Gouvernance et Emergence de la Recherche en Sciences Humaines au Cambodge
GEReSH-CAM

Quality Assurance Plan

Dear Partners,
This Quality Assurance Plan summarises the quality management strategy and process for planning and implementing the project activities in order to ensure the best quality of the project performance and results. This document also exposes the principles and requirements needed to implement an effective quality assurance and control.

For any questions regarding this Guide, please contact:

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INTRODUCTION

This Quality Assurance Plan is developed in the framework of GEReSH-CAM project's Work Package 5 – Quality Control. It formalizes the approach followed by the consortium to ensure the highest quality of the project's management, activities, outputs and outcomes.

It outlines the main processes for planning and implementing the project's activities, and establishes the minimum principles and requirements to guarantee effective quality control.

By following the quality assurance procedure, it will be possible to have a better understanding of the project's progress and to identify success as well as actual or potential problems. As a result, it will facilitate timely adjustments and corrections when the project's performance deviates from the intended objectives presented in the Project Description. Therefore, GEReSH-CAM's coordinating team will be able to monitor the project effectively.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
Activity Leader	The Activity Leader is the main author of the deliverable
Beneficiary	Organization who has received a grant to implement a project.
Co-financing	The co-financing principle implies that part of the costs of a project supported by the EU must be borne by the beneficiary, or covered through external contributions other than the EU grant.
Consortium	Two or more participating organisations teaming up to prepare, implement and follow up the project or an activity within a project. A consortium can involve organisations established in the same country or organisations from different countries.
Coordinator Coordinating Institution	A participating organisation applying for an Erasmus+ grant on behalf of a consortium of partner organisations.
Coordinating Team	Group of people working on the implementation of the project. (= consortium)
Deliverables	Distinct, expected and tangible outputs of the project, meaningful in terms of the project's overall objectives. They are used to measure the project's progress and success.
EACEA Executive Agency The Agency	The Education, Audio-visual and Culture Executive Agency. It is an Agency of the European Union responsible for the management of certain parts of the EU's funding programmes in the fields of education, culture, audio-visual, sport, citizenship and volunteering.
Leader Institution	A participating institution designated to be responsible for one or several Work Packages in the framework of a project.
Monitoring Committee (MC)	A group of people employed by participating organization who are responsible for the overall strategic implementation and monitoring of the project.

TERM	DEFINITION
Output	A final product or result of an activity.
Participating organization	Any organization taking part in the implementation of the project and integrated in the consortium.
Project	A coherent set of activities, which are organized in order to achieve defined objectives and results.
project partner	Participating organization involved in the project but not taking the role of applicant. (= Participating organization)
Quality Assurance (QA)	Ways of ensuring the quality of an activity or a product. It comprises administrative and procedural activities implemented in order to fulfil quality standards and requirements.
QA officer	A reviewer who measures the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed processes and deliverables.
Staff	Persons employed by a participating organization who are involved in the project activities.
Steering Committee (SC)	A group of people designated to manage a project and provide it with a strategic direction.
Transnational meeting	A meeting involving staff of the participating organizations and coming from different countries.
Timesheet	A piece of paper for recording the number of hours/ days worked.
Work package	A group of related tasks/activities within a project.

1. Quality Management Approach

There are several approaches to quality management. In GEReSH-CAM project, the consortium agrees to focus on outcome-and-process-based approach to quality management. This approach looks at both the quality of the processes and the outcomes that result from the approaches to project management adopted by the Coordinating team.

The following two characteristic features of Quality Management can be identified:

- **Quality Monitoring**, which concerns the development and processes undertaken by the institutions involved in the project.
- **Quality Control** (or Evaluation), which is a product-based approach mainly focused on the outputs.

1.1   Quality Monitoring

A project quality monitoring is performed continuously throughout GEReSH-CAM project's lifetime.

Written documents shall be prepared and assessed in accordance with the quality standards, as approved by the consortium and detailed in the quality assurance plan and its annexes as well as GEReSH-CAM's project management guide and its annexes.

