

European Public Local Authorities' Network for
driving the Energy Transition



D1.2 - Guidelines and Quality Assurance

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Content

1	Introduction	7
2	Quality Management	8
2.1	Organization	8
2.1.1	<i>Work Package Leaders (WPL)</i>	8
2.1.2	<i>Project Management Board (PMB)</i>	9
2.1.3	<i>Project Coordinator (CO)</i>	9
2.2	Quality reporting	10
2.2.1	<i>Quality of the deliverables</i>	10
2.2.2	<i>Reporting to the European Commission</i>	11
3	Practices, Standards and Conventions	12
3.1	Documentation	12
3.1.1	<i>Documentation distribution procedure</i>	12
3.1.1.1	<i>Public documents</i>	12
3.1.1.2	<i>Confidential documents</i>	12
3.1.2	<i>Documentation standards</i>	12
3.1.3	<i>Documentation naming convention</i>	12
3.1.3.1	<i>Deliverables</i>	12
3.1.3.2	<i>Other documents</i>	13
3.1.4	<i>Templates</i>	13
3.2	Information management	13
3.2.1	<i>Deliverable process review</i>	13
3.2.2	<i>Repository</i>	15
3.2.3	<i>Review of documentation</i>	15
4	Periodic reviews	17
5	Risk Management	18
5.1	General	18
5.2	Principles	18
5.3	Risk monitoring and reporting	21
6	Intellectual Property Rights Management	23
6.1	During the project implementation	23
6.2	After project conclusion	24
7	References	25



Executive Summary

This document describes the Guidelines and Quality Assurance of the ePLANET project. It defines the management structures and how decision-making is organised during the project to ensure quality assurance. It is also a practical guide for the preparation of all documentation to be collected and generated during the life of the project, setting out practices, standards and conventions, as well as the validation processes to be followed for deliverables. It establishes the schedule of internal and official reviews agreed at the start of the project. In addition, it defines the protocol in case of risk detection and establishes the methodology for its follow-up. Finally, it establishes the IPR guidelines to be followed during and after the project.



List of Tables

Table 1 Deliverable process steps	14
Table 2 Review of documentation criteria	15
Table 3 Planning of periodic reviews.....	17
Table 4 Risk identification and mitigation actions.....	19
Table 5 Access rights to project background and results.....	23

List of Figures

Figure 1 ePLANET Management Structure	8
Figure 2 Deliverable naming convention.....	12
Figure 3 Document naming convention	13
Figure 4 Deliverable template.....	13
Figure 5 Deliverable process steps.....	14
Figure 6 Risk identification and monitoring template.....	21



Abbreviations and acronyms

ABBREVIATION OR ACRONYM	DESCRIPTION
CO	Coordinator
CA	Consortium Agreement
CoM	Covenant of Mayors
EC	European Commission
ET	Energy Transition
EU	European Union
GA	Grant Agreement
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
PA	Public Authority
PMB	Project Managing Board
QA	Quality Assurance
SEAP	Sustainable Energy Action Plan
SECAP	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan
TL	Task Leader
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leaders



1 Introduction

Quality assurance (QA) is a part of quality management focused on providing confidence in the compliance with quality requirements set either by the EC or by the project consortium itself led by the Coordinator.

CIMNE, as project coordinator, based on its experience in EU project management, has adapted its quality procedures to the needs of ePLANET.

The main objectives of the Quality Assurance are:

- To define the means to meet the objectives of the quality assurance process, and establish the activities and resources (personnel, methods and tools) to carry them out,
- To provide efficient monitoring of all related activities and to ensure that the project will meet its specified requirements according to the criteria specified by the EC.
- To address the risks and opportunities associated with its context and objectives.



2 Quality Management

This chapter describes the parties involved in the implementation of Quality Assurance (QA). It includes human resources, tasks, means of quality reporting, reporting to the EC, responsibilities and finally the project communication mechanisms that ensure a smooth exchange of information.

2.1 Organization

The project management organisation has three main structures: the Work Package Leaders (WPL), the Project Managing Board (PMB) and the Project Coordinator (CO) that all together ensure the evolution of the project according to the work plan.

