



D5.2 – Project Quality Plan

WP5 – Task 5.1

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Summary

This deliverable presents the EVEREST Project Quality Plan (PQP). It describes the guiding principle for the quality planning, the quality assurance and the quality control procedures. This document is effective throughout the lifetime of the project but it is open to revision if necessary.

Keywords

Project Management, Project Quality Plan, Quality Planning, Quality Assurance, Quality Control

Abbreviations and acronyms

Acronym	Description
EEAB	External Expert Advisory Board
CA	Consortium Agreement
COO/co-COO	Coordinator/co-Coordinator
D or DEL	Deliverable
DoA	Description of Action
EC	European Commission
ExCom	Executive Committee
EUG	End Users Group
GA	Grant Agreement
GB	Governing Board
HE	Horizon Europe
KOM	Kick-Off Meeting
IMR	Interim Management Report
M	Month (of the project)
MS	Milestones
NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement
PMO	Project Management Office
PM	Person-Month
PO	Project Officer
PQP	Project Quality Plan
PR	Periodic Report
RP	Reporting Period
V	Version
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader

Table 1: abbreviations and acronyms

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose

This Project Quality Plan (PQP) shows how quality aspects are taken into account in a variety of processes and activities within the EVEREST project. The interrelated quality processes – planning, assurance and control – have impact on the project work from its start to its end.

- **Quality Planning** refers to quality policies like meeting, deliverables (DEL) or publication policies, the definition of responsibilities as well as the creation of a project visual identity including a project logo, project-like designed templates etc. In order to communicate adequately within the project as well as to project external persons, several tools, such as project policies including meetings minutes, DELs and the publication process of scientific papers, are established and explained in this document.
- **Quality Assurance** involves the establishment of the dedicated project monitoring file, Periodic Reports (PRs) (default requirement of the European Commission) clear responsibilities and regular, clearly guided telephone conferences. A well-defined internal review process further supports the Quality Assurance of DELs.
- **Quality Control** focuses on feedback through internal processes (internal review process) and external advices (Advisory Board, project stakeholders). It further monitors how feedback is implemented and assures the project outcomes through proactive risk management

Responsibilities for quality planning, assurance and control are shared between all partners, which allow various views on quality issues in order to reach the optimal outcome.

1.2 Application and validity

The requirements contained in this PQP apply to all personnel engaged and tasks planned in EVEREST. Revisions of the contents of the PQP become valid from the date of issue.

1.3 Administration

LGI is responsible for the administration of the PQP. Proposals for modifications or additions must be submitted to LGI, which updates and issues the revisions of the PQP. All revisions need approval by the Coordinator (COO). Each new issue will be indicated in the revised document by means of a revision number and accompanied by a comment.

1.4 Dissemination

The PQP and its annexes are public documents and will be made available via the project's website and dedicated EC platforms after the final validation and release by the EC legal officer. A dedicated communication note will be sent to all Partners providing an access link to the final document. Each beneficiary of the project has a by default Microsoft TEAMS access to the PQP content including the archived and final versions.

2 Structure of the document

The PQP is an essential part of the EVEREST project management. Its purpose is to describe how quality will be managed throughout the project-lifecycle. Quality must always be planned in a project in order to prevent unnecessary rework, as well as waste of cost and time. Quality should also be considered from both, an outcome and process perspective. The processes and activities that produce DELs need to fulfil certain quality levels in order to reach the expected high-quality outcome. To address all quality

requirements and quality assurance mechanisms in the EVEREST project, 'Project Quality Plan' at hand has been developed by the project team. This plan acts as the quality bible for the project and all partners will adhere to the project quality plan.

Each project has its characteristics in terms of partners, Work Packages (WPs) etc. and therefore requires a tailor-made quality plan, clear responsibilities and contact persons. This is described within Chapter 3.

The overall Quality Management Strategy of EVEREST is addressed in Chapter 4. It is divided in three key activities:

Quality Planning

Quality Planning comprises quality policies and procedures relevant to the project for both project DELs and project processes. It defines who is responsible for what and which documents compliance with EC guidelines. A project visual identity represents the project internally, in partners' organisations as well as externally. In order to communicate adequately within the project also to project external persons, several tools are established and introduced in this chapter. Clearly defined project policies in terms of policies for DEL naming, meetings, scientific publications or the procedure of internal DEL review, etc. give security to the project partners, as they have clear guidance how to deal with upcoming issues.

Quality Assurance

Quality assurance creates and monitors project processes, which need to be performed effectively to reach the targeted outcome. This involves the establishment of project monitoring tools and PRs, clear responsibilities and regular, clearly guided telephone conferences (telcos) but also face-to-face meetings. These activities within EVEREST are summarized in section 4.2.

Quality Control

Quality Control will be actively performed by all partners, e.g., by acting as an internal reviewer of DELs. A clear internal review process has been defined before the DEL submission to provide feedback to the editor. A proactive risk management has already been mentioned within the Description of the Action (DoA). The risk management has been established as planned in order to guarantee the project quality and avoid delays or failures. Feedback on the project progress and outcomes by the External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB) will support the quality controlling and guide the project into the right direction. This is described in section 4.3 and 7.4.2.

The goal of the following chapters is to give an overall explanation of how great quality can be assured. All the processes identified in the EVEREST project with the reference in this document and responsibilities are resumed in the Table 2 below.