The coordinating team makes sure that all deliverables have a common appearance. Templates of documents are made available to all participants. It is important to guarantee the visual identity, recognition of the project, and to facilitate reporting, and communications between the Consortium and the Agency.

1.2   Quality Evaluation

All project activities and outputs are subject to evaluation in this work package.

A systematic way of evaluating with common quality criteria should be used to evaluate the relevance of all outputs, in accordance with the project's general and specific objectives. It is **a periodical assessment** used to measure changes in a given situation.

2.   QUALITY MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

- **Project Coordinator**

The project coordinator will be responsible for:

- The overall technical and operational project management
- The communication and reporting to the EACEA
- The proper use of the grant.

- **Steering Committee**

The Steering committee (SC) is the decision making body that:

- Elaborates strategy
- Decides on any necessary contingency measures in reorganisation of tasks and resources.

The SC is made up of one representative of each participating institution and gathers twice a year. The decision-making method is consensus.

- **Monitoring Committee**

The Monitoring Committee is in charge of implementing the project. It is composed of two separate bodies, both formed by at least one representative of the participating institutions: the Administrative Monitoring Committee (AMC) & the Scientific Monitoring Committee (SMC).

The **AMC** is appointed to:

- Ensure effective implementation of EU project management rules and standards
- Ensure the financial management of the grant
- Provide various kind of administrative support such as bookkeeping, planning, scheduling and documentation.

The AMC holds monthly meetings and is actively involved in the execution of all work packages, with a focus on WP 5 – Quality Control; WP-6 Communication & Dissemination, and WP 7 – Management.

The **SMC** is in charge of:

- The production of scientific research and activities on the issue addressed by the project.
- Carrying out various activities: provides trainings, conducts surveys, writes reports, etc.

The SMC holds meetings once every two months and is mainly involved in the implementation of WP 1 – Preparation, and WP 2, 3 & 4 – Development

The decision-making method for both committees is **consensus**.

Both committees stay informed of each other's activities through the **meeting reports** and **meet once a year during the consortium meetings.**

- **Leader institution**

The Leader Institution (or Work Package Leader), is the institution in charge of a Work package.

Work Package	Leader Institution
WP 1- Preparation	RUFA
WP 2- Development	AUF
WP 3- Development	LUES
WP 4- Development	IRD
WP 5- Quality control	INALCO
WP 6 - Dissemination & Exploitation of results	INALCO
WP 7- Management	INALCO

- **Activity Leader**

The Activity Leader is the main author of the deliverable.
The production of deliverables may also involve co-authors who are responsible for completing their part in the deliverable, according to the instructions of the Activity Leader.

- **Quality Assurance Officer(s):**

Also designated as "reviewer", the Quality Assurance officer (QA officer) measures the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed processes and deliverables.

 The QA reviewer is in charge of:
- Making sure that all deliverables are properly evaluated, their quality monitored and improved (if necessary);
- Conducting regular verifications to ensure that the activities are properly implemented at all stages of the project ;

The SMC or AMC designates the person to be in charge of the evaluation when the activity begins. The reviewer should not be involved in the production of the output. One or two reviewers can be designated, depending on the nature of the output produced.

The QA officer reports the conclusions about the quality of outputs of each work package during the AMC or SMC meetings as follows:

Work Package	Committee concerned
WP 1- Preparation	SMC
WP 2- Development	SMC
WP 3- Development	SMC
WP 4- Development	SMC
WP 5- Quality control	AMC
WP 6 – Dissemination & Exploitation of results	AMC
WP 7- Management	AMC

The coordinating team must use the results of the evaluation made by the QA Officer(s)in order to improve the project. The Project Coordinator must use these conclusions to write the intermediary and final reports to be sent to the Executive Agency.

3. QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCESS

GEReSH-CAM project envisages three levels of activities in the QA process:

3.1   Quality monitoring throughout the project period

The first level is the quality monitoring undertaken by the consortium throughout the period of implementation of the project. Each partner is responsible for the contribution and involvement of its own staff in the project results.

In order to implement effectively the foreseen activities, participants can rely on two documents:

- The project management guide

- The communication plan

WP Leaders are in charge of submitting deliverables to the QA Officer(s) in a timely manner.

Deliverable can be peer-reviewed or drafted and discussed before submission to evaluation.

Partner institutions are asked to do semi-annual progress reports and to submit them to the project coordinator.

Meanwhile, the Steering Committee gathers twice a year in order to monitor the progress of the project and make sure that it remains in line with the initial objectives. Each meeting is a defining moment that enables to move on to the next stage.

3.2   Quality control

Table 1: The quality control cycle
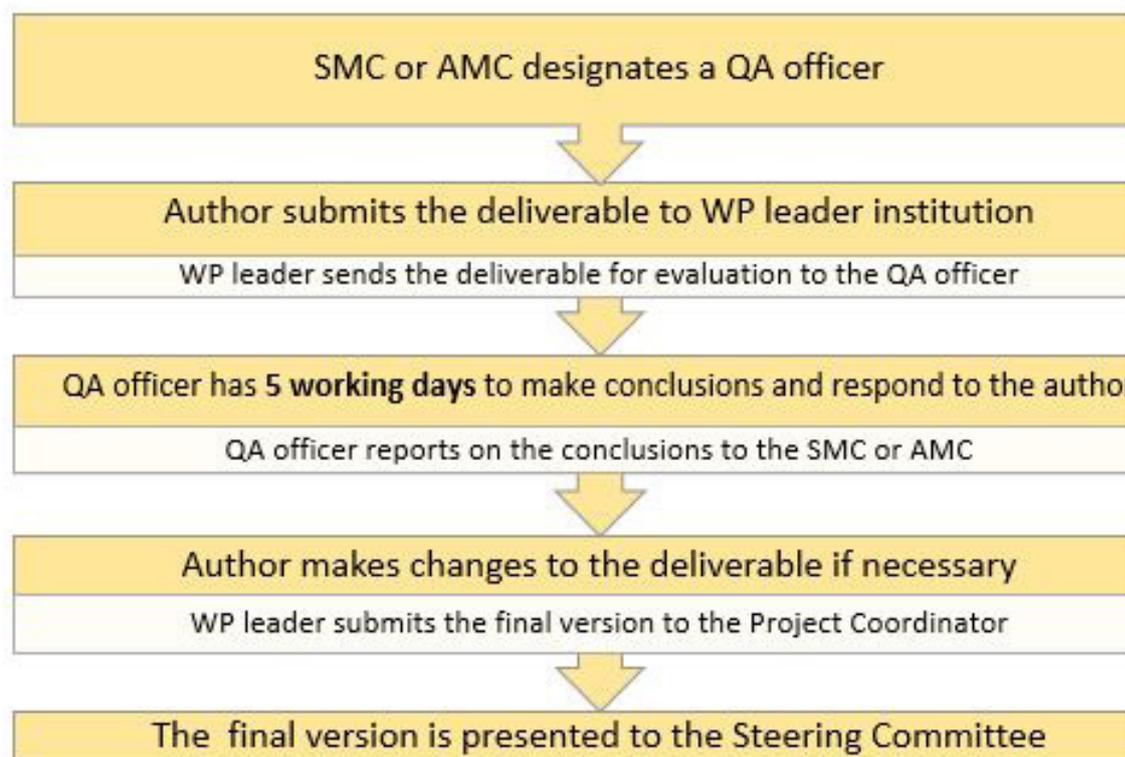
The evaluation of the project's outputs (tangible and intangible) can be done with various evaluation instruments. At the beginning of the project, the coordinator designates a team member in charge of providing a set of criteria for these evaluations, in line with the QA procedure and standards.