The following figure illustrates the organization of the management structure:

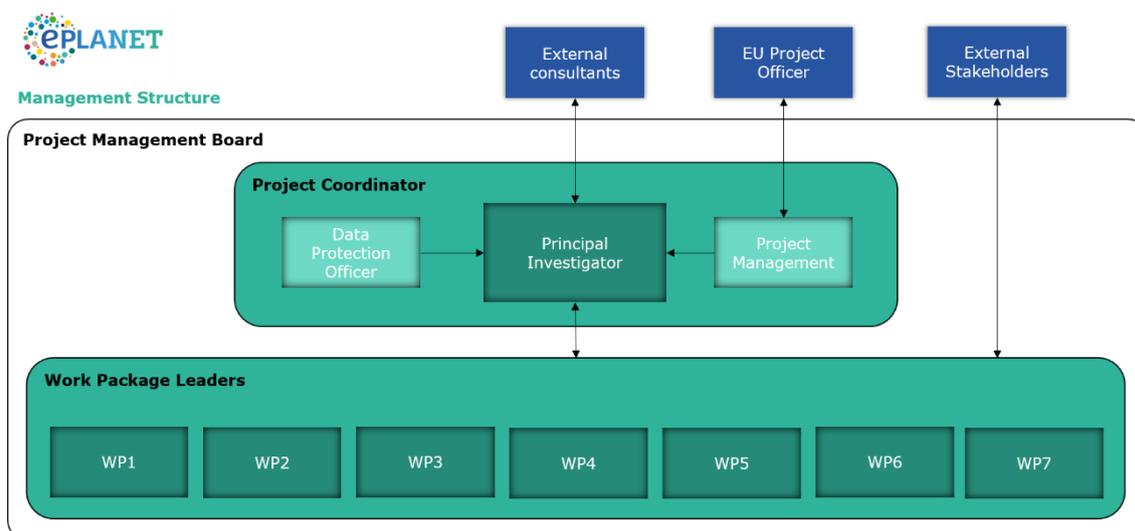


Figure 1 ePLANET Management Structure

2.1.1 Work Package Leaders (WPL)

The Work Package Leaders (WPL) group is composed of a representative of the partner responsible for each of the Work Packages. Each WPL is responsible for organising the tasks within its Work Package. Assigning WP responsibility and leadership to the same WP leader ensures effective execution of the project work plan, through balanced distribution and commitment among partners, as well as timely (and possibly early) identification of potential risks or non-compliant partners.

Each WPL will:

- Ensure coordination, monitoring and implementation according to the timeline of the WP;
- Document progresses in the WP;



- Report on WP activities status, project progress and Milestones;
- Update the WP plan as necessary for best achieve project objectives. e.g. propose any changes in allocation of tasks or budget amongst tasks and/or participants to the CO as necessary (for approval by the PMB);
- Coordinate contributions to the individual WP from the Task Leaders (TLs) who are responsible for delivering the results of their project tasks.
- Supervise the preparation process of WP Deliverables;
- Identify and inform the CO of any financial and technical risks or any other difficulty arising in the WP;
- Manage WP communications including regular conference calls (monthly, bi-monthly or weekly as appropriate).

Each WPL has the responsibility to provide ongoing reports to the PMB through regular conferences, including sufficient information so that the CO can be sure that each WP is progressing according to plan.

2.1.2 Project Management Board (PMB)

The Project Management Board (PMB) is the highest management body that controls all management tasks and responsibilities and the formal decision-making body of the consortium.

The PMB is composed of the Project Coordinator and at least one representative from each partner in the consortium. Each representative should have an overview of their organisation, and any associated partners or subcontractors, to commit the organisation on all financial and other resource matters and to negotiate on their behalf.

The PMB will:

- Ensure overall quality of the project results;
- Define, evaluate and update the Project Work Plan;
- Maintain sound financial and administrative control of the Project;
- Evaluate the overall communication strategy of the Project;
- Monitor objectives, achievements and impact measurements;
- Sustainability issues;
- Risk assessment;
- Quality assurance and
- Moderate conflict resolution procedures.

PMB members will participate in monthly conference calls (a schedule agreed at the start of the project) and will usually meet face-to-face, on average, at least once every 6 months. The Project Coordinator is responsible to chair the PMB meetings. However, meetings may be convened at any other appropriate time throughout the duration of the project, if necessary.

Implementation of the plan to manage knowledge and intellectual property issues is the responsibility of the PMB and it is addressed in chapter [\[Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia..\]](#)

2.1.3 Project Coordinator (CO)

The overall coordination and management of the project is under the responsibility of the Principal Investigator appointed by the Project Coordinator (CO), CIMNE.



The CO leads the technical coordination of the project and is supported by CIMNE's dedicated project management department for administrative, financial and legal management, and is the intermediary for the communication between the project partners and the European Commission on the progress of the project.

The CO is responsible for coordinating, harmonising, and monitoring activities, ensuring the quality of the deliverables and respect for deadlines, as well as resource consumption, risks and contingencies. Periodical activity and resource reporting are carried out and submitted to the EC under the CO's responsibility.

Finally, the Coordinator may ask for advice to external consultants concerning key technical, business and market directions and to support the project with regards to the exploitation of results.

2.2 Quality reporting

The CO will handle day-to-day quality and risk management issues and will be in charge of establishing and validating quality control procedures, risk management procedures and risk register management. To provide an extra check on this important task, CIMNE plans to perform an expert review of quality and risk issues (see WP1 description on the GA).

The consortium agreement (CA) includes procedures for quality assurance, already proven in previous CIMNE projects, to ensure that the partners adopt the same practices, conventions, project management, deliverables, and procedures and ensure results produced conform to defined standards. These procedures include the definition of the internal review process to be applied to the different types of achievements and deliverable results, and the standard structure and formats for the various classes of documents that will be produced in the context of the project (i.e. progress reports, meeting reports, external presentations etc.). Documents and reports will be uploaded onto the repository enabled by CIMNE. Public documents will be made available for all the user communities.

2.2.1 Quality of the deliverables

The defined project deliverables are the central focus of quality assurance within the project. The measurable outcomes as specified in the project plan serve as key benchmarks for this task. Deliverables are submitted for review and feedback to selected participants not involved in the deliverable concerned, and where appropriate, to the Stakeholders Forum or external expert.

CIMNE will lead the task and plan to include an experienced reviewer to provide support from quality assurance. The idea is to include a lightweight structure (1/2 day per month on average) to provide independent, objective, external input to all deliverables, prior to completion, to ensure:

- they are fit for purpose;
- focus on results rather than on report generation (i.e. are efficient and effective in terms of resource use);
- enable repetition of the results by other EU actors (i.e. are good for public use) and;
- reduce any risk of complacency.



LIMA will ensure aspects relevant for dissemination. All the other partners will also participate actively in the Quality Assurance, through participating in the revisions of the deliverables, as well as giving feedback about project progress improvements and working with the Stakeholders Forum.

2.2.2 Reporting to the European Commission

Reporting will be ensured by the Coordinator and its dedicated project management department and will adhere to the practices of the ICT Office of the Programme Horizon 2020. The consortium based its estimation of workload and costs on the following assumptions:

- 1) If requested by the EC Project Officer, half-yearly status reports to the Project Officer via email or letter (financial statements are not included).
- 2) Periodic management reports including cost statements and, if necessary, methodology and financial audit certificates.
- 3) Periodic review meetings.

More information about periodic reviews in the chapter 4.



3 Practices, Standards and Conventions

3.1 Documentation

3.1.1 Documentation distribution procedure

3.1.1.1 Public documents

The distribution of public documents in their draft version can be done through any means considered by the owner or author, however the preference is to use the common repository enabled.

The final public documents shall be stored in the common repository and notify the person in charge of distribution, assigned by the PMB.

3.1.1.2 Confidential documents

All confidential project material will be stored and controlled by the owner who is responsible for maintaining its privacy. Confidential deliverables will be stored in the common repository, being this the main exchange medium for sharing it with any member of the consortium.

3.1.2 Documentation standards

When creating documentation, all contributors are following these standards:

- All documentation generated in project is distributed among partners in Microsoft Office format (minimum version 2007 for compatibility).
- Public documentation will be distributed in PDF format.
- This project uses a document template described in Section ¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia..
- ePLANET naming conventions shall be used as described in following Section ¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia..