Process	Reference in PQP	Who
Prepare and release: Contractual technical document DELs Milestones	5.1 5.2, 7.1.2.1, 7.4.4 7.4.3	WPL DEL author WPL
Name documents	5.3	All members
Report to the EC	5.4	WPL then COO
Resolve Conflict	5.5	Between partner and if failed at the COO level then at the EC level

Communicate with the EC	6.3	COO
Communicate internally via TEAMS - Documents sharing - Collaborative work on documents - Emailing Public library	6.1	All members
Communicate externally - Website - LinkedIn	6.2	All members participate and WPL manages with the support of LGI
Organize and lead meeting	6.1.3	All members
Manage planning	7.1	COO
Create Visual Identity	7.1.1	LGI
Define Project policy - Meeting - DELS - Scientific papers	7.1.2 6.1.3 7.1.2.1 7.1.2.2	All members participate Management by COO & PMO
Manage Quality assurance Quality criteria and control	7.2 & 7.3 7.4	All members, WPL then COO
Project monitoring tool	7.4.1	WPL, COO, PMO
Periodic Report	7.4.7	WPL, COO, PMO
Manage risks	7.5	WPL & COO
Manage effort and costs	8	COO & PMO

Table 2: Processes referencing and responsibilities

3 Project structure overview

EVEREST is a research project with 5 WPs and 15 partners, coordinated by GRS gGmbH. It started the 1st of September 2024 and will run over 4 years. The COO acts as the project leader and will be responsible for the innovation management and scientific coordination of the project. He is assisted by the LGI, acting as an external Project Management Officer (PMO).

Participant No	Full Entity Name	Short Name	Country	Role
1	GESELLSCHAFT FUR ANLAGEN UND REAKTORSICHERHEIT (GRS) gGmbH	GRS	DE	COO
2	TEKNOLOGIAN TUTKIMUSKESKUS VTT OY	VTT	FI	BEN
3	HUN-REN ENERGIATUDOMANYI KUTATOKOZPONT	HUN-REN EK	HU	BEN
4	INSTITUT JOZEF STEFAN	JSI	SI	BEN
5	BUDAPESTI MUSZAKI ES GAZDASAGTUDOMANYI EGYETEM	BME	HU	BEN
6	LGI SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION	LGI	FR	BEN
7	PREUSSENELEKTRA GMBH	PEL	DE	BEN
8	INSTITUT DE RADIOPROTECTION ET DE SURETE NUCLEAIRE	IRSN	FR	BEN

Table 3: List of the EVEREST partners.



4 Project Management and Governance

4.1 Project management strategy

Project management includes all core activities to ensure the successful completion of the project within all technical and financial aspects set out in the Grant Agreement (GA). WP5, led by GRS, is dedicated to the management and coordination of the project to ensure that it is stayed on track in terms of scope, costs, resources, and quality. All changes and optimizations essential for facilitating this goal are always under discussion with the partners and the decisions are taken based on the partners approval.

Good communication management practices are crucial for ensuring that information reach the appropriate partners, and that timely, efficient decisions can be taken. Quality management contributes to establish the relevant project quality control and quality assurance activities to ensure an efficient collaboration among the consortium partners and delivery of project results. Risk management is necessary for providing the process and techniques for the evaluation and control of potential project risks, focusing on their precautionary diagnosis and handling.

4.2 Project management structure

The overall organizational structure of EVEREST is illustrated in the Figure 3 below.

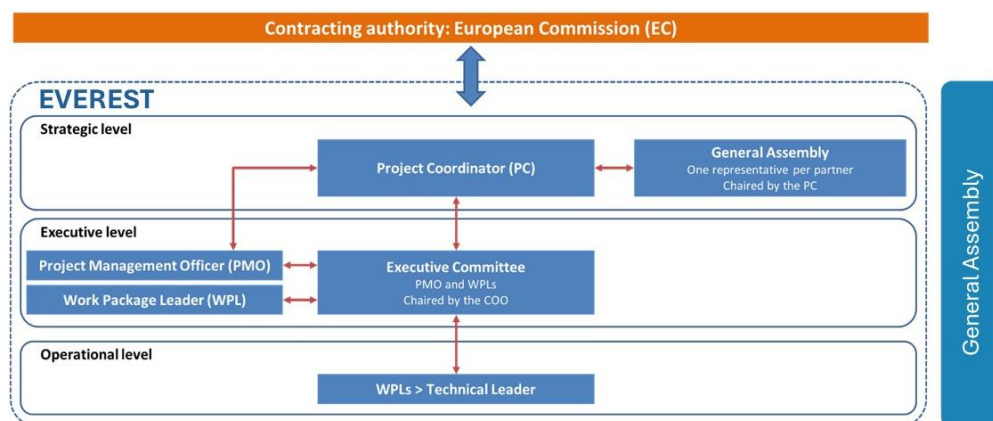


Figure 3: Management structure of the EVEREST project.

The EVEREST project bodies, the decision-making process as well as the responsibilities are described in the Consortium Agreement (CA) and in the Grant Agreement (GA) and resumed in the Table 4 below. The interaction, responsibilities and decision-making power is clearly split between the established project bodies.

Body	Composed of
Governing Board	All partners (at least 1 person per partner mandatory) COO PMO
Executive Committee	WPLs COO PMO
WP organization	WPLs and Partners involved
Project coordination	Coordinator and co-Coordinator PMO

External Expert Advisory Board	EEAB members COO WPLs
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Table 4: EVEREST project bodies.

The Governing Board is the assembly of all partners. The GB shall consist of one representative (Member) of each partner. It was established within the proposal and therefore included into the CA (see CA Art. 6).

The GB is the ultimate decision-making body that takes decisions concerning level management and strategic issues.

The Executive Committee is the assembly of all Work Package Leaders (WPLs), it includes the PMO and is chaired by the project COO. The composition of the ExCom was established during the Kick-off Meeting.