- Quality Assessment tool for Deliverables (Annex A.1): A designated reviewer assess the deliverables of the project by using a questionnaire. This questionnaire is made to collect qualitative data and includes observations of the QA reviewer, including suggestions for improvement or changes.

- Quality Assessment tool for Events (workshops, conferences etc.) (Annex A.2): After each event, a designated QA reviewer will assess the event by using a questionnaire. This questionnaire is made to collect qualitative data and includes observations of the QA reviewer, including suggestions for improvement or changes.

- Partners' meeting evaluation form (Annex A.3): to be filled by all participants. It is an anonymous digital survey tool used to collect qualitative data. After each event, a designated QA reviewer will compile a summary of the data collected, including suggestions for improvement or changes.

Table 2: Evaluation method for specific outputs

Work Package	Output	Evaluation method	
1 Preparation	Guide	Peer-review of the questionnaires, their results and their synthesis. Draft discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable	
	Calendar of activities	Draft discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable	
2 Development	Trainings	Peer-review of the training programme QA officer review of Events Post-trainings satisfaction survey filled by attendees	
	Compilation of training fact sheets	QA officer review of deliverable	
3 Development	Trainings	Peer-review of the training programme QA officer review of Events Post-training satisfaction survey filled by attendees	External evaluation
	Compilation of training fact sheets	QA officer review of deliverable	
4 Development	Trainings	Peer-review of the training programme QA officer review of Events	
	Action Plan	QA officer review of deliverable	
	Roadmap for the creation of a doctoral school	Draft discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable	
5 Quality Control	Organization chart	Draft discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable	
	Quality Assurance Plan	Peer-reviewed QA officer review of deliverable	

Work Package		Output	Evaluation method
6	Communication and Exploitation of results	Communication Plan	Draft discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable
		Website	Structure and contents discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable
		Collaborative platform	QA officer review of deliverable
		Communication material (leaflet, brochure...)	Structure and contents discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable
		Final conference	QA officer review of event Post-event satisfaction survey filled by attendees
		Training : communication techniques	QA officer review of event Post-training satisfaction survey filled by attendees
7	Management	Project Management Guide	Draft discussed and approved collectively by the consortium QA officer review of deliverable
		Internal evaluation tools	Peer-review QA officer review of deliverable
		Gantt Chart	Peer-review QA officer review of deliverable
		Consortium meetings	Evaluation of all participants with the Partner meeting evaluation form
			External evaluation

3.3   Final validation by the Steering Committee

• The final versions of deliverables are presented to the Steering Committee. If necessary, the Steering Committee can give recommendation about the deliverables.

• In case of disagreements between the QA officer(s) and the authors, the Coordinator takes the necessary corrective actions in order to find a common ground.

4.   RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1   Risk Identification

Risk may occur in the management of the Erasmus + CBHE Grant and financial resources:

- Underspending

- Inappropriate use of the grant (i.e. declared unit costs/expenses identified as ineligible)

- Not timely incurred or validated eligible expenditures

Risk may also occur in the project implementation and management:

- Delay in the project realization

- Implementation with low quality

- Poor leadership or management

- Lack of motivation in the working team

4.2   Preventive and corrective actions

All participating institutions are jointly responsible for identifying and addressing potential issues that may arise in the project.

They must take **preventive actions early in the project** in order to **avoid potential risks** and difficulties during the implementation of the project.

Regular communication among partners, follow-up and evaluation make prevention possible and thus diminish the risk of poor management and implementation.