3.1.3 Documentation naming convention

This section describes naming conventions to be used for deliverables or other (non-deliverable) documents. This will ensure consistency, easier search, document referencing and collaboration among project team members.

3.1.3.1 Deliverables

All deliverables will use following naming conventions, all items separated by blank space:

ePLANET DX.Y Deliverable Name - vZ

Figure 2 Deliverable naming convention

Where

- ePLANET project acronym



- DX.Y, indicates deliverable number where X is the name of the Work Package it belongs and Y is the number of the deliverable within the Work Package.
- Deliverable Name is the title of the deliverable indicated in the GA. In case of excessive length, abbreviation will be considered and agreed by the PMB.
- - vZ is the document version indicated by the editor who will be the document responsible. This part will be removed by the CO for final versions.

3.1.3.2 Other documents

The rest of documents will use following notation:



Figure 3 Document naming convention

Where:

- Type, indicates document character, for instance: Minutes, Agenda, Report, Leaflet, Presentation, Template, etc.
- Context, gives information about document context.
- Date, to be considered if relevant

3.1.4 Templates

Document templates have been elaborated and distributed among partners using the collaborative platform.



Figure 4 Deliverable template

3.2 Information management

To ensure QA, project team ensures appropriate information management. Information is going to be review and stored in structured way. The following sections describe these topics in more detail.

3.2.1 Deliverable process review

To ensure the highest quality of the deliverables the Quality assurance procedure on Deliverables (introduced in section ¡Error! No se encuentra el origen de la referencia.) will be implemented as following:



- Each deliverable has a Lead Beneficiary (a partner), who is responsible towards the ePLANET Project Management Board (PMB). The Lead Beneficiary is appointed by the leader of the work package to which the deliverable begins.
- Each deliverable produced shall be reviewed by a peer-review (made up of minimum one “peer reviewer” known as Reviewer who will be appointed by the Lead Beneficiary and approved by the PMB during the monthly coordination meetings.
- The Project Manager will apply a final revision and will submit all final deliverables to the EC Project Officer.

The following figure shows the different steps of the process:

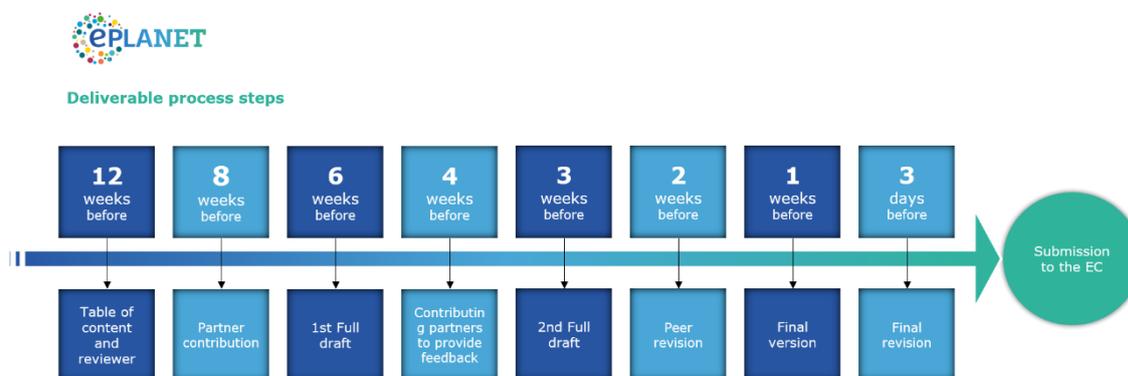


Figure 5 Deliverable process steps

The table below describes each of the steps in the process review for each deliverable.

Table 1 Deliverable process steps

Due Date	Action	Responsibility	Description
12 Weeks before	Table of Content and reviewer	Lead Beneficiary (LB)	The partner in charge of the deliverable shall provide a draft of the Table of Content in means of structure and content and propose a reviewer.
8 Weeks before	Partner contribution	Lead Beneficiary Contributing Beneficiary/ies	The deliverable should have most of the content ready. Time to ask for partner contributions.
6 Weeks before	1 st Full draft	Lead Beneficiary	Contribution arrangements update.
4 Weeks before	Contributing partners feedback	Contributing Beneficiary/ies	Should read, comment and suggest improvements for the deliverable in terms of quality.



