

QUALITY ASSURANCE PLAN

OF THE ERASMUS+ PROJECT

MEDIATS

“MEDIATION: TRAINING AND SOCIETY TRANSFORMATION”

599010-EPP-1-2018-1-NL-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

Breda, the Netherlands

2018-2020

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Introduction

The “Quality Management Plan” of MEDIATS ERASMUS+ Project” (hereinafter only Plan) is a deliverable within WP5.2. of the MEDIATS project. The contents and structure of the Plan is developed in line with the MEDIATS project structure and work plan.

The plan outlines the main definitions related to quality management. It defines processes for planning and implementing the project activities in order to ensure the highest possible quality. In this Plan minimum principle, requirements and processes needed to implement an effective quality assurance and monitoring is proposed, with the aim to ensure smooth and responsible project management, in line with the proposed Work plan, activities and goals of this project.

Quality Management Plan was prepared by HUG, the owner of the WP5 in collaboration with the project coordinator, NLBA and cocoordinator, KROK.

The outline was presented to the members of Project Steering Committee, they presented to the project teams of partner HEIs in order to inform and receive the feedback from all partner institutions. Due to delay in financing and changes in legislation in the countries involved, the project goals slightly changed, that was discussed at PSCM2. Finalized version will be discussed at PSCM3 and uploaded on google drive.

1. Project brief description

The project envisages enabling Universities to be one of the key players in facilitation of the processes of mediation in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine to enhance democracy and objective problem resolution by acquiring best European practices.

To do this, the project teams will learn the best EU practices, select and train the staff, select students, develop and implement Master Degree Program in Mediation in Ukraine and Azerbaijan and Mediation Module in Georgia. The quality of training and competencies of the students will be carefully evaluated by national and EU experts, the practical activities will be organized in partner countries and in the EU to ensure qualitative preparation of mediators.

The Mediation Federation will be established in Ukraine, HEIs of Azerbaijan and Georgia will closely cooperate with newly established state Mediation Structures and will act as sustainable mechanisms, through which HEI staff will have opportunities to promote the mediation values, introduce legislative changes, develop cooperation with various stakeholders and make impact on the local, national and international level.

Project goal is to enable Universities to be one of the key players in facilitation of the processes of mediation in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine to enhance democracy and objective problem resolution by acquiring best European practices.

Specific objectives:

- 1 To develop and implement Master's degree program "Mediation" – for Ukraine and Azerbaijan, Module in Mediation – for Georgia.
2. Establishing of the sustainable Mediation Federation is eligible for Ukraine; Georgia and Azerbaijan will cooperate with newly established governmental Mediation Structures.
3. To promote mediation values within the society in Azerbaijan, Georgia and Ukraine.

2. Quality of project expectations

The present chapter presents the expectations of the project consortium with reference to the MEDIATS deliverables and activities as well as the expectations relevant to the project management.

2.1. Quality of project deliverables

The deliverables of MEDIATS may be classified into tangible deliverables such as action plan, reports, Ghant chart, publications, manuals, newsletter, methodology, plans, printed and electronically available promotional material, media articles as well as intangible deliverables in the

form of organized events (trainings, study visits, project steering committee meetings, monitoring visits, international highlight event, national dissemination seminars, etc.), developed and launched project web site, social media, etc.

A common quality expectation for all deliverables is their relevance to reach the overall objective and the specific objectives, with a further focus on their development in an efficient and effective manner. Timely delivery following the project workplan/ timeline, reflected in the Ghant chart by each partner is expected.

2.2. Quality of organization of MEDIATS events

All events organized by project partners, during the course of the project should be organised professionally. The organizers should provide in due time a full information package to the participants including the draft agenda, study visit guide or a note on the logistics (informing about travel arrangements, venue, suggested hotels, etc.). Time for preparation activities depends on the type of event e.g. several months for study visits or conference and several weeks for trainings. This obligation is defined as a separate task for host institution/partner, coordinator and cocoordinator.

The meeting organizers ensure smooth registration processes including event attendences list – and the implementation of the meetings respecting appropriate time for event sessions and breaks as well as the availability of all necessary materials (e.g. meetings, training and promotional material). The organizers will also ensure the recording of minutes of the meetings in a concise style including a list of decisions – for PSCMs. After event the link to the google form will be sent to the e-mail of the participants.

Based on obligations of the beneficiaries defined in article I.10.8 and II.7, related to information requirements, the partners shall inform the public, press and social media of the event which must visibly indicate “Co-funded by the Erasmu+ Programmeof the European Union” as well as the graphic logos of the project and Erasmus+ Programme.

Posters, roll-up and other promotional materials shall be displayed during the event.

2.3. Quality of promotional materials

Communication and dissemination activities of the project will adhere to the Dissemination and Sustainability Plan WP6 of the project. All promotional materials will reflect the visual identity of the project and the Erasmus+ Programme.

The owner of WP 5, KROK , is responsible for design and distribution of all promotional material. The draft version will be sent to all partners for comments and suggestions, before printing, publishing and distribution. The materials will be disseminated by all project partners at events which are relevant to reach the project's target group.

2.4. Quality of the project websites and other electronic media

MEDIATS website was created <https://mediatsproject.wixsite.com/mediats>, that includes general information about the project, - goals, results, brief description, list of project partners. The section Partners includes brief description, logos, link to the website of all HEIs, information and contact details of the project team. The section News includes information on the project meetings. All project newsletters are uploaded to the project website. The website is constantly updated with project news, partners information. The project will maintain all project results, as soon as they are delivered. The project website contains the project logo and logo that mentions the European Union`s financial support. Coordinator, owner of WP 6 KROK maintains project website.

The google disc, tool for project communication and project management within project partners, was established. It contains all project information, is used for storage, exchange of project documents. The partners upload their documents, reports, other relevant info, coordinator, co-coordinator upload all project docs, info on the meetings, all other relevant documentation. Coordinator maintains Google disc.

Moreover, all partners are asked to promote MEDIATS project on their websites and other electroning tools (such as: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn profiles/groups, newsletters, and other media etc.) by providing short description of the project, logo, project events and link to MEDIATS website, #MEDIATS has to be used.

All tools will be implemented with high performance, good functionality and stability, emphasizing the maximum reach and awareness of the target audience.

2.5. Quality of Project Management

Project Management will be implemented basing on the principles of Project Management Plan, according to the workplan, timeline within the project budget. The Management meetings will be organized every months, they will be combined with quality meetings.

The quality of the project management will be evaluated by General Report, by comparing the achieved qualitative and quantitative indicators. Moreover after PSCM the evaluation of project management implementation will be made by questionnairing of partners.

3. General Project Guidelines

MEDIATS will follow different project guidelines and respects the requirements of the programme. Apart from the Quality Control and Monitoring Plan at hand, the reference documents include:

Grant Agreement
Partnership Agreements
Project Management Plan
Dissemination and sustainability plan
Updated Project budget
Timeline in the form of Ghant chart
ERASMUS+ - Program Guidelines for the Use of Grants

All required documets and guidelines are available for all partners at the google disc.

3.1. Amendments to the Plan

The procedures in this Plan can be amended by agreement of all partners or by a decision taken by the PSC. Any new version will be communicated to all the partners and takes effect 15 calendar days after this communication.

4. Project Quality Assurance Strategy and Approach

Internal monitoring will be carried out by all partners, basing on previously established documents and instruments for self-evaluation such as they are: LFM, Workplan, budget, PSC meetings, monitoring visits. The google disc will also be used for monitoring of project activities.

The goal of the project assurance strategy refers to all concrete measures that will be taken to guarantee quality project deliverables: comparative study methodologies, survey methodologies, use of evaluation forms for events, authors and editorship, etc.

The general project outcomes will be controlled as well as the outcomes for the individual participants will be supervised. Quantitaive and qualitiative indicators will be compared with stated in LSM.

The following indicators will be taken into account:

- (i) effectiveness: does the deliverable provide optimal results for the users;
- (ii) efficiency: did the production of the deliverable make the optimum use of resources provided;
- (iii) punctuality: was the deliverable produced according to the timeline;
- (iv) partner involvement: how did each partner perform, based on the self-assessment and the assessment of the wp leader.

P 11 will support the project management and WP owners in reviewing objectives, priorities, methodology, and planned activities (planning support function), Advising project implementation and help solve issues (advisory function), Providing tools to foster engagement, commitment and accountability ("catalyst function") and Assessing results/impact/sustainability/visibility (control function).