The ExCom shall prepare the meetings, propose decisions and prepare the agenda of the GB. The ExCom shall be responsible for the proper execution and implementation of the decisions of the GB. The ExCom shall monitor the effective and efficient implementation of the project. In addition, the ExCom shall collect information at least every 3 months on the progress of the project, examine that information to assess the compliance of the project with the Working Plan and, if necessary, propose modifications of it to the GB.

The ExCom functions as the supervisory body for the proper execution of the project. It monitors and manages the day-to-day operations and is accountable to the GB.

WP Leaders (WPLs) are responsible for: i) planning the scientific and technical work of the WP, in coordination with all partners that are involved in this WP; ii) ensuring that the time maintained and indicate any discrepancies to the COO; iii) initiating corrective actions for project deviations (if required); iv) consolidating partner information and preparing the reports for submission to the COO; v) ensuring that the objectives and milestones of the whole WP as well as of the detailed activities within the WP are achieved in time; vi) ensuring that the DELs are provided according to the time schedule.

The list of ExCom members and deputies named to represent their organization during the EVEREST GB is available via the internal Contacts list in TEAMS.

The External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB) consists of leading experts in domains relevant to the project providing their advice and guidance throughout the implementation phase of the project.

4.3 Steps towards participation in the project

Initial registration

New participants in the project need to contact the COO and the PMO in order to receive access to the project web-based secured repository, Microsoft TEAMS, hosted and managed by LGI. New members of technical staff need to be communicated to WPL indicating where the new person will be engaged.

Mailing lists

All contact details (name, surname, email address) will be added to the EVEREST contact list and the new participant will be subscribed to relevant mailing lists, as there are central tools for all project internal communication. The diffusion lists are defined and managed through the TEAMS platform.

PQP

New participants will receive this PQP to be used as a project handbook (available in the TEAMS repository) to get familiar with the project structure and the project procedures.

The project handbook is designed in a way to be easily consulted and it provides quick answers in the TEAMS repository. It is available as a PDF file and should be a living document. This implies that it will be updated regularly to record and list the lessons learned in order to improve the quality of the project. The partners will be involved in the revision process and informed about handbook modifications. In general, the COO and the PMO will be the main responsible partners for updating the project handbook. Modifications and updates will be performed whenever necessary, e.g. if there are changes to the mailing lists or if the project structure or the governing bodies composition changes. In any case, partners are always invited to propose updates if required.

Introduction to partners and start

Once being familiar with the project policies and the IT tools, newcomers will find the most relevant documents like the DoA, GA and CA on the TEAMS repository.

For more details on the subject of repository organization and usage, please consult deliverable D5.1 Online Workspace.

5 Management Processes and Tools

5.1 Preparation of contractual technical document

During the second ExCom of the project, WPLs defined Technical Reviewers of the different technical DELs. A table is made available to the entire project consortium. By default, when not the main DEL author, WPL is the technical reviewer for the deliverables of their WP.

Before processing the document under the process workflow, it is important to note that the document should be prepared on the chosen collaborative platform (*i.e.* TEAMS) following this process:

- As soon as possible and at the latest 30 days before the official deadline, the author must create the DEL on the collaborative platform in the corresponding WP folder,
- Notify the different contributors and the COO that the initial draft is available in this folder,
- This is the working document for the DEL. All contributors can work collaboratively on this draft and no versioning is necessary.

Once the DEL is ready for the technical review, the author must notify the related reviewer and the COO that the DEL is ready for a technical review. Technical reviewers are nominated by the author and/or WPLs.

Once the technical review is over, the author can start the official workflow on TEAMS and issue the DEL for the quality process.

Once the DEL reviewed and validated and that the formatting is ready, the DEL is ready to be processed under the TEAMS workflow (see 7.4.3).

5.2 DEL preparation

According to the GA, EVEREST has 23 DELs, each one assigned to one responsible partner (see 7.3). The partner in charge of the DEL is responsible to provide a high-quality content and timely submission to the WPL and COO for review. After quality review, the final version of the deliverable is uploaded by the COO/PMO onto the EC portal. The DEL preparation timeline is explained in the Table 5 below and exhaustively detailed in section 7.4.3.

Action	Due date
First draft for internal review ready	30 days before deadline
Final draft with internal reviews ready	15 days before deadline
Quality review by PMO	7 days before deadline
Approval of the draft by the COO and preparation of finalized version	3 days before deadline

Table 5: Deliverables preparation planning.

Any deviations from the time plan should be communicated by the DEL leader to the COO/PMO as soon as possible. The time plan can be adjusted if previously agreed between the author, the reviewers, and the COO. The DELs marked as “public” will be uploaded to the EVEREST website while the DELs marked as “confidential”, will be only made available to the EC and the consortium partners via the project’s repository.

5.3 Document formats and naming conventions

The EVEREST Partners will use standard format and production tools to release their material (e.g. Microsoft Office suite, .pdf, .zip, conventional image formats).

In order to ease the communication process and the identification of documents and versions all partners are advised to use some naming conventions based on the principle of self-explanatory titles and versions. The general file name conventions are as follows: EVEREST_*[name of the document]*_Vxy_date_. FileExtension

- The name of the document shall be as concise as possible but also self-explanatory i.e., KickOff_Meeting_Minutes
- The date should be presented in the form yyyymmdd i.e., 20241103

5.4 Reporting to the EC

EVEREST has 3 Reporting Periods (RPs) which are related to payment requests:

- RP1 from M1 – M18
- RP2 from M19 – M36
- RP3 from M37 – M48

The RP are being prepared with the contribution of all partners and the overall responsibility and coordination of the COO. The final reports are to be submitted to the portal by the COO/PMO, within 60 days after the end of the RP.

5.5 Conflict resolution

Project and quality management activities as well as the awareness of all partners about their commitments, will ensure the proper implementation of the project plan and the realization of its objectives. Decisions will normally be taken by the responsible partners based on the work to be conducted, as described in the GA. Transparency and a good communication among the project members are key to avoid challenges and conflicts before they arise. It is expected though, that during the project, the partners may need to resolve various issues and reach agreements. The processes to be followed start with informal contacts as a first step such as an oral discussion or ad-hoc meeting and further on include written notification in terms of email, minutes, etc.

The COO is responsible for the overall resolution of conflicts. The general principle is to solve conflicts at the lower possible level starting from the task level with strong emphasis on the use of negotiation skills.

Task leaders and WPLs should notify the COO as soon as possible when conflicts arise so that intermediate corrections can be proposed. Conflicts that are not being solved on the COO level, will be communicated to the GB. Any correction measures will be in accordance with the GA and the CA. Good communication among all involved parties is key point for resolving any conflicts.

6 Communication Processes and Tools

6.1 Internal communication and monitoring

Communication is one of the most essential foundations of successful project collaborations. Communication processes and tools form the communication framework of EVEREST which will serve as a guide for communication may change throughout the duration of the project and can be adjusted as communication requirements. The COO will take a central and proactive role in ensuring effective communication on this project and facilitating the seamless implementation of the workplan. The internal communication regards to the processes and tools that will be used among the partners of the project.

6.1.1 Project repository

TEAMS repository will be used as the central repository for the project where all partners will be able not only to share documents but also to monitor project progresses and to communicate with each other.

TEAMS is restricted only to the personnel of the project offering:

- Support management tool restricted to the project community
- Online workplace for sharing documents
- Public library for DELs and any other related documents
- Safe and user-friendly environment
- Document sharing at any time and from any location and device
- Groups per working activities (e.g. WPs, ExCom, ...)
- Emailing based on distribution lists

TEAMS access starts with email invitation and account online validation and is entirely managed by the PMO organisation (LGI).

A dedicated DEL (Online Workspace – D5.1), explaining TEAMS functionalities, has been released.

6.1.2 Mailing lists

Direct email will be limited as common means for sharing information and addressing day-to-day businesses of the project. Distribution lists will be privileged. Distribution lists have been created to communicate for different audiences:

- One list per each WP, including all people involved in the WP implementation
- A list for the EEAB
- A list for the ExCom members
- A list for the GB members
- A list for the main contact of each partner

- An overall list including all members of the consortium

Distributions lists are managed and regularly updated by the PMO/COO with the collaboration of all partners. Due to the dynamic character of EU projects and the expected changes in personnel, people will be added/removed accordingly and upon partner's request.

6.1.3 Meeting structure

To ensure the project success it is necessary to implement an efficient meeting structure. For the organisation of meetings, different platforms will be used for virtual meetings, such as Framadate or Doodle.

At the beginning of the EVEREST project, the Kick-Off Meeting (KOM) took place on 3rd and 4th of September, 2024 in Garching (Germany). After the KOM, dedicated meetings for each WP were organized to discuss the different expectations and schedules in order to make the definitive detailed work plan and required actions.

For the moment, the consortium decided to hold the ExCom meetings on a monthly basis and one GB meeting each 12 months. In addition, there will be regular WP-internal/ cross-WP face-to-face meetings on request.

The provisional list of all meetings is reported in the Table 6.

Body	Who	When	Modality
Governing Board	All partners (at least 1 person per partner mandatory) COO PMO	M1 M12 M24 M36	F2F (Germany – GRS) F2F - TBD F2F - TBD F2F - TBD
ExCom	WPLs COO PMO	Monthly	Remote (Teams)
WP meetings	WPLs and Partners involved	Upon request	Remote by default (F2F when exceptionally justified)
Project coordination	Coordinator and co-Coordinator PMO	Upon request (at least monthly)	Remote
External Expert Advisory Board	EEAB members COO WPLs	Back-to-back with GB	F2F when possible

Table 6: List of EVEREST meetings (tentative).

At the end of each RP, there will be a Review Preparation meeting one day before the official Review meeting takes place (planned venue: EC premises in Brussels, or if applicable at partner's premises). At the end of the EVEREST project there will be a Project Finalisation meeting. Further it is planned to participate in several workshops and conferences.

According to our CA, the meeting chairperson shall give written notice of a meeting to each member of that Consortium Body as soon as possible. The chairperson also shall prepare and send the agenda to the members well in advance.

The chairperson of the meeting is also responsible that meeting minutes are produced and circulated to the members. These meeting minutes shall be considered as accepted if, within 15 calendar days

from receipt, no member has sent an objection to the chairperson. Afterwards the accepted minutes shall be sent to all members (and stored on TEAMS).

6.1.3.1 Face-to-face meetings

Usually, the intention is to execute the project meetings at partner's premises and if that is not possible, the host can also arrange/ ask for offers for conference rooms in a hotel.

The following bullet points should be helpful for hosting upcoming meetings/ workshops:

Meeting Room(s):

- On the first and last days one medium room for approx. 25-35 people (if every partner shows up with 2-3 persons; a participant list will be created and provides further details) is usually needed.
- For the second day parallel sessions might be suitable. To plan such sessions, one-two rooms (for approx. 15 persons each) would be required. (It will be discussed in advanced how many break-out sessions will be necessary for the dedicated meeting).
- Are there any costs for the conference room/ day/ person? (Coffee break, lunch)?
- Are there any other expenses?

Infrastructure/Equipment:

- Free WLAN at conference
- Internet connection
- Projector in each room
- Flip charts and pens
- Power plugs for all participants
- Speaker for large rooms

6.1.3.2 Fully remote meetings

For the effective communication among the partners involved in the same WP and/or sub-WP, regular online meetings are expected to be held. Partners will privilege Microsoft Teams platform, when possible. Other platforms can be considered (i.e. Google Meet, Skype, Webex, Zoom etc.). For the GB and ExCom meetings, organized by the POO/PMO, Microsoft Teams will be used. Currently, the PMO provides their telco system (i.e. Microsoft Teams) for all these virtual meetings.

6.1.3.3 Hybrid meetings

To ensure the full participation of all partner's members, several meetings will be organized in "hybrid" mode. Partners will be allowed to decide if they want to participate in person or remotely, according to their organization internal policies. The COO/PMO will then arrange these meetings by offering both modalities, as described previously.

6.2 External communication

For external communications, the consortium will establish its own website (<https://www.projecteverest.eu/>) and communicate with external stakeholders by e-mail and LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/projecteverest/>.

All partners are expected to produce high quality presentations and scientific papers for publication in specialized conferences and journals as well as more simplified press releases demonstrating the impact of the project for a wide range of readers.

In all external communication tools (including the web), materials (e.g., leaflets, posters, conferences, etc.) and dissemination activities, an acknowledge of EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement will be made, as required per Article 17.2 of the GA.

These efforts will be pursued throughout the project to raise awareness and ensure high visibility of the project results. More information about the external communication will be presented in the DEL “D4.3 Communication Plan” to be submitted in M3.

6.3 Communication with the EC

The COO is the responsible contact point on behalf of the project, for the communication with the EC. He is responsible, with the assistance of the PMO, for keeping the project portal always up to date i.e., regarding communication activities, milestones reached, DELs and progress report submitted etc.

Moreover, the COO is responsible for providing any requested information by EC as well as inform the partners about any information that should be shared from the EC. The partners are not supposed to communicate with the EC directly except for there is a certain need that has been prior discussed and agreed upon with the COO. In all other cases, the COO will communicate any issues to the EC.

7 Quality Management Strategy

Quality is the degree to which the project results fulfil the project’s requirements. In order to fulfil and exceed the project requirements, a Quality Management Strategy has been defined within the EVEREST project through three key processes, namely Quality Planning, Quality Assurance and Quality Control. These three processes are connected and interact in order to guarantee efficient and high-quality work.

7.1 Quality planning

Quality management planning determines quality policies and procedures relevant to the project for both project deliverables and project processes, defines who is responsible for what, and documents compliance with certain guidelines.

7.1.1 Project’s visual identity

The creation of a project visual identity of good quality plays a significant role in the way the EVEREST project presents itself to both internal and external stakeholders. A corporate visual identity expresses the values and ambitions of our project and its characteristics. Our corporate visual identity provides the project with visibility and "recognisability". It is of vital importance that people know that the organisation exists and remember its name and core business at the right time.

In parallel, templates (.ppt and .doc) have been created on the basis of the project visual identity. They will be adopted by partners for all types of dissemination and communication (both internal and external).

All these elements are available in the dedicated folder of the Teams repository.

For more details and examples of visual elements, we invite the reader to consult D4.3 Communication plan.

7.1.2 Project policies

Internal project guidelines, or as we name it the project policies, were established to organise internal and external processes in terms of meetings, deliverables and publications, to ensure quality.

7.1.2.1 Deliverables

As mentioned in section 5.1. each deliverable leader is asked to use the appropriate Teams channel to collect inputs for the deliverable report and send it for internal review to the WPL and COO (see Figure 6).

Types of deliverables as per EVEREST GA

- “R” (Document, report)
- “DMP” (Data Management Plan)

Structure of the deliverables

As deliverables are the most important outcome of the project, excellent quality needs to be ensured. Therefore, an internal review process has been defined, which is described in sections 5.1 and 7.2.

The template for the deliverables prepared by the COO/PMO, includes all essential information of the project and the content of the deliverable including call identifier, GA number, title, acronym, duration, document revision history with assigned roles and description, table of contents, figures and tables (if applicable), list of acronyms, executive summary.

7.1.2.2 Policy for publishing scientific papers

Prior notice of any planned publication shall be given to the other parties concerned in accordance with the CA (8.4.2.1). Any objection to the planned publication shall be made in accordance with the GA in writing to the COO and to any party concerned within 15 days after receipt of the notice. If no objection is made within the time limit stated, the publication is permitted.

The beneficiaries may agree in writing on different time limits to those set above, which may include a deadline for determining the appropriate steps to be taken.

Furthermore, the paper/article, or the link to it will be published on the official EVEREST project website. The COO/PMO and the WPL should be informed as soon as a link or document in pdf format is available. The EC will then be informed about the scientific publication via our website and also via LinkedIn.

In addition, in order to ensure open access to scientific publications (GA Article 17), these peer-reviewed papers will be uploaded in the project repository, in the partners’ repositories and on a public repository to be defined in D5.3 Data Management Plan to be delivered at M3.

All publications or any other dissemination relating to foreground that was generated with the assistance of financial support from the European Union shall follow rules as per GA 17.2.

Authorship “Rules of Thumb”

A person should be author and the person may veto a publication if:

the person has contributed significant portions of the text, and/or

the person has contributed at least one significant idea, and/or

the paper describes an implementation that has been performed by the person.

All other contributors/ influencers should be mentioned broadly in the acknowledgements.

As prior notice needs to be given at least 30 days before the publication, all partners have sufficient time to review the planned publication. This additional review process further contributes to high quality publications.

7.2 Quality assurance

According to the Project Management Body of Knowledge - PMBOK,¹ “Quality Assurance is the process of auditing the quality requirements and the results from quality control measurements to ensure that appropriate quality standards and operational definitions are used.”

