GRACE | Grants Administration and Collaboration Environment

Submit and Update
Project Level Information

GrACE User Manual for
Programme Operators and Fund Operators

Version 4.1, February 2024

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1. Introduction

As mentioned in the Results Guideline[1], the Programme Operators and Fund Operators are responsible for submitting specific Project Level Information (PLI) to FMO.

The purpose of submitting Project Level Information to FMO is twofold:

- The Project Level Information constitutes a valuable source for compiling key statistics on the Grants implementation progress
- The project summary and the additional information will be used for communicating about the Grants

The Project Level Information will be submitted in GrACE by the Programme Operator (PO) and Fund Operator (FO) for their programme in 2 steps:

A) Initial registration: this includes initial information about the project available once the project is contracted. This information must be submitted within 15 calendar days after the project is contracted[1]. The information shall be updated in case any changes occur in time.

B) Final registration: this includes results-related information available once the project is completed and the final project report is finalised. This information must be submitted within 15 calendar days after the project report was finalised[1].

The functionality to register the Project Level Information in GrACE is developed based on the PLI Template[2]. For additional information about the terms used for reporting this information, please consult the Results Reporting Guide[3] section 6 on Project Information.

For further help and support, please contact grace.support@efta.int. This user manual and other manuals can be found at our website https://eeagrants.org/gracemanuals, be sure to check in sometimes for updated versions.
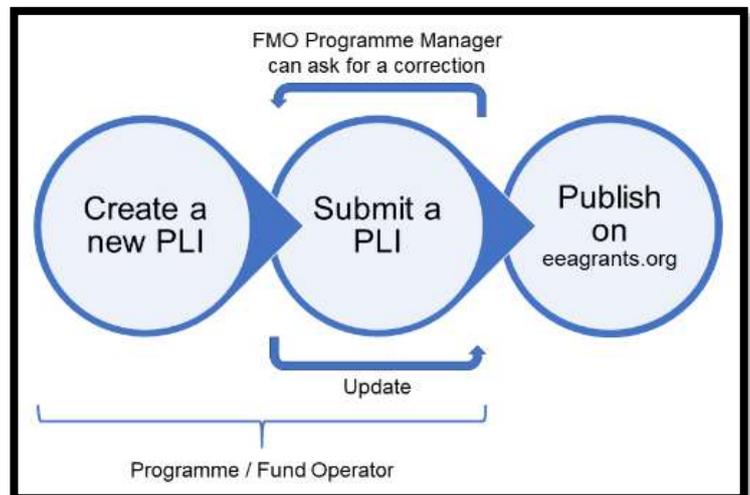
2. Project Level Information (PLI) in GrACE

Once the project is contracted, the Programme/Fund Operator can register the section Initial registration in GrACE. It is possible to update the information previously registered as many times as needed.

Note: To register information related to projects resulting from calls, the related Call information should previously be registered in GrACE.

The information you submit via the PLI will automatically be published on eeagrants.org without any FMO review. The FMO Programme Manager has the possibility to review the information and ask for corrections after the PLI is submitted. Once the project is completed and the final project report is finalised, the Programme/Fund Operator can register the section Final registration in GrACE.

The picture displays a visual representation of the workflow:

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[1] https://eeagrants.org/resources/2014-2021-results-guideline
[2] https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-project-level-information-template
[3] https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-results-reporting-guide

3. Create a new PLI

As a user from Programme/Fund Operator organisations, you will create a PLI from the Project Level Information link in your programme:

- Enter your programme from the main menu dashboard under **My programmes**
- Once in the programme, click the **Project Level Information** (1) link under Modalities in the Programme
- To create a new PLI, click on the button **Create new** (2)
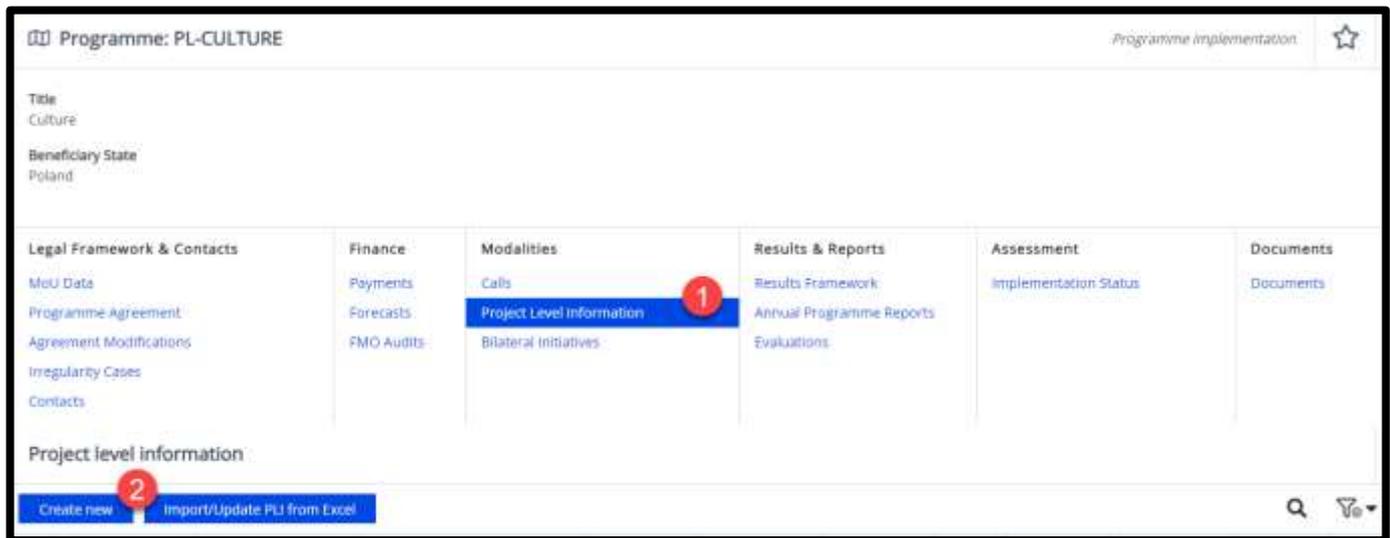
4. Fill in the section "Initial registration"

The system will open the form to register the PLI and you can start filling in the section Initial registration. The information is classified in sub-sections, each being expanded or collapsed using the buttons "**+**" or "**-**":

- Initial registration: project title, project internal ID, financial mechanism, project URL, and links to project social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube etc.)
- Project details: project grant, level co-financing, eligible expenditure, grant rate, project promoter organisation and email, implementation modality and related call
- Project partners: donors project partners and other project partners, if any
- Project content: project outcome(s) and summary, sector code and sub sector code, project target group, policy makers, and project location
- Project timeline: project signature date and project eligibility end date
- Bilateral summary (displayed only if a donor project partner was registered above): What level of involvement do you foresee for your donor project partner(s)?, How was the cooperation established?, and Estimated amount

You have the possibility to register some of the information in the form, **Save** your progress and return later to continue filling in the form.

Please consult the Results Reporting Guide[4] section 6 on Project Information and the PLI Template[5] for guidance on how to fill in the fields.

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[4] https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-results-reporting-guide
[5] https://eeagrants.org/resources/eea-and-norway-grants-2014-2021-project-level-information-template

You can see a full checklist of what to include in PLIs by clicking on the checklist icon next to 'Initial Registration'. Additionally, the tooltips from GrACE can provide further guidance on how to fill in some fields. To check for tooltips, you can hover with your mouse on the respective field.

There are a few mandatory fields to fill out before saving the project information. These are marked with an asterisk, *: **Project title** and the related **Call** (unless the Implementation Modality was set to Predefined).

Other fields are optional to save the information while some are prefilled and cannot be changed (such as Beneficiary State or Financial Mechanism, unless the programme is receiving funds from both EEA Grants and Norway Grants, and you need to choose one).

NB: New from April 2022 are mandatory fields under the Project details concerning the Russian invasion of Ukraine. If you hover over the text, a tooltip will display.

Warning: When filling in the project promoter and donor project partner organisation, you have the possibility to create new organisations in case they are not already registered in GrACE. Please search the list first and do not create new organisations unless it's necessary.

After clicking on the **Save** button, the PLI changes status to **Draft** (accessible/visible only to the author and the users from the organisation). The project information registered so far will receive a project code generated by GrACE. Example: Programme Short Name-0001 for the first project registered, Programme Short Name-0002 for the second project registered, etc.

You can edit the PLI as many times as needed with the **Edit** button.

5. Submit a PLI

After clicking **Save** the first time, the option **Submit** will be available alongside **Save** the next time you **Edit** the project information. While **Save** is only recording the information registered so far, clicking **Submit** will submit the information to FMO and therefore enable FMO to see the Project Level Information.

The system will notify you which fields are required for submission:

The system will not allow you to **Submit** the PLI without filling in the required fields, and will notify you of the missing fields:

Please select at least one Outcome in section "Project content".
Please fill in "Summary" in section "Project content".
Please fill in "Sector code" in section "Project content".
Please fill in "Sector sub code" in section "Project content".
Please fill in "Project target group" in section "Project content".
Please fill in Policy marker "Gender Equality" in section "Project content".
Please fill in Policy marker "Roma inclusion and empowerment" in section "Project content".
Please fill in Policy marker "Social inclusion of vulnerable groups other than Roma" in section "Project content".
Please fill in Policy marker "Anti-discrimination" in section "Project content".
Please fill in Policy marker "Transparency and anti-corruption" in section "Project content".
Please fill in "Project location" in section "Project content".
Please fill in "Project signature date" in section "Project timeline".
Please fill in "Project eligibility end date" in section "Project timeline".

The **Bilateral summary** section appears if you registered at least one donor project partner in the **Project partners** section. Donor project partners and the bilateral information represent valuable information to report about the Grants, therefore please make sure to register the Donor Project Partners, if any.

When all the required data is registered, you can submit the PLI to FMO. Once the submission is successful the Internal status of the PLI is set to **Submitted**.

On the right side of the PLI form, the Internal status will tell you if the specific project related information is published or not. You can also find this information about all projects in the **Project Level Information** link under Modalities in the Programme.

Please make sure the project summary is of good quality and that related project information such as organisations, project grant and dates are correct.

6. Update information on a submitted PLI

You can **Update** the PLI previously submitted to FMO as many times as needed. In the following two situations you should update the PLI:

- when important changes occurred in the project implementation and the data previously submitted to GrACE needs to be updated
- if requested by the FMO Programme Manager (see the next section for more details)

To update a PLI previously submitted:

1. Click on the specific PLI code in the PLI link in your programme, and click **Edit** once you are in the PLI form
2. Edit the fields which requires update
3. Click **Save** once you finished the registration

Once you clicked **Save**, the information inserted will replace the information previously submitted. In the same manner as for the first submission, the system will notify you of missing fields. After a successful update, the status of the PLI changes to **Updated**. The information will automatically be published on eeagrants.org if the update concerns the information displayed there.

7. Correction of a PLI

The FMO Programme Manager may decide to review one or more PLIs. After a review, they can request a correction of the PLI if considered necessary. If they ask for a correction, the status of the PLI will change to **Waiting for correction.**

Once the FMO Programme Manager requests a correction, a new task is created and assigned to the main contact from the Programme Operator or Fund Operator organisation. When they login to GrACE, they will find it under "My tasks" on their dashboard.

If a colleague of the main contact would like to work with this correction, they can take it over like this: Click in front of the task in "My team(s) tasks" (1) and then click **Take over** (2). It will then be assigned to them and move over to "My tasks" like shown above.

The task can refer to one or multiple PLI(s). It will include the Project code(s) of the PLI(s) to be corrected.

After clicking on the task, in the **Comment** column you can find more details about the correction required.

You can edit the PLI as many times as needed in the manner described in the chapter *Update information on a submitted PLI*. The PLI status will remain **Waiting for correction;** when in this status, the PLI will not be published on eeagrants.org.
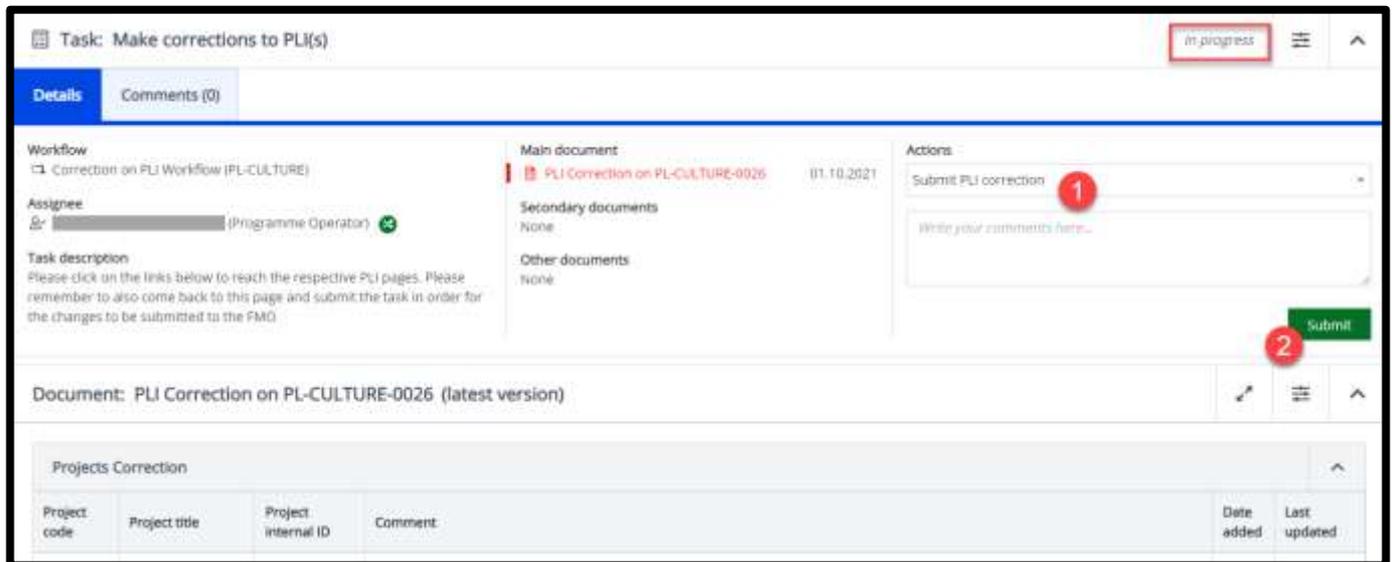
After completing all the updates, you can send it back to the FMO by completing the task you received. You can find the task on your dashboard, the front page when you first open GrACE. When you are in the task, on the right hand side select the action **Submit PLI correction** (1) and click the **Submit** button (2).

After submitting the task, the PLI status will change to **Updated**. The FMO Programme Manager is notified via e-mail that the PLI has been updated.

The FMO can decide to review some of the PLIs. You can see this information on the right side of the PLI form, as well as information on whether it's published or not.


8. Fill in "Final registration"

Once the Project is over, as a Programme Operator or Fund Operator you will fill in the data from the section **Final registration**. To start filling in the final information about the project, go to the **Final registration** tab in the PLI and change Project contract status from **Signed** to any of the other options. Recall from the beginning of this document that this should be done within 15 calendar days from when the project has ended.

You can choose between the following Project contract statuses:

- **Signed**: this is the default status once you submit the Initial registration to FMO.

- **Terminated**: use this in case of project contract termination. This applies before the project reaches its planned end date.

- **Partially completed**: use when the activities planned in the project contract have not been completed when due. This applies once the project has already reached its planned end date.

- **Completed**: the activities planned in the project contract have been completed and the final project report has been approved.
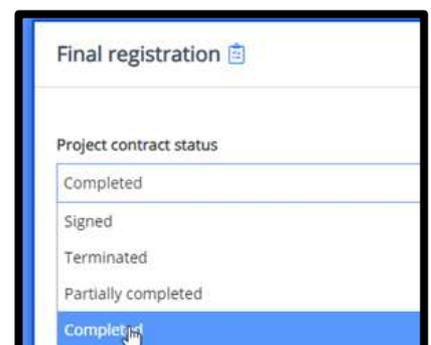
If you change the project contract status to **Terminated** or **Partially completed**, you will need to fill in the following sections:

- Project finalisation details, which includes:
    - Activities' completed end date.
    - Total project grant paid (automatically calculated based on the information you submitted in IFRs in the Incurred section for this project).
- Total project eligible expenditure
- Reason for partial completion/termination
- Were any results achieved? If you select **Yes**: please see below for *Projects results* section.

⚠ In summer 2023, the Final registration details was changed slightly, in order for the FMO to better guide the users on what we need for the reporting to the donors. The previous text box "Results summary" is now gone and instead we have separated this information box into 3 textboxes for the results – see the *questions in italic below*. **Already submitted PLIs does not need to be updated because of this.** The FMO is asking for the same information as before, just in a more guided way to help the users understand what information we need.

When you change the project contract status to **Completed**, you will need to fill in the following sections:

- Project finalisation details, which includes:
    - Activities' completed end date.
    - Final project grant (automatically calculated based on the information you submitted in IFRs in the Incurred section for this project).
    - Final project eligible expenditure.
- Project results, which include the following questions:
    - *What were the issues or challenges the project aimed to address?*
    - *What did the project do? Describe the activities and outputs.*
    - *What results did the project achieve and for whom? Describe the outcomes and impacts, and for which beneficiaries.*
    - Is this a 'good practice' project? (Yes or No)
    - To what extent are the positive effects of the project likely to continue after the funding period? (Will continue/Likely to continue/Unlikely to continue)
    - *Bilateral results summary
    - *Questions about the strengthening of bilateral relations and the cooperation and involvement of the project partners (possible to tick one or more options that best describe the project).

In this section you can also upload relevant communication materials such as press releases, brochures, or infographics (jpg, pdf, or docx accepted), as well as the project URL and links to social media sites.

When filling in these sections, please note that:

- *The bilateral related fields will be displayed only if there was at least one donor project partner registered in Project partner section in the Initial registration.
- If the project status is Terminated or Partially completed, the section Project results will be displayed only if you select **Yes** - that there were results achieved, in the section Project finalisation details.

A note regarding the «Final registration» financial numbers:

The **"Project eligible expenditure"** in the initial registration is a combination of the agreed upon grants amount plus the project level co-financing from the project promoter.

The **"Total project eligible expenditure"** might be different in the end, they do not need to match.

"Total project grant paid" is automatically collected from the Interim Financial Report (IFR). If you are registering expenditures for this project in a new IFR, this number will be automatically updated, it does not need to be updated manually.

The project will still receive eligible expenditures registered in IFRs even though the PLI is marked as Completed.

⚠️ **Projects that are completed or partially completed after the 30th of April 2024**

As of January 2024, a new checkbox has been added to the PLI Final Registration form. This checkbox will appear for POs/FOs when registering a project as completed or partially completed and setting the end date as past the 30th of April 2024. The checkbox will ask if additional funding was made available after the deadline (30th of April 2024) to complete those projects.

There you will click either 'Yes' or 'No', depending on which is applicable. If you choose 'Yes', another box will appear where you will be asked to fill in the volume of additional funding which was used after the deadline.

9. Import/Update PLIs from Excel

As a Programme Operator or Fund Operator you can import or update multiple PLIs at once using Excel. Go to the **Project Level Information** link (1) and click the button Import/Update PLI from Excel (2).
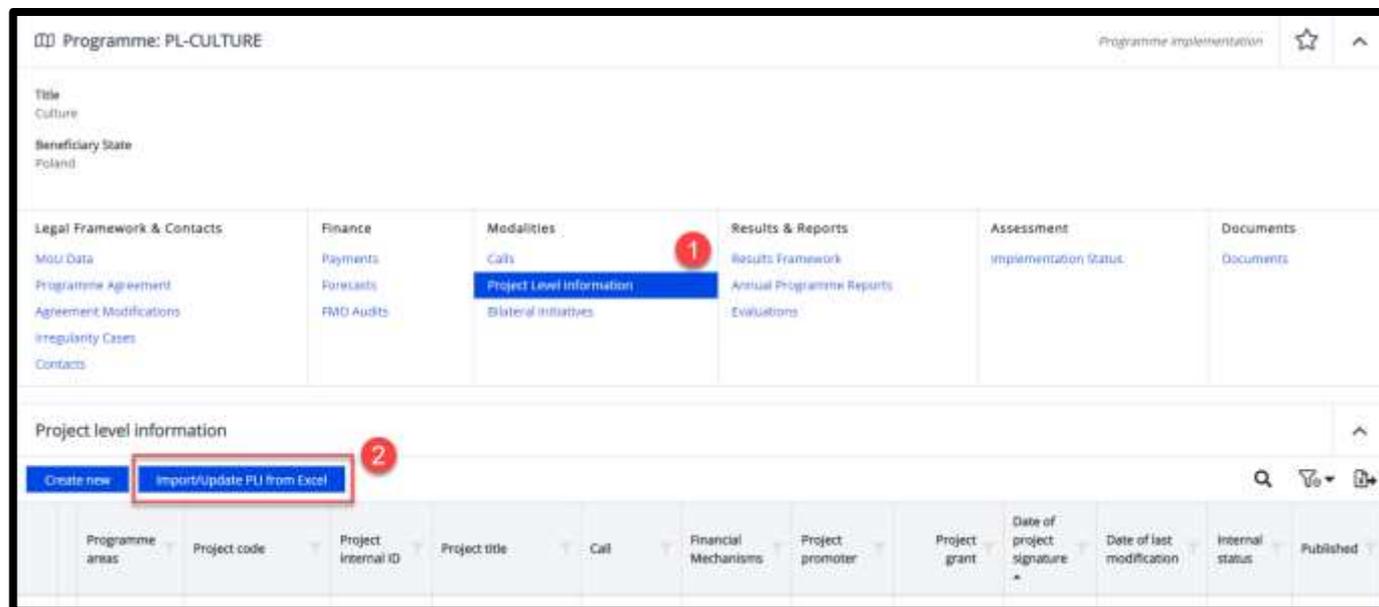
After clicking this option, you will choose between **Import New PLI(s)** or **Update existing PLI(s)**.

In case you plan to **Import new PLI(s)**, please make sure to **Download the example .xlsx file** before you continue:

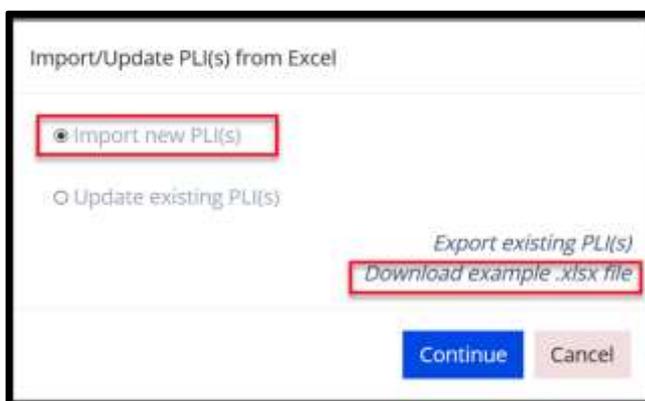You will create the Excel file with your own Project Level Information using the format provided in the first worksheet of this file. Since you plan to import PLIs which are not yet in the system, please make sure to let the first column **Project code** be empty.

The headers contain clarifications for each field (turn on Show all Notes from Review tab in Excel if you don't see them).

The second worksheet called **Nomenclatures** contains the list of values accepted for each field. To check the value accepted in each field, go to the tab **Nomenclatures** (1), and then expand the related field using the **+** button on the left side (2).

If you will plan to **Update existing PLI(s)**, please make sure to **Export existing PLIs(s)** before you continue:

Import/Update PLI(s) from Excel

O Import new PLI(s)

⦿ Update existing PLI(s)

Export existing PLI(s)
*Download example .xlsx file*

Continue   Cancel

This option will enable you to download a file with all the PLIs previously submitted to GrACE in a format suitable for import. Like the example file, the second worksheet of the exported file called **Nomenclature** contains the list of values accepted for each field.

You will prepare this file further for import by keeping only the lines with the projects you plan to update and edit their necessary fields.

Important: The system will know which PLIs to update based on the **Project code** column, which contains the project code previously generated by the system when the PLI was initially created. It is necessary to maintain the first column **Project code** with the original code to update the PLIs you intend to.

After you prepared your Excel file, either for importing new PLIs or for updating existing PLIs in GrACE, you can click **Continue**. A new window will appear where it is possible to upload the file or to drag and drop it directly into the window itself.

Legal Framework & Contacts	Modalities	Results & Reports	Assessment
MoU Data	Calls	Results Framework	Implementation Status
Programme Agreement	Project Level Information	Annual Programme Reports	
Agreement Modifications	Bilateral Initiatives	Evaluations	
Irregularity Cases			
Contacts			

Update PLI(s)

Upload one file
Or drag and drop a file here

Cancel

Once you have uploaded the Excel file previously prepared, the system will perform a check of the information from the file and will notify you of any errors that should be corrected in the Excel file before submitting the information.
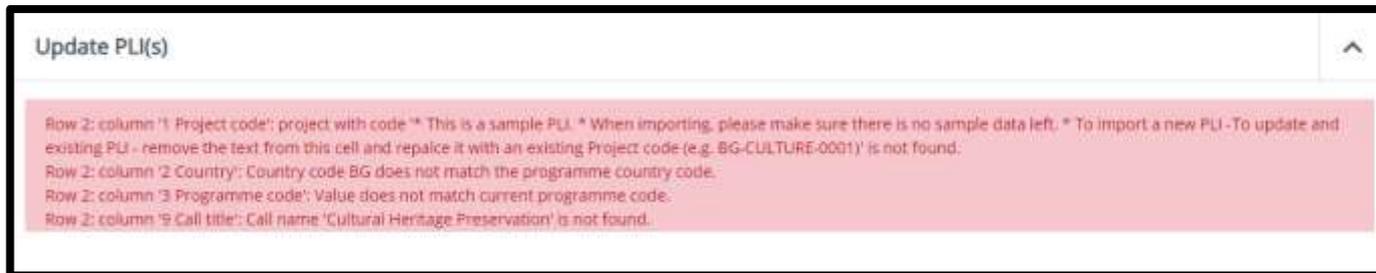
In case the Project promoter organisations or Donor project partner organisations included in the file were not already in GrACE, the system will ask either to link the project with an existing organisation or to create a new record for the respective organisation in the system. Please search the list first and do not create a new organisation unless it's necessary.
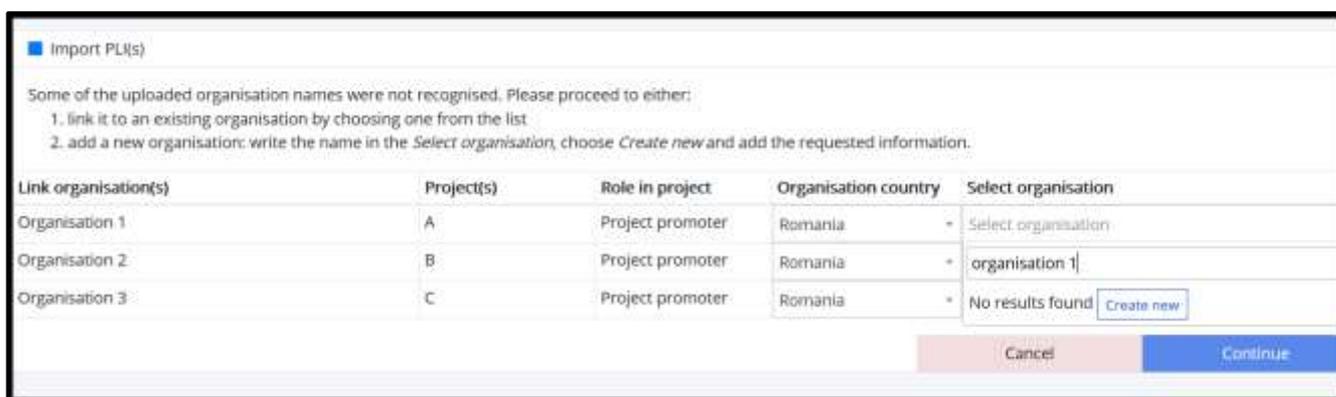
In case of importing new PLIs, if you didn't fill in all the required fields, the system will upload the project with status **Draft**. You will then need to go to each of the PLIs, fill in the empty fields and click **Submit** after finalising the import.

Note: It's recommended to fill in all the fields in the Excel file to upload the PLIs with the status **Submitted**.

The system will let you know the status of the PLI you upload before finalising the import:
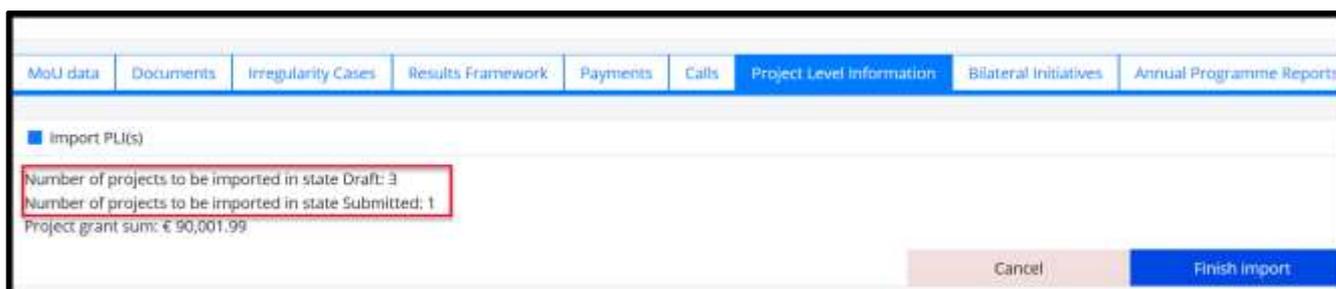

In case of an update, the system will warn you that once you proceed you will overwrite the information existing in GrACE for the projects you included in the file. There's no need to do any further action in each PLI after finalising the import in this case. The data is submitted or updated once you click **Finish import**.

10. View the PLIs in GrACE

The list of saved PLI is displayed in the **Project Level Information** link under Modalities in the Programme.