3 Weeks before	2 nd Full draft	Lead Beneficiary	Adapt improvements from partner feedback.
2 Weeks before	Peer revision	Reviewer	The peer reviewer will have one week to read, comment and suggest improvements. All notes shall be in “track changes mode” in the document.
1 Week before	Final version	Lead Beneficiary	Adapt improvements from peer revision.
3 Days before	Final revision	Project Manager	The Project Manager will oversee ensuring all major remarks raised. The PM will forward the consolidated version to the LB for double-checking before sending the final version to the EC.
1 Day before	Delivery	Project Manager	The PM will send the approved version to the European Commission through the portal. A copy will be uploaded on the repository.

If there is no response from the parties involved in the steps in which feedback is required, it will be understood as acceptance.

3.2.2 Repository

All information and documents will be stored in the repository set up by the Coordinator. The repository is for the exclusive use of ePLANET consortium members with individual password access and is managed by CIMNE. The D1.1 Collaborative Working Environment contains all the necessary information in this matter.

3.2.3 Review of documentation

All project documentation must be reviewed by the consortium members. During the review process, the members must take into account different aspects in order to meet the quality criteria.

The following table describes some of these criteria:

Table 2 Review of documentation criteria

Criteria	Description
Understandability	The document is being understood and comprehensible for its purpose.



Uniform typing format	The document follows the styling defined in the templates and on the D7.2 Visual Identity Handbook.
Coherence and Consistency	The document does not present contradictory arguments and there is an agreement, harmony, or uniformity among their parts.
Traceable	Authorship of the document or parts of it can be identified, as well as revisions and comments from reviewers.
Adequacy	Appropriate analysis, design and coding techniques used.



4 Periodic reviews

Periodic reviews, as set out in Article 22 of the Grant Agreement (GA), the Agency or European Commission has the right to carry out checks, reviews, audits and investigations. Their reviews and audits can be performed on demand - during implementation of action or afterwards (up to two years after the payment of the balance).

The following table shows the official and internal reviews that are planned, as it was announced during the kick-off meeting.

Table 3 Planning of periodic reviews

Type	Month	Date	Review start date	Review end date
INTERNAL	9	May 2022	1 June 2022	31 July 2022
OFFICIAL	18	February 2023	1 March 2023	30 April 2023
INTERNAL	27	November 2023	1 December 2023	31 January 2024
OFFICIAL	36	August 2024	1 September 2024	31 October 2024



5 Risk Management

5.1 General

Risk management is a systematic and iterative process for optimizing resources in accordance with the project risk management policy. It is integrated through defined roles and responsibilities into the day-to-day activities in all project domains and at all project levels. Risk management assists managers and engineers by including risk aspects in management and engineering practices and judgments throughout the project life cycle, including the preparation of project requirements documents. It is performed in an integrated, holistic way, maximizing the overall benefits in areas such as:

- Design, manufacturing, testing, operation, maintenance, and disposal, together with their interfaces.
- Control over risk consequences.
- Management, cost, and schedule.

Within the risk management process, available risk information is produced and structured facilitating risk communication and management decision making. The results of risk assessment reduction and the residual risks are communicated to the project team for information and follow-up.

5.2 Principles

According to the risk analysis carried out jointly by the partners during the preparation of the proposal, there are some critical risks related to the implementation of the project, not only technical/development risks, but also management and business related risks. The proposal tasks and timetable have been established to minimise demonstration and operational risks, and mitigation and contingency measures are proposed in case a certain risk occurs. Risks are ranked by their likelihood and impact of occurrence during the project.

LIKELIHOOD

The Likelihood ranking is used using the following scale [LOW; MEDIUM; HIGH].

- LOW: Below 30% of probability of occurrence.
- MEDIUM: Between 30% and 70% of probability of occurrence.
- HIGH: Under 70% of probability of occurrence.