Quality assurance is a fundamental part of the implementation of the project and will be performed throughout the duration of the project by all the partners.

¹ <https://www.pmi.org/pmbok-guide-standards/foundational/pmbok>

The quality assurance plan is based on the plan-do-check-act cycle introduced by W. Edwards Deming², and is schematically represented in the Figure 5 below.

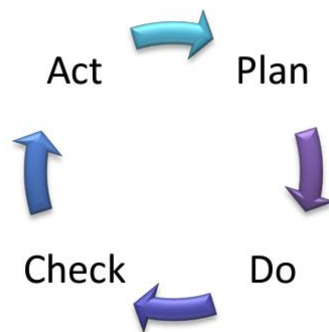


Figure 4: Quality assurance principles.

Plan: is related to the objectives, processes, tools and resources needed to deliver the results according to the work plan and the project requirements;

Do: is referring to the implementation of the planned work;

Check: is referring to monitoring and evaluating the project outcomes and services based on the planned work and the requirements;

Act: is referring to the actions taken if necessary, to make correction and improve outcomes and performance.

The focus of quality assurance is made on the creation and monitoring of processes. Quality assurance creates and monitors project processes, which need to be performed effectively to reach the targeted outcome. This involves the establishment by the management team of the dedicated Project monitoring tools, clear responsibilities and regular, clearly guided online conferences and face-to-face meetings.

7.3 Roles, responsibilities & internal review

Transparency of roles and responsibilities has a big impact on the project success. Uncertainty can dramatically affect individual, organisational as well as the consortium performance.

GRS, as the COO of the project will ensure that the project's collaborators are aware of the Quality Assurance Plan and of the way each partner contributes to the successful implementation of the project and achievement of the project's quality requirements. Moreover, the COO is responsible for the control of the documented information of the project, which includes storage & backup and versioning & control of changes.

The TEAMS repository which was chosen as the central repository for the project is supporting both requirements and as such is ensuring that this information can be available at any time.

In the first step, responsible persons for each organisation and per WP were defined. Each WPL is responsible for monitoring and controlling the implementation phase of the project and ensuring conformity with the quality requirements. As for the Deliverables, the DEL-leading organisations were already defined within the DoA, but the concrete editor responsible for requesting and guiding partner inputs towards a punctual and high-quality submission, were named at the project start. In line with the internal review process (see section 5.1), at least one specific internal reviewer for each DEL was defined and clear deadlines for first draft version, the review feedback as well as for the submission were established.

All the records of responsibilities for Deliverables (DELs) and Milestones (MS), as well of action & status tracking were established via the dedicated project monitoring excel file, available to all participants

²<https://deming.org/>

in Teams. This file is reviewed at every ExCom meeting, thus allowing to reduce the risks of complex tasks mismanagement, confusion of roles or timeline issues.

7.4 Quality criteria and control

The focus of quality control is on feedback and deviation management in the project. Its main purpose is to strengthen the project ability to reach the objectives set, and to do so it sets a permanent assessment of management through feedback from internal and external advisors. Risk Management (see 7.5) is an integral element of quality control as the proactive notice of deviations from the DoA allows the consortium to control the consequences or even transform those consequences into opportunities.

Any material produced by the EVEREST project (technical data, models, reports, deliverables, publications and so on), have to be of high quality based on certain quality criteria. These criteria are relying on the principles of completeness, correctness, and punctuality³.

Regarding the content, completeness is seen as covering in depth the topic without missing any important aspect or making redundancies. The accuracy is seen in the context of clear statement of the results, sufficiently evidence supports of the research and outcomes, minimization of errors and ambiguities. All the produced materials have to follow the visual identity of the project and follow the templates of EVEREST as well as conform to the specifications of the EC. Punctuality refers to the timely delivery based on predefined deadlines.

7.4.1 Project Monitoring Tool

The basic idea of internal EVEREST Project Monitoring file is to implement a tool (or a set of tools, if judged necessary on later stage), which implies that each partner has to provide information regarding their ongoing and planned work and all identified deviations from the DoA and the proposed corrective actions. These tools take shape of an Excel Project Monitoring File, which allows detailed monitoring of each WP activities and, which summarises in brief all acute points from all WPs and is primarily used during the monthly ExCom meetings to have a concise overview of the progress, changes and deviations. We consider this tool to be an efficient mean to provide the COO and the PMO a good understanding of the status and progress of the work and to detect any possible delays or deviations well in advance. This helps the coordination team to monitor partner activities and the progress made within the previous months. This tool is a living document and its features will evolve with time in order to adapt to the specific needs of project management control, if judged necessary by the operating parties.

7.4.2 External Expert Advisory Board (EEAB)

The consortium will be supported and advised by an external expert group consisting of 4-6 members which are currently being nominated. Their valuable feedback to the global project strategy and the communication strategy is expected to bring a number of benefits for the EVEREST project. The EEAB board will provide an external unprejudiced scientific feedback and advice on the project results. To attain high quality results within the EVEREST project, a strong cooperation with the EEAB members will be actively pursued and facilitated by frequent interaction in the form of face-to-face and remote meetings.

Through the integration of an AB, interim feedback of enormous importance regarding the overall orientation of the project outcome is expected. This supports the path towards objectives and controls the quality of the project work as well as the quality of expected outcomes.

The Coordinator is the chair of the EEAB is the ultimate responsible to ensure that the feedback from EEAB is integrated within EVEREST.

³ Bots, J.M., Heck, E. van, Swede, V.van, "Management information", pub. CAP Gemini Publishing BV, Rijswijk, 1990, pp. 550-555

If confidential information will be provided to the EEAB members, the COO, with the help of the PMO, will ensure that a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) is executed between the consortium and each EEAB member.

