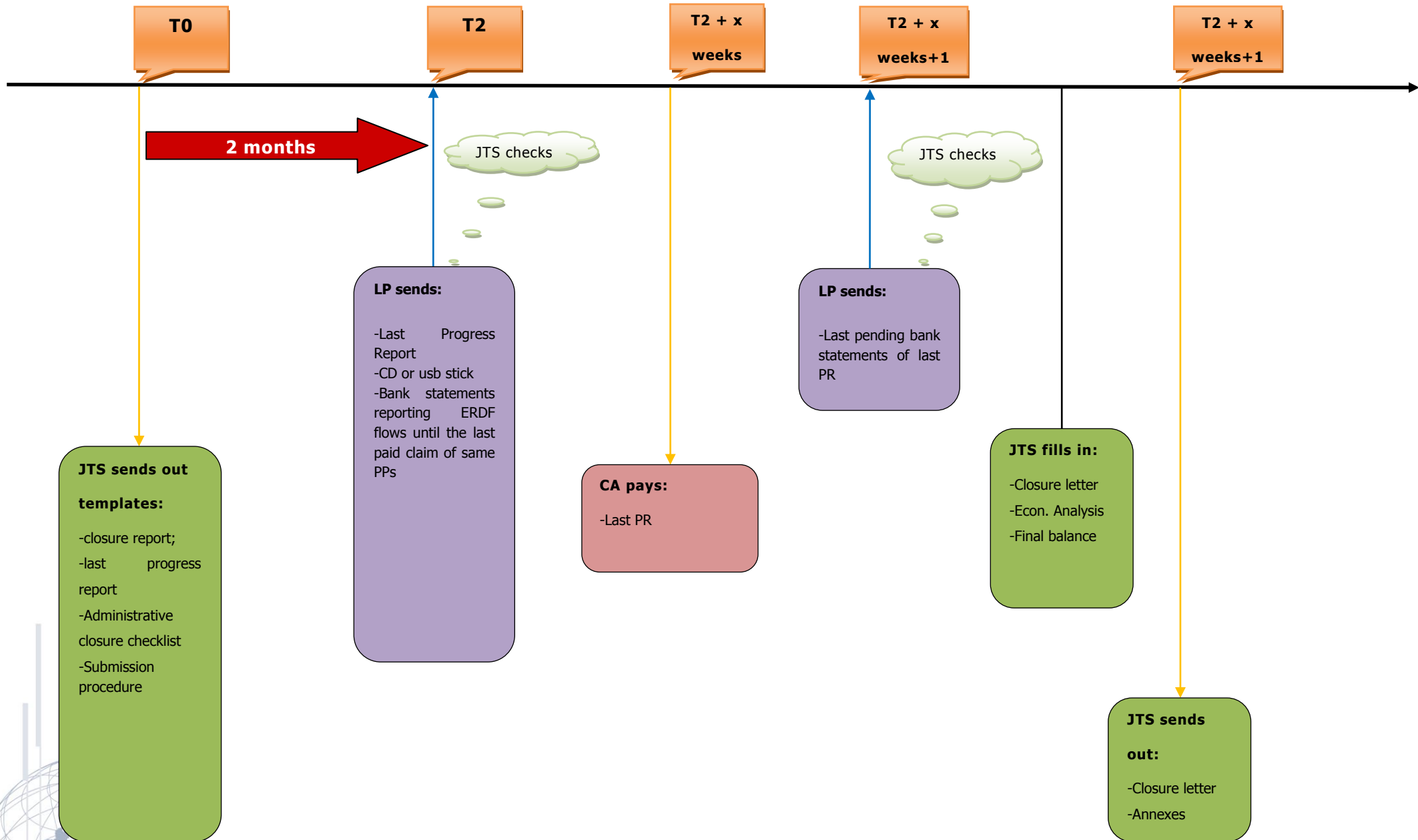
In this case, the LP will have to submit the following documents within 2 months after the end of the cluster implementation:

- the last progress report (original paper signed version + electronic version)
- the CD-ROM
- the supporting documents indicated in the administrative closure checklist (electronic version)

Therefore, for example, if a cluster ends the 31st of December of year N (the T0 indicated in the graph below), the LP will have to submit a PR (only including costs incurred and paid until the 31st of December of Year N), a Closure Report, the CD-ROM and the supporting documents indicated in the administrative closure checklist by 1st of March of year N+1 (the T2 indicated in the graph below).



Closure procedure without additional financial report



2. If the cluster intends to claim costs for the extra 3 months beyond the end of the cluster implementation:

In this case, the LP will have to submit the following documents within 2 months after the end of the cluster implementation:

- the last progress report (original paper signed version + electronic version)
- the CD-ROM

Once these documents have been delivered to the JTS, the LP will then ask the JTS for the additional financial report template.