The programme areas can be filtered by clicking on the filter button (1) in the first column. You can access each PLI by clicking on either the Project code (2) or on the Project internal ID (2) in this list**.**

You can customise the fields you would like to see in the list of PLIs by filtering columns with the filter button (3) or you can export the list to Excel using the download symbol (4).
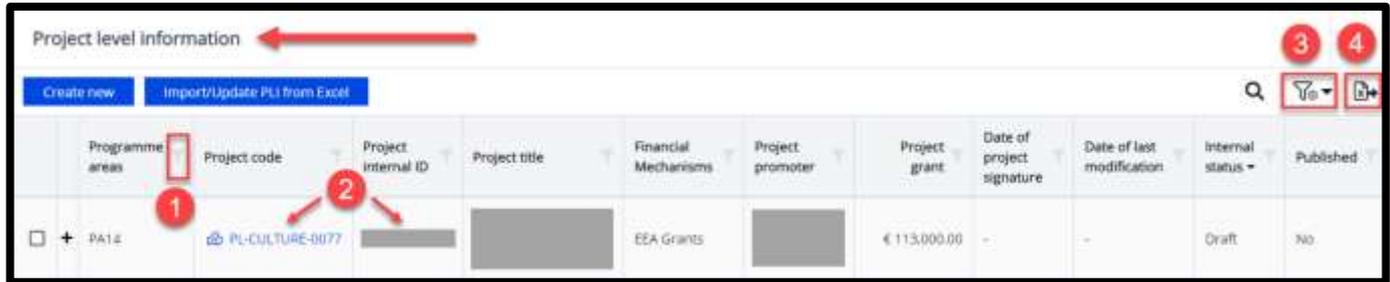

With the filter button, you can customise the visualisation of the PLI with the following columns:

- Programme areas
- Project code
- Project internal ID
- Project title
- Implementation modality
- Call
- Financial mechanisms
- Project promoter

- Project promoter contact information
- Project grant
- Date of project signature
- Date of last modification
- Donor project partners
- Internal status
- Contract status

- Source
- Reviewed
- Suspended
- Date of last FMO review
- Published
- Marked for review
- Outcomes
- Outcome names

The Internal status column shows the status of the PLI:

- **Draft**: Initially as a Programme Operator or Fund Operator you created a new PLI and saved it. In this case, only the author or another user from his/her organisation can view and edit the PLI. The FMO can not see it (except Support).
- **Submitted**: You filled-in all required information and submitted the PLI to FMO**.** In this case, FMO can view the PLI. You can still edit the PLI anytime as needed. Information from the submitted PLI is automatically made available to be published on the FMO website unless explicitly unpublished by the FMO Programme Manager.
- **Waiting for correction**: When the FMO Programme Manager requests a correction on one or more PLI(s) through the specific workflow for corrections.
- **Updated**: Once you update the information from a PLI or after you finalised the task **Make corrections to PLI(s)** started by the FMO Programme Manager.

On the top of this list, GrACE might show a warning about the PLI numbers. This happens if the number of PLIs linked to a call is different than the *Number of applications contracted* registered inside the call. For example: If it says inside the call *"Ongoing call 4: Improving digital knowledge and skills and wider using of digital technologies and tools of CSOs."* that 12 projects are contracted and there are 13 PLIs registered towards that call, this will give the warning below:
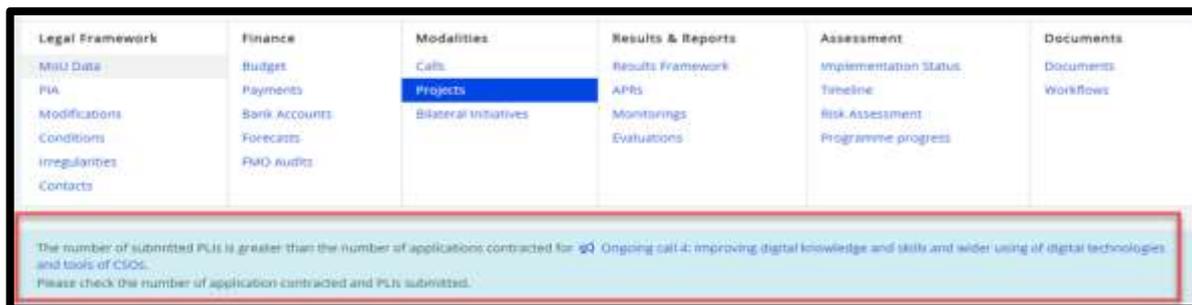
11. Annex 1: PLI Check-list

This checklist provides guidance for filling out project-level information in GrACE.

To find the checklist, please do the following:

1) In GrACE, go to your projects, or you can be looking already at one specific project
2) Click on the ? (question mark) in the top right corner
3) Click on the "PLI check list" link
4) If you want to download the document, click on the little arrow pointing down to a line, next to the printer symbol.