IMPACT

The impact of the risk on the project in case of occurrence is also determined. The impact scale ranges from 1 to 5, with 1 being a low impact and 5 a high impact, understanding:

- Low impact as not preventing the objectives from being achieved, although they may delay their achievement or making more difficult to carry it out.
- Medium impact as preventing a single element of the project meeting its objectives, but only diminish the quality of achievement of project level objectives.
- High impact as preventing a successful outcome of the project, for instance a totally fail to meet one or more of its objectives.



All risks must be actively managed: Risks of impact 5 must be continuously assessed and communicated to the coordinator. The project manager, with the help of the Project Managing Board, assesses the likelihood of the identified risks occurring, as well as their impact, using the following approach described in the Grant Agreement:

Table 4 Risk identification and mitigation actions

Risk number	WPs Affection and description risk	Likelihood	Impact	Proposed risk-mitigation measures
R1	ALL WP. Withdrawal of a Consortium partner	LOW	MEDIUM	In the case a participant withdraws from the Project, the management committee will approve the settlement and the conditions of the withdrawal, considering if a) the tasks developed by the withdrawing participant can be covered by the remaining participants or b) a new participant needs to be involved. In that case the coordinator will request an amendment to the European Commission Grant Agreement.
R2	ALL WP. Delays and quality issues with critical deliverables	MEDIUM	LOW	1) All participants will be provided with standardised templates to ensure that information is submitted following quality criteria; 2) the management procedures have been designed to identify these issues rapidly and act accordingly scaling up resolution procedures as necessary, engaging the relevant structures; (3) contingency for quality control is reinforced by the figure of experienced expert advisor to facilitate solutions if necessary.
R3	WP2. User and governance requirements definition and feedback delay	MEDIUM	LOW	The consortium itself incorporates considerable expertise from CoM regional coordinators, experts and national programmes responsables and has sufficient capacity to advance the work in order to avoid delays in other WPs.
R4	WP2. Full harmonization of ET measures and policies too time-consuming	HIGH	MEDIUM	This is a key challenge and the project is well prepared for it. The work will pragmatically focus on the pilots required data fields and use as a base already existing definitions. The overall concept is to make to core work extensible to new requirements, so that it could be gradually extended in the future.
R5	WP3. The internal common data	MEDIUM	LOW	The work will leverage on the already existing comprehensive and complex energy/space/ operations data model for buildings inherited



	model development is too complex			from SHERPA and EDI-Net. This will be only complemented with the less complex data for ET evaluation from other sectors.
R6	WP3. Data availability and data compatibility problems	LOW	MEDIUM	Unlikely to occur as the project starts with pilots that already have available datasets from SECAPs and other sources and the development will take them into consideration to ensure full compatibility with them.
R7	WP4, WP5, WP6, WP7. Public authorities are not sufficiently engaged in the project	MEDIUM	HIGH	This is a key challenge for the project and it is specifically addressed through the 3-tier engagement approach designed to address users with different degree of involvement and using the project resources with maximum effect. A key is the continuous engagement and feedback through the “Stakeholder Forum”, coupled with the targeted communication and dissemination.
R8	WP5, WP6. Difficulties in replication and extension of the services	LOW	HIGH	The consortium includes regional coordinators and two core organisations in the CoM that have established networks of PA. The replication of the pilot activities falls completely in the context of the current work of these networks and many of the PA have declared their interest through letters of support. On the other hand, the cloud based big data technology in the core of the ePLANET platform is conceived with the purpose to maximally facilitate the scaling-up of the service adoption.
R9	WP7. The communication and dissemination of the project is not sufficiently effective	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	The adopted communication and dissemination strategy is based on a tailored approach with specifically design messages for each target group. It involves all project participants, which represent the target groups, to adjust the messages, select the most appropriate channels. Mitigation: promotion to ensure visibility making the project “untouchable”.
R10	ALL WP. Local / regional / national political change	MEDIUM	LOW	Sustainability is now embedded in policy and public perception beyond the reach of party and ideological differences the impact will be low.
R11	ALL WP. Economic instability in the EU due to COVID-19 pandemic.	MEDIUM	MEDIUM	The risk of low public authorities’ interest due to reduced resources that compete with other necessities will be mitigated with proactive communication of the benefits of the digitalisation offered by the project



				brings, including reduced cost through open source software, reduced work effort, improved information sharing and coordination, avoiding the necessity of face to face meetings, and related costs.
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5.3 Risk monitoring and reporting

The risk monitoring will be performed in the periodic meetings. When a risk is identified the partner needs to report the risk without any delay to

- The WP leader to which the risk belongs.
- To the Project Manager.