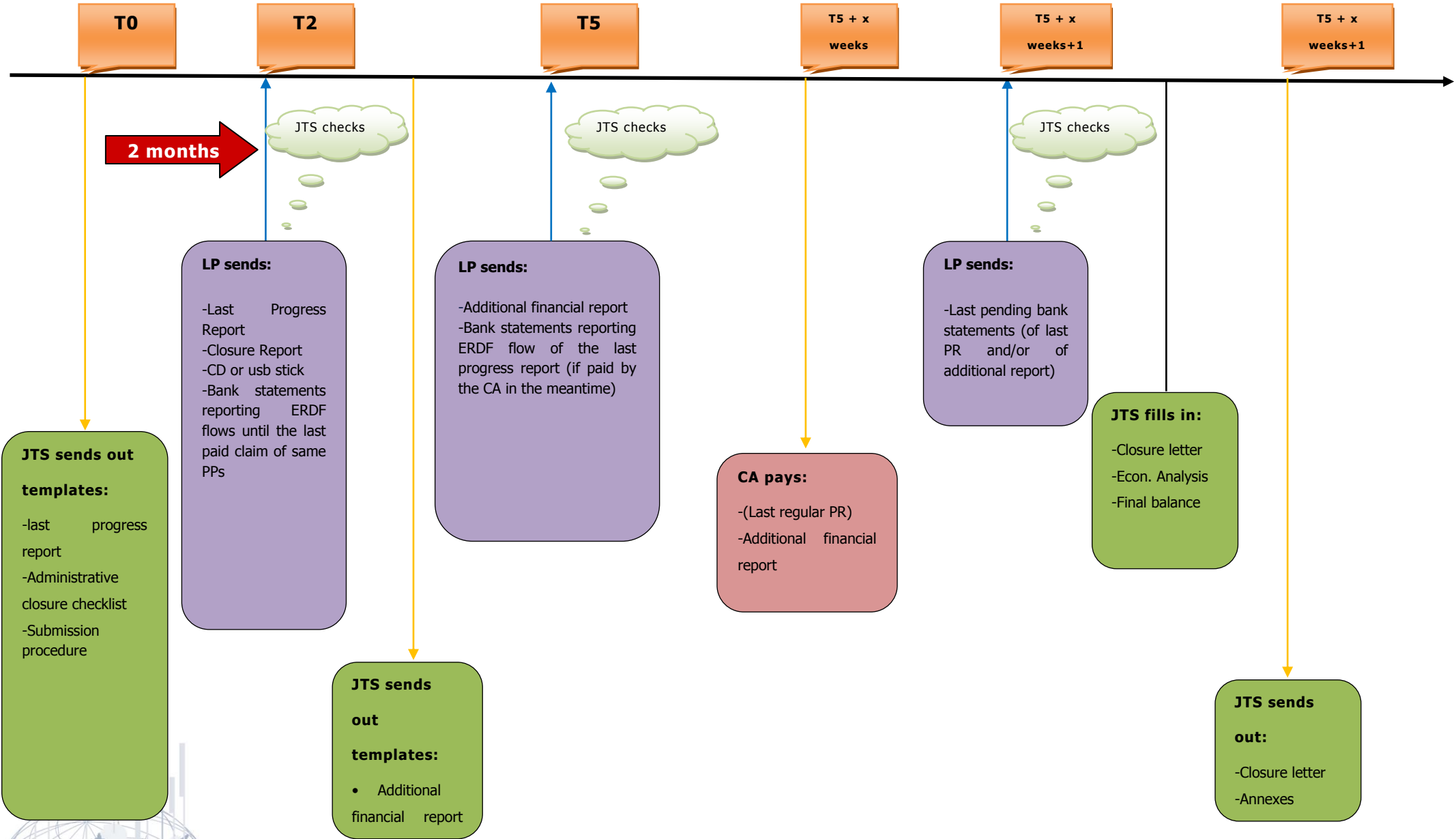
The original paper signed version and the electronic version of the additional financial report will have to be submitted together with the supporting documents as indicated in the administrative closure checklist.

These documents shall be sent to the JTS 5 months after the end of the cluster implementation (e.g. by the 31st of May of Year N+1, if we consider the same example mentioned in bullet point 1 above).

Be aware that the cluster cannot be closed administratively and the payment of the last tranche of ERDF cannot be released if all relevant documentation is not delivered to the JTS.



Closure procedure with additional financial report



A. Cluster administrative closure

1. The Joint Technical Secretariat monitors all components of the Final Report
If the information delivered in the report is insufficient or if there any outstanding document, the Joint Technical Secretariat will ask for further information or clarification from the Lead Partner.

Once the check is completed, the Certifying Authority (CA) effects the payment to the Lead Partner. The latter is informed about the payment by means of a payment notification letter (e-mailed).

2. The payment should be transferred to the Lead Partner bank account in one to two weeks.
The Lead Partner is then responsible for internal allocation or further disbursement of grants to the Cluster Partners. The Lead Partner should ensure that ERDF financing is forwarded to Cluster Partners in time and in full. No amount shall be deducted or withheld and no specific charge or other charge with equivalent effect shall be levied that would reduce these amounts for the Cluster Partners.
3. LP will have to collect all bank statements regarding the last payment of the ERDF tranche and send it to the JTS (see paragraph 1.2 of this guidance).
4. Once all bank statement are received and checked by the JTS, the LP will receive a closure letter completed by the JTS. This letter is only for information and needs no action from the LP. It must be archived and kept by the cluster together with all other relevant documentation necessary to ensure the cluster audit trail. The closure letter is the document attesting the administrative closure of the cluster.



Summary illustration of the submission process:

