



# Deliverable D1.1

## Quality Guidelines

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The present document contains a summary of internal guidelines defined to assure a correct, timely and smooth implementation of activities to be performed under the ERA\_FABRIC project. It focuses in particular on the project governance structure, operational procedures for meetings at different levels, description of the deliverables production process and approach to risk management. These guidelines establish general principles to be followed, while specific details will be agreed upon at a later stage in the project.



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## **1. ABBREVIATIONS**

CA	Consortium Agreement
DL	Deliverable Leader
EAB	External Advisory Board
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
PC	Project Coordinator
PP	Project partner
PR	Partner Reviewer
SC	Steering Committee
TL	Task Leader
WP	Workpackage
WPL	Workpackage Leader



## 2. INTRODUCTION

The present document contains a summary of internal guidelines defined to assure a correct, timely and smooth implementation of activities to be performed under the project ERA FABRIC “Framing And Bridging Regional research and Innovation ecosystems Capacities for a renewed ERA” during its whole duration.

They have been defined taking into consideration the formal obligations set out in the project Grant Agreement signed with the EC and in the Consortium Agreement jointly signed by all project partners.

The aim of the guidelines is to guarantee that objectives are met in the most effective and efficient way. They are developed within the scope of Work package 1 of the Project according to the project description and all applicable rules and guidelines.

The Quality Guidelines provide general rules, structures and procedures for the delivery of outputs focusing in particular on deliverables, online and offline meetings, bearing in mind each partner's different way of operating and finding a common quality assurance system. They are presented as an handbook containing the basic forms of documents to be used and clarifying policies, systems, and procedures adopted to implement and improve the Quality Management System with a special attention to Risk management. These guidelines establish general principles to be followed by the partners in the day-to-day activities of the project, with the goal of maintaining uniform quality control procedures and continuously monitoring their execution. However, it is understood that specific details may be discussed and decided upon at a later stage, following the decision taken at Steering Committee level.



### 3. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The organisational structure of the project consortium comprises the following Consortium Bodies:

The **Steering Committee (SC)** which is the decision-making body of the consortium.

The Project **Coordinator (PC)** which is the legal entity acting as the intermediary between the Project Partners(PP) and the Granting Authority (the EC).

The **Work Package Leader (WPL)** which is the coordinator of the respective Work Package (WP).

The **External Advisory Board (EAB)** which assists and facilitates the decisions made by the Steering Committee.

#### 3.1 Steering Committee (SC)

The Steering Committee is the highest and final decision making board in the project governance. SC is composed by one representative of each PP authorised to deliberate, negotiate and decide on all matters listed in Section 6.3.7 of the Consortium Agreement.

The SC works under the coordination of the PC who chairs all meetings of the Steering Committee, unless decided otherwise by the Steering Committee

The SC monitors and assess the actual progress of the project.

#### 3.2 Coordinator (PC)

The project coordinator perform all tasks assigned to it as described in the Grant Agreement and in the Consortium Agreement.

The Project Coordinator has the following roles:

- the only official channel for interaction with EU, regarding: submission of deliverables, reports (including financial statements and related certification) and relationships of consortium with third parties;
- monitoring appropriate implementation of actions (progress, compliance with GA/CA, milestones achievement, deliverables production, timely reporting, administration aspects);
- assurance of integration of the single WPs in agreement with the WPLs;
- preparing the meetings, proposing decisions and preparing the agenda of Steering Committee meetings, chairing the meetings, preparing the minutes of the meetings and monitoring the implementation of decisions taken at meetings;



- overall coordination of internal communication, keeping the address list of PPs and other contact persons updated and available and transmitting promptly documents and information connected with the project;
- administering the financial contribution of the Granting Authority, taking care of financial accounting, cost claiming and managing payments to PPs;
- establishing and maintaining contacts with EAB members, ensuring that a non-disclosure agreement is executed between all PPs and each EAB member.