7.4.3 Milestones quality control

For ensuring the quality of the project, eleven milestones have been set throughout the duration of the project. The milestones can be also regarded as quality control points where the progress of the project is evaluated.

7.4.4 Deliverable quality assurance process

To ensure quality of deliverables, an internal review process has been defined. The main goal of this process is to establish internal feedback by partners who did not directly participate as editor to the deliverables before submitting it to the EC.

The review process is shown and explained below.

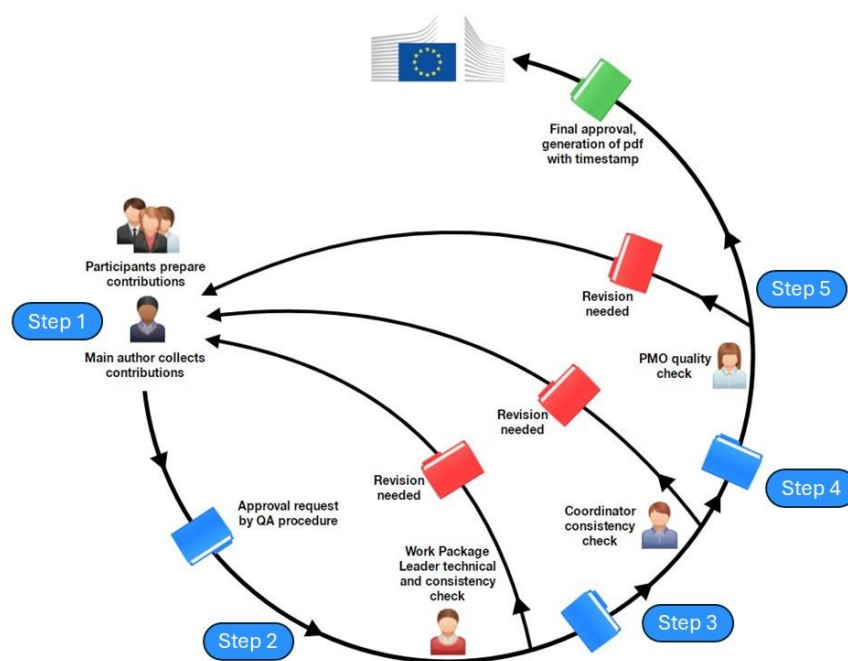


Figure 5: Review process to ensure the quality of EVEREST deliverables.

Step 1 “Input collection”

The main author is responsible for collecting the necessary contributions from other partners to have a final draft ready at the latest 30 days before the deliverable deadline.

Step 2 and 3 “Review”

Main author (deliverable leader) sends the draft to the WPL at least 30 days before the deadline and then to the COO at least 20 days in advance. The reviewers read the draft and compares the content against its objective as defined in the work plan. The review result is a draft with mark-up as follows: Word: For Microsoft Word, the author protects the draft against changes (always save with “track changes” activated). Typos and small changes are directly entered on the text while using “track changes”. Comments are entered into the text as Microsoft Word comments. The reviewers provide an internal review based on specific questions, in order to make sure that the content complies with the quality claims of the EC (e.g. required information, structure, etc.) as well as the project partners.

It monitors the structure as well as the compliance with the description in the DoA. This gives feedback to the editor of this Deliverable in a clearly structured form and helps the editor to address all comments.

Steps 4 “Quality check” and 5 “Release”

If there were final changes necessary, the editor has to update the document and send to the COO and the PMO the final version for submission, allocating 2 days for a release step. After a quality check, the PMO will then submit the final document to the EC.

A total of 23 deliverables will be submitted until the end of the project. The deliverables will all follow the same template set up by the COO/PMO who will provide guidelines about their use, the time plan, and the expected final result, to all partners.

The review of the deliverable will focus on consistency and clarity of the document, relevance and coverage of the topic and language features.

For each DEL one partner is being assigned as reviewer. The DEL number, the title and the responsible partner are defined in the GA and are made available in the TEAMS.

7.4.5 Specific case of PR for the EC

According to the GA, the COO is responsible for issuing the PR (financial report and activity report) to the EC. The procedure to prepare these reports starts from the top level of the project and goes down through the various management levels. The reporting is divided into a financial part and a technical part. To ensure high quality and timely reporting, the PMO will use the approach outlined below. Being responsible for the execution of the entire reporting process, the PMO will provide support to the COO to ensure the quality of this reporting. For the financial part of the reporting, the procedure is shown below.



Figure 6: Procedure for the financial RP.

On the other hand, for the technical part of the reporting (i.e. project progress), the process is as follow:



Figure 7: Procedure for the activity RP.

Moreover, the WPLs are responsible for verifying and confirming the consistency between the funding needs and the resources as defined in the GA. If adaptations appear to be necessary, the WPLs have to inform the COO, who may propose to the ExCom some adaptations of the distribution of tasks and funding between the WPs, and if necessary, between beneficiaries (N.B. such changes require approval from the GB).

7.5 Risk management

7.5.1 Risk management plan

To guarantee the achievement of the objectives of the EVEREST project, it is essential to identify and understand the significant project risks. Risk management refers to all activities undertaken for identifying, analyse, monitor, and control potential risks that could affect the execution of the project. Risk management is a continuous process that will be undertaken throughout the lifetime of the project.

The continuous risk management process is based on the early identification of, and the fast reaction to events that can negatively affect the outcome of the project (see the flow-chart Figure 9). The frequent meetings of the project bodies therefore serve as the main forum for risk identification. The identified risks are then analysed and graded, based on impact and probability of occurrence.