In order to prevent risks in the management of financial resources, GEReSH-CAM project foresees a procedure for validating expenditures on the intranet collaborative platform:
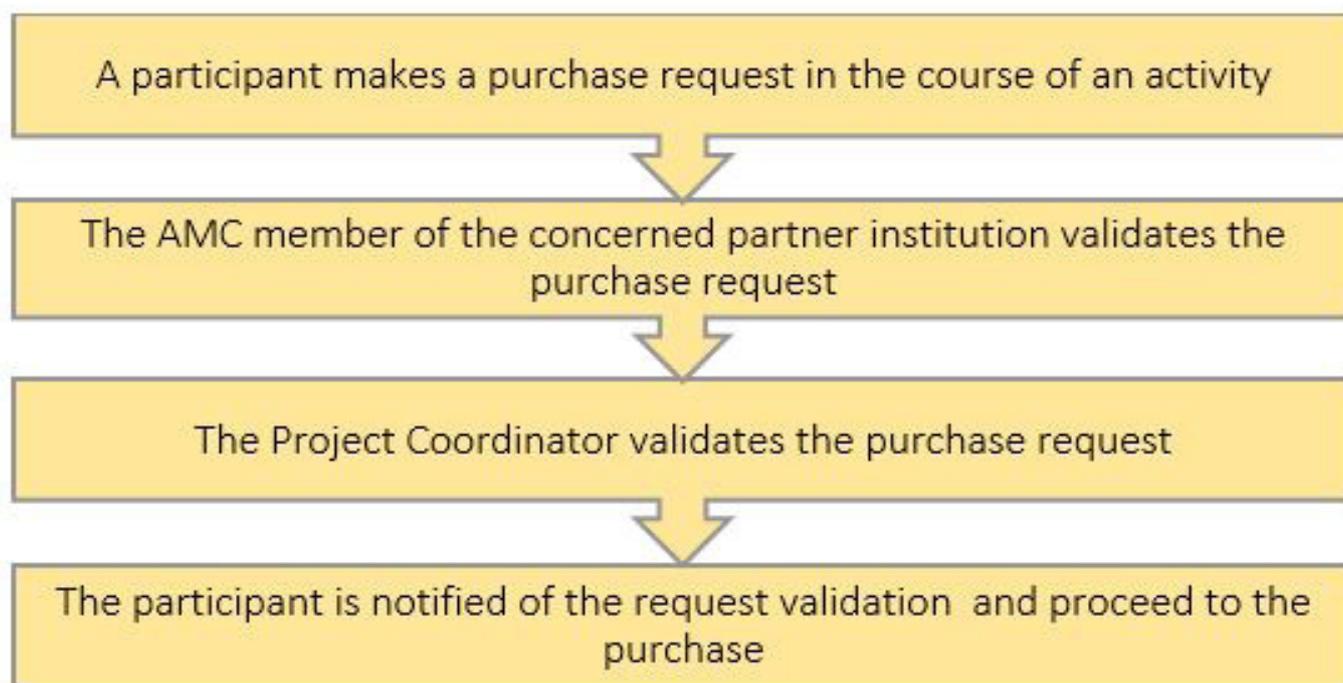
They also have to initiate corrective actions when a problem occurs in order to minimize negative impacts. As such, it is important to communicate about it by discussing the issue during a meeting and by informing the Project Coordinator as soon as they are aware of it.

If necessary, the project coordinator can mobilise the Steering Committee for recommendations in order to address the issue.

5.   EXTERNAL EVALUATION

It is considered important to guarantee the independence of the evaluation process. For this reason, an external evaluator will be subcontracted. The external reviewer will be carefully selected by the Steering Committee and will work closely with the Monitoring Committee.

Using the requirements set out by the consortium, the external evaluator will give a free and neutral view to the evaluation process, contributing for a high quality analysis and conclusions.

The external assessor will be in charge of:

-        Evaluating all the outputs produced

-        Evaluating the implementation process and the impacts

-        Contributing to the intermediary and final reports.

The external reviewer will produce an evaluation report for the project **midway and at the end of the project.** The project coordinator shall provide the external evaluator with all the relevant documents of the project in order to succeed in this task.

The consortium has to make sure to take into consideration the results of the last external quality assurance activity when preparing for the next one.

ANNEXES OF QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN

A.1 Quality Assessment tool for Deliverables

A.2 Quality Assessment Tool for Events

A.3 Partners' meeting evaluation form

Good luck and thank you for your participation !