### **3.3 WorkPackage Leader (WPL)**

Each Work Package has a designated Work Package Leader (WPL) responsible for:

- coordinating the Tasks of the Work Package assuring the active involvement of the partners in the implementation of the activities and in the production of the deliverables of the coordinated WP in compliance with the established deadlines and indications given by the Steering Committee;
- ensuring the quality control of the Tasks and the Deliverable of the Work Package the WPL is responsible for;
- preparing the corresponding high-quality Work Package periodic Reports and Deliverables respecting timing and milestones. For this purpose, they will gather all contributions needed from the Partners involved in the Work Package implementation, starting from the Task leaders (TL);
- dealing with all issues concerning the implementation of activities described in Annex I of the Grant Agreement;
- monitoring all project activities in order to have regularly an up-to-date idea of state of progress of the project, the performance of the concerned PPs responsible for the activities of the work package;
- timely informing the Coordinator of any changes and adjustments to the original Work Plan, related to the leaded work package, at any time deemed necessary, in order to discuss the issue at the Steering Committee;
- supporting the Coordinator in handling any disagreement that may arise among the Parties involved in the work package execution .

### **3.4 External Advisory Board (EAB)**

The EAB is appointed and steered by the Steering Committee. The EAB, composed of up to 5 experts in compliance with gender equality criteria

The EAB members are allowed to participate in Steering Committee meetings upon invitation but have not any voting rights.



Finally **at Partner level** specific persons are identified to take care of:

- General project management
- Administrative tasks, controlling and financial management
- Communication and dissemination tasks

The Project List of Contacts will contain for each PP the staff assigned to each WP specifying their role.





## 4. OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR MEETINGS

In the ERA-FABRIC Project meetings can be arranged at different levels:

- **SC meetings**, to be held at least every six months, mainly in presence, involving all PPs. A first calendar will be agreed during the kick-off meeting;
- **WPL meetings** to be held on-line at least every 2 months, involving all WPLs;
- **WP meetings**, to be held on –line at any time the WPL consider useful involving the relevant PPs.

### 4.1 SC meetings

#### 4.1.1 Representation in SC meetings

Any PP:

- should be present or represented at any SC meeting;
- may appoint a substitute or a proxy to attend and vote at any meeting;
- shall participate in a cooperative manner in the meetings;
- could be supported by technical experts providing the technical contribution on the implementation of the activities and on the quality of the products. The technical experts participate in the meetings of the Steering Committee without having the right to vote.

#### 4.1.2 Convening SC meeting

The chairperson of the Coordinator convenes ordinary meetings of the Steering Committee at least once every six months and shall also convene extraordinary meetings when considered necessary and decided by the SC itself.

#### 4.1.3 Notice of a meeting

The chairperson shall give written notice of a SC meeting to each PP as soon as possible and no later than 14 calendar days preceding an ordinary meeting and 7 calendar days preceding an extraordinary meeting. In case of in-presence meeting, the written notice shall be given at least 1 month preceding the meeting including also indicative starting and closing times and practical information about the venue provided by the hosting PP supporting the travel organization.

#### 4.1.4 Sending the agenda

The chairperson shall prepare and send each PP an agenda no later than 14 calendar days preceding the meeting, or 7 calendar days before an extraordinary meeting. The agenda will include clearly the expected contribution from each PP.



#### 4.1.5 Adding agenda items

Any agenda item requiring a decision by the PPs must be identified as such on the agenda.

Any PP may add an item to the original agenda by written notice to all of the other PPs no later than 7 calendar days preceding the meeting and 2 days preceding an extraordinary meeting.

During a meeting of the Steering Committee the PPs present or represented can unanimously agree to add a new item to the original agenda.

#### 4.1.6 Meeting format

SC Meetings of the Steering Committee may also be held by tele- or videoconference or other telecommunication means.

#### 4.1.7 Meeting minutes

The chairperson produces minutes of each SC meeting which shall be the formal record of all decisions taken. He/she sends draft minutes to all PPs within 10 calendar days of the meeting.

Decision taken during the SC meeting for are summarized in following format, indicating for each specific topics, final decision, PPs addressed, affected WPs and, if necessary, a reasonable deadline for the completion of the action or solution of the issue that has emerged.