The risks will be monitored on a regular basis and an updated risk table is to be provided within the RP. Risks will be minimized and managed by using well-established methodologies for project planning and project control. The splitting of project work into work packages also minimizes internal risks. The COO and the PMO in cooperation with the ExCom members will be mainly responsible to handle risks and inform all partners when necessary.



Figure 8: Schematic of the risk management process.

Technical risks were analysed and graded, based on their probability of occurrence in order to answer the governing question: “How big is the risk and what its impact is?” Knowing how a risk impacts the project is important as several risks of the same type can be an indication of a larger problem.

The risks defined in the DoA, will be evaluated based on the risk assessment matrix⁴ against its impact and likelihood, according to the Figure 10 below. This results in an easily comprehensible way of visualizing the potential risks. Depending on the severity of each risk, different mitigation measures will be taken.

⁴ <https://www.maintworld.com/PartnerArticles/Using-a-Risk-Assessment-Matrix-to-Improve-Maintenance>



Figure 9: Risk assessment matrix.

The definition of the risk level is calculated based on the relation between Probability/Likelihood and Impact with the “Impact value” weighting more than the “Likelihood value”. The risk levels are explained as following.

Risk level	Definition
LOW	Has little potential to cause disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or disruption of performance. Normal effort will probably be able to overcome difficulties
MODERATE	Can potentially cause some disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or disruption of performance. However, special effort will probably be able to overcome difficulties.
HIGH	Likely to cause significant serious disruption of schedule, increase in cost, or degradation of performance even with special effort and close monitoring of the contracting activity.

Figure 10: General definition of risk levels.

7.5.2 Identified risks

Eleven critical risks have been identified in the proposal stage (see GA) and the countermeasures planned to address them. This list will be continuously revisited and updated during the lifetime of the project and reviewed during each Executive Committee meeting.

In addition to the above-mentioned tools and procedures, the project partners’ and the coordinator’s profound experience with European projects implicates a high level of competence, expert knowledge, skills and qualifications, which further increases the quality of the project work. Furthermore, besides these hard skills, also soft skills, such as motivation, team cohesion, and interpersonal interaction contribute to high quality project performance.

8 Effort and Cost Management

8.1 Overview

The Effort and Cost Management Overview total effort and budget of the projects are defined in the GA. The aim of the effort and cost management is to ensure that the implementation of the project is conducted within the predefined Person-Months (PMs) and Budget. The COO, supported by the PMO and in collaboration with all partners, will monitor throughout the implementation of the project, the effort and resources by comparing the actual numbers to the data defined in the GA.

To avoid confusion and complications due to conflicts between National and European Union reporting rules, all efforts are to be reported in full hours and Euro amounts are to be reported in two decimals. If effort and/or cost deviation of +/- the 5% are seen, the status of the cost/effort will be set to “cautionary”. In the unintended case where the deviation is +/-10%, the status will be changed to “alert” and will trigger corrective actions which will be discussed first between the COO and the affected partner. Any cost/effort change will follow a thorough communication between the affected partner and the COO. Approvals for extreme project effort/cost changes may require a contract amendment with the funding agency.

8.2 Efforts, costs monitoring and reporting

In order to have timely information about the effort and costs consumed, so that corrective measurements can be discussed and taken immediately, each partner will have to report every 18 months the consumed effort and costs to the COO/PMO. The report will be submitted 15 calendar days after the completion of the 18-month period so as to provide the partners with adequate time for the compilation of the information. The COO/PMO will provide all necessary templates and guidelines so that the partners can easily complete the reports. The reporting of the effort and the budget absorption to the EC will be conducted in the two RPs of the project.

A set of financial dashboards will be regularly released and updated in the TEAMS repository.

Staff effort per participant						
Grant Preparation (Work packages - Effort screen) — Enter the info.						
Participant	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5	Total Person-Months
1 - GRS gGmbH	29.50	16.00	7.00	3.50	16.00	72.00
2 - VTT	20.50	17.00	6.00	3.50		47.00
3 - HUN-REN EK	26.50	22.00		2.50		51.00
4 - JSI		48.00	47.00	6.50		101.50
5 - BME	4.00	18.00	30.00	6.50		58.50
6 - LGI				12.00	16.00	28.00
7 - PEL	6.00					6.00
8 - IRSN	14.00		2.00	2.50		18.50
9 - UPM	32.00			0.50		32.50
10 - TRACTEBEL	16.00			0.50		16.50
11 - MVM PAKS NPP	4.00					4.00
12 - PSI	44.00	9.00	2.00	5.00		60.00
13 - EPFL	10.00	25.00	27.00	6.50		68.50
14 - NCSU	2.00	2.00		2.50		6.50
15 - AXPO	16.00					16.00
Total Person-Months	224.50	157.00	121.00	52.00	32.00	586.50

Figure 11: Staff effort per participant, as foreseen in the GA.

9 Conclusion

This PQP demonstrates that quality aspects are taken into account in a variety of processes and activities within the EVEREST project. The interrelated quality processes – planning, assurance and control – impact the project work from its start to its end. The project aims at obtaining a high degree of quality, where outcomes are achieved in terms of the effectiveness and efficiency of working practices, as well as products and standards of project DELs and outputs. This plan seeks to establish the procedures and standards to be employed in the project, and to allocate responsibility for ensuring that these procedures and standards are followed.

The project management team (COO and PMO) monitors that the above-described processes are fulfilled. In case of any deviations to the planned work, the management team is in charge of taking necessary mitigation measures. The plan is effective throughout the lifetime of the project, but is open to revision if necessary. As described in chapter 4, responsibilities for quality planning, assurance and control are shared between all partners, which allow various views on quality issues in order to reach the optimal outcome.

---- End of the document ----