Early identification of risk minimises the impact on the project.

When a risk is detected, it shall be identified by completing the template available in the repository, see next figure. The document includes two separate tables, the first to identify the risk and the second to monitor it.

RX Risk description (short)		1 / 1	
Risk identification			
Risk description	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur.		
Date identified	DD/MM/YYYY		
Risk responsible	XX [ORGANIZATION]		
Likelihood	[LOW] [LOW MEDIUM] [MEDIUM] [MEDIUM HIGH] [HIGH]		
Impact	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]		
Proposed solution	Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.		
Risk monitoring			
Action performed	Date of action	New likelihood	New impact
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua.	DD/MM/YY		
 			

Figure 6 Risk identification and monitoring template



The risk identification will include the following information: Risk description, Date identified, Responsible, Likelihood, according to defined in previous section, Impact, according to defined in previous section, Impact, description of potential impact and proposed solution.

For each of the risks, actions to mitigate the risk will be monitored with the following information: Action performed to decrease / eliminate de risk, Date of action, New probability and New impact. For each of the actions, one row of the table must be filled in, with an impact of 0 being the total risk mitigation.



6 Intellectual Property Rights Management

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) management plays an important role in maximising the impact of research and innovation projects safeguarding that bright ideas and ground-breaking research findings are turned into value-creating goods and services.

6.1 During the project implementation

It is during the implementation of the project that partners need to give access rights to their created background and results so that other partners can carry out their work on the project and/or exploit its results. Requests must be made in writing, which may take, for example, the form of an e-mail with acknowledgement of receipt. The participant granting access rights may request that an agreement be established, especially when it wishes access rights to be limited to certain conditions (e.g. stricter confidentiality commitments).

The following table indicates principles of access rights to project background and results in different purpose.

Table 5 Access rights to project background and results

Purpose	Access to Background	Access to Results
Implementation of the project	Royalty-free Unless otherwise agreed by participants before their accession to the GA.	Royalty-free
Exploitation of owned project results	Subject to agreement, access rights shall be granted under fair and reasonable conditions (which can be royalty-free).	

The Grant Agreement and the Consortium Agreement are the contractual documents for managing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

More information about ACCESS RIGHTS are described in the GA article 25 and 31.

Information about OWNERSHIP OF RESULTS are described in the GA article 26.

Information about PROTECTION OF RESULTS are described in the GA article 27.

Information about EXPLOITATION OF RESULTS are described in the GA article 28.

Information about DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS are described in the GA article 29.



In the event that the Grant Agreement or the Consortium Agreement does not provide a solution to a specific Intellectual Property Rights conflict, it will be resolved through the IPR Helpdesk¹ of the European Commission.

6.2 After project conclusion

After the conclusion of the project, the IPR provisions will remain in force, such as the obligations regarding confidentiality, exploitation and dissemination. Consequently, participants are required to properly manage the post-contract phase too:

- During implementation of the action and for four years after the project, in accordance with the grant agreement participants must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential. Such a confidentiality time limit may be extended for the information shared among the consortium partners in their consortium agreement, which should be checked so that you know for how long participants are bound by confidentiality commitments in your project.
- Measures to ensure the exploitation of results must be performed up to four years after the project, requiring participants to be truly engaged in the use of their results.
- When disseminating the results without protecting them first, deciding to stop protection or not to seek extension, participants that have received EU funding must up to four years after the project formally notify the Commission in advance according to the requirements established in the grant agreement.

¹ [European IP Helpdesk \(europa.eu\)](http://europa.eu)



7 References

- [1] European IP Helpdesk https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/regional-helpdesks/european-ip-helpdesk_en
- [2] European IP Helpdesk, Your Guide to IP in Horizon 2020 <https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-01/EU-IPR-Guide-to-IP-in-Horizon-2020-EN.pdf>