N.	Topic	Decision	Affected WPs	Responsibles	Deadline

The minutes shall be considered as accepted if, within 7 calendar days from receipt, no PP has sent an objection to the chairperson with respect to the accuracy of the draft minutes by written notice.

The chairperson sends the accepted minutes to all the PPs, and to the Coordinator, who shall retain copies of them and upload them in the Internal collaboration Platform, in the specific SC meeting folder.

## 4.2 WP Leaders meetings

WPLs will meet regularly at least at bimestrial level to refer about the state of implementation of each WP. During the meeting each WPL illustrates the progresses made in last period, detailing the next specific commitments and related responsible and deadline.

During WPL meetings could emerge some issues to be put at the attention of the Steering Committee.



The WPL meetings are chaired by the Coordinator and planned on a regular basis during SC meetings.

If necessary meeting dates can be modified. In this case the PC will send written notice to all WPLs at least 1 week before the expected date, including a doodle poll to identify the most convenient new date.

The minutes of the WPL meeting will be prepared by the Coordinator in form a list having the following format:

N.	WP	Topic	Responsibles	Progresses and Commitments	Deadline

The PC send the WPL meeting minutes to all WPLs within 1 week after the meeting and upload them in the Internal collaboration Platform, in the specific WPLs meetings folder.

The minutes shall be considered as accepted if, within 1 week from receipt, no WPL has sent an objection to the PC with respect to the accuracy of the draft minutes by written notice.



## 5. DELIVERABLES PRODUCTION PROCESS

Project deliverables are the key outputs to be submitted within the scope of a project, therefore it is of utmost importance to put in place a quality assurance procedure, to be used as a reference for their preparation, review and final submission.

Each deliverable is produced within a specific WP and has a main responsible (DL deliverable leaders) indicated in the “List of deliverables” in the project DoA- part A.

The DL in collaboration with the WPL identifies the partners contributing to the Deliverable, (starting from the relevant Task leaders) and for each partner specific reference persons included in the Project Contact List.

The DL is responsible for the collection of inputs from the relevant partners contributing to the deliverable (CPPs) and for the final release of the deliverable.

All members of the consortium will contribute to the reviewing processes. In particular each partner identifies a person in charge for the Deliverable review at least 1 month before the delivery date. The reviewers names and relative e-mail will be communicated to DL and will be included in the Contact list for the Deliverable.

Once the first draft of the deliverable is ready the DL sends it to all Partners reviewers (PRs), that are engaged in the reviewing process, that will be based on the Check-list for Deliverables in Annex 1.

The PRs are expected provide their feedback, including comments on major aspects, recommendations for improvements and suggestions for minor changes using the track change mode.

The DL will prepare a second draft of the Deliverable, taking into consideration the comments received by the PRs. At this stage, if necessary, a consultation on-line call will be arranged with the relevant CPPs.

Then the DL will send the second draft of the Deliverable to all partners for a final validation and eventually release the final version of the Deliverable to be uploaded on the EU portal by the Coordinator.

The deliverable will be drafted out using the common template agreed at project level and available in the internal collaboration platform.

This template has a cover page containing the following information:

- Project name and number
- Project Logo
- Deliverable Name and number
- Responsible Partner
- Contributing Partners
- Dissemination level
- Planned date of Delivery
- Date of Issue
- Document version



Each deliverable shall contain an Executive summary, a Table of contents and an Abbreviation list (if useful), an Introduction, the main part containing the specific content of the document ending with a Conclusion chapter when relevant.

At the end of the process the deliverable will be uploaded also in the appropriate repository in the internal collaboration platform In the Deliverables folder.

The timeline for the different steps in the deliverable production is provided in the table here below:

Table 1: Timeline deliverable production

WHO	WHAT	WHEN (deadline)
Deliverable leader	Collects contributions from the involved partners, drafts a first version of the deliverable and sends it to all partners	3 weeks before the delivery date
All PRs	Read the deliverable draft and send a revised version to the deliverable leader	2 weeks before the delivery date
Deliverable leader	Arranges a consultation on-line meeting if necessary, processes the comments received from partners and sends an eventual second version to all partners for a final ok	1 weeks before the delivery date
Deliverable leader	Receives feedbacks from partners, release the final version of the deliverable and send it to the Coordinator	2 days before the delivery date
Coordinator	Upload the deliverable in the EU platform Upload the deliverable in the repository in the internal collaboration platform	delivery deadline

## 6. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

To ensure effective internal communication in the project, PPs will agree on the use of digital channels, such as: **virtual communication spaces, specific distribution lists and virtual calendars**. The Internal collaboration Platform will be a structured **online repository on Google drive** to be used also for storing all project related documentation.

Final decision on internal communication means will be taken during the Kick-off meeting.



## 7. RISK MANAGEMENT

### 7.1 General principles

Risk management in the ERA\_FABRIC project has the overall objective of assuring:

- timely execution of project tasks, milestone achievements and reporting delivery,
- avoidance of defaulting situations by early identification of risks and proposal for their mitigation;

having in mind that timely awareness and consequent reactions to potential problems are crucial for a smooth project implementation.

The approach to risk management consists of the following five steps:

1. **risk identification**, the main goal of this step is to uncover risks before they actually arise;
2. **risk assessment**, risks identified in the previous step are assessed taking into account the probability of occurrence and the level of severity;
3. **potential risk treatments**, for each identified and assessed risk, possible risk treatments are proposed;
4. **detailed risk management plan**, risk management plan consists of a description of risks, assessment and treatment procedures, risk indicators, appropriate mitigation measures and respective responsible persons;
5. **risk reviewing and continuous evaluation**, risk management plan is reviewed along the entire course of the project.

Is assumed that Project management will include a continuous monitoring of risks (of both internal and external origin) focusing on all factors that are critical to the success of the project. The risk management plan starts from the preliminary analysis carried out during the project proposal elaboration and included in Part A at the “ List of Critical risks” paragraph.

### 7.2 Risk identification procedures

Risks should be reported by any partner as soon as detected: the earliest a risk is detected the easiest will be minimizing its impact.

Partners are invited to submit risks anytime using the *Risks Identification Table* that will be available in the internal collaboration platform containing the following information fields:

- **Nature**: this field indicates which type of category the risk belongs to. One or more of the following categories must be selected:
  - **Formalisation**: risks related to a bad definition of requirements, bad interpretation of data and / or a lack of inclusion of experts and reference entities;



- **External:** risks related to external inputs, data, technologies, introduction of new laws of European or national scope, governance framework. Legal issues will be classified under this category;
- **Organizational:** risks related to general workflow of the project;
- **Technical:** risks related to technical aspects of the project such as expected inputs for a certain work package needed earlier than defined in the project schedule.
- **Description of the risk:** this field is used to establish the border conditions of the risk. Partner has to explain in detail: the risk origin, the trigger for the risk to become a reality and the risk that the Project is facing;
- **Affected WPs:** WPs affected by the possibility of the risk to happen;
- **Observation period:** estimation of the time span in which the risk may arise;
- **Likelihood:** a quantitative evaluation of the probability of the risk to concretize during the Project;
- **Severity / Impact:** a quantitative evaluation of the effect of the risk on the Project should it happen;
- **Risk factor:** a comprehensive quantification, both in terms of likelihood and impact, of the importance of the risk for the Project management;
- **Proposed mitigation action:** this field is used to define the proposal of actions to be undertaken in order to mitigate the probability of occurrence of the risk and its eventual impact.

The Risk report must be submitted to Coordinator and Affected WPLs.

### 7.3 Risk analysis procedures

After the submission of the risk, Affected WPLs (involving TL if considered relevant) are asked to place comments on the risk submitted, especially about the quantification of the likelihood and impact. The quantification of project risks is performed considering the most likely outcome scenario for all identified risks. This procedure encompasses the definition of values for:

- **Likelihood measurement:** this measurement describes the perception of the probability that the selected risk affects the project in an estimated amount of time (observation period). This information will be used by the relevant WPL and the Project Coordinator for prioritizing the actions that will help to mitigate the risk. Possible values of this field are:
  - 5. CERTAIN: is affecting / will affect the project;
  - 4. PROBABLE: not certain, but is likely to affect the project.



- 3. POSSIBLE: could affect the project
  - 2. UNLIKELY: will probably not affect the project
  - 1. VERY UNLIKELY: virtually certain not to affect the project.
- **Severity/Impact Measurement:** this measurement describes the perception of the impact if the risk were realised. Possible values of this field are:
  - 5. EXTREME Catastrophic effect – the majority of targets will not be met across the project;
  - 4. MAJOR relevant effect on project performance --critical targets will be missed;
  - 3. MODERATE Moderate effect on project performance – local performance targets will be missed;
  - 2. MINOR Minor effect on project performance – limited effect on targets;
  - 1. NEGLIGIBLE Insignificant effect;
- **Risk factor:** the result of multiplying Likelihood and Severity gives as result a number from 0 to 25 (Risk factor) that enables to prioritize the risk importance.

#### 7.4 Risk management procedures

This part of the process of risk management is aimed at defining and put in place a risk management plan containing appropriate measures to avoid, mitigate or accept the risks.

Three possible policies can be applied in order to deal with risks:

- **Avoid the risk:** some risks may be avoided with an adjustment to the project schedule or approach;
- **Mitigate the risk:** the majority of risks will need a mitigation action to manage them and try to minimize their impact in the project development. If this strategy is chosen, then it is necessary to define and describe the mitigation action for managing that risk. That implies making considerations and detailing when those actions will be executed and by which partner(s).
- **Accept the risk:** a very small number of risks will be accepted. The acceptance of a risk means that all the actions that can be applied to minimize the impact are more expensive in time and resources than accepting the consequences of that risk.

The risk mitigation strategy with specific tasks must be managed as any other project task. This includes securing the resources, assignment to individual project team members, motivating the involved project team members, overseeing and controlling the execution of





the tasks and finally measuring and reporting the progress of risk mitigation. A mitigation plan foresees the description of:

- actions;
- time schedule of that actions;
- responsible partners for those actions, ie identify a leader to manage the risk.

The final definition of the risk management plan will be made by the risk management board, that is defined, according to the relevance of the Risk Factor as follows:

Severity					
5	5	10	15	20	25
4	4	8	12	16	20
3	3	6	9	12	15
2	2	4	6	8	10
1	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3	4	5
	Likelihood				

Table 2. Risk Factor

If Risk factor is lower than 5: Coordinator and Affected WPL

For Risk factor between 5 and 9: WPLs Board

For Risk factor between 10 and 25: Steering Committee

The risk log is handled by Task 1.3 Leader: UNIST.



## Annex 1: Checklist for deliverables

### 1. Overall technical evaluation of the deliverable

Does the deliverable contain new, or value added information? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there any major technical errors, omissions, lack of necessary details? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
How do the results compare with the state of the art and/or parallel activities?	<input type="checkbox"/> Well	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor
What value does the document add to the project partners?	<input type="checkbox"/> High	<input type="checkbox"/> Low

### 2. Executive summary. Are the following questions clearly asked and answered?:

Which problem(s) and key questions of interest to intended readers are addressed? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
What are the expected main benefits of this deliverable? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
What are the results contained in this deliverable? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Who are the main consumers for this deliverable, e.g. who should read it? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Why should I read the deliverable? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

### 3. Introduction

Is the purpose of the document clearly stated :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the technical subject properly introduced? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If necessary, is there a guide to the reader (document structure, short description of chapters and relationships)? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If necessary, are there statements on technical assumption, readers' prerequisites, relationships with other documents or parallel activities:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No



#### 4. Main part of the deliverable

Does it contain what was defined in the deliverable description in the DoA :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If something has been left out, have clear and valid reasons been given as to why:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the key part structured in a logical way? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the content appropriate for the intended audience? Does it only include essential information? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does it duplicate or contradict standards or other on-going known initiatives? If yes, the affected standard or initiatives need to be identified? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No

#### 5. Conclusion

Are conclusions reached? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are they within the consortium perspective? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are any necessary follow-up actions clearly indicated? :	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No