Activities under Work Package 5 will be implemented as it is stipulated in the project application. Quality control and monitoring is envisaged as a combination of internal and external project evaluation, though it will be organized by Partner 11 HUG. Partner 11 is not the university, it is the company, that is involved to the project implementation only regarding quality WP and sustainability issues, therefore there is no need for involvement of external quality evaluator, it is not envisaged in the project, moreover that this function will be made by monitoring visits of NEO and feedback from EACA. On the other hand lack of involvement of HUG to the project activities may impact internal quality evaluation and control regarding the mediation program evaluation and partially activities of mediation structure. That is settled by involvement of coordinator, EU experts, WP owners and partners that implement activities to development of additional quality ensurance.

HUG performs the function of quality manager - evaluates the effectiveness of the project, i.e. the extent to which it contributes to the stipulated goals.

The quality of the project is presented by quality manager at PSCMs, the results are evaluated by the Project Steering Committee and focuses both on the technical aspects and content aspects of the project.

The consortium takes very seriously the feedbacks on the implementation from the National Erasmus+ Offices in the partner countries, as well as from the EACEA. With respect to the financial management, the project foresees the audit to be conducted by a professional auditor.

5. Types of quality reports

5.1.General quality reports

Quality report on checking of correspondence of project implementation with the planned indicators.

The report included the list of WPs, activities of each WP, indicators as stated in the detailed project description. The partners had to mark the status of implementation of the activities in colours – green – done or nearly done, success 80-100%, yellow – in progress, success 50-79%, orange – started, but done less than 50%, red not yet or just started success 0-20%. The partners also had to indicate when does the plan expect achievement; describe the deviation – how far are we from time schedule, achievement in percent – how far are we from plan and the partners could provide remarks, description, comments.

5.2. Quality reports on the events

The quality report includes questions on general aspects of the meeting, organizational aspects (practical information about the event, structure and content, quality of logistics, rooms, technical support and other arrangements, quality of organizational activities at your HEI before training, the aspects that can be improved); detailed assessment of the activities of the meeting depending on its program, (including the questions like which activity was the most valuable, how will the obtained knowledge and skills used), an other comments. Completing the form should not take more than 3 minutes, as the idea is not to make it too time consuming. The quality questionnaire was prepared for each activity as google form and sent to the e-mails of the participants of the meeting, they fill it, the quality manager prepared the general report, uploads on google drive and commented at PSCM.

5.3. External Monitoring by NEO and EACEA

External monitoring of the project will be performed by National Erasmus Office in Ukraine, Georgia and Azerbaijan. NEO performs three types of monitoring, based on deliverable achievement: (1) Preventive (in the first project year); (2) Advisory (after the first project year); and (3) Control (after the end of project – sustainability check).

As part of their regular activities, National Erasmus Offices are expected to conduct regular desk monitoring and field monitoring visits. The official feedback received by the consortium will be taken as input for the quality enhancement by the project consortium. The monitoring by NEO includes the assessment of various aspects of project implementation, such as relevance (is project still relevant in terms of its previously determined goals and achievements), efficiency (are the activities in work-packages done on time in line with the proposed project Working Plan), effectiveness (how well are project specific objectives met), impact (at the level of departments, faculty, university, etc.) and sustainability (what would stay after the project is finished).

5.4. Financial audit

The audit of financial management of the project will be conducted in the second part of project implementation period and is the responsibility of project Coordinator NLBA.

6. Project Management and Risk Plan

As part of the internal quality management, a regular risk assessment will be carried and reviewed out during the regular Project Steering Committee meetings (Risk brainstorming) which shall lead to corrective actions and potential adaptations of the WorkPlan based on a sound process.

The project management and risk plan strategy addresses issues that could potentially endanger the achievement of the overall goal of the project and its objectives considering potential financial risks (overspending and underspending), timing (postponing of activities / deliverables), performance risks (project management), and sustainability of the project results. The main aim will be to provide a sound assessment, to anticipate challenges in a systematic way and to minimize the potentially negative overall impact.

The identification and assessment of new risks is a joint responsibility of all project partners who have to communicate them to the Project Coordinator and the Steering Committee, eventually suggesting also possible interventions and solutions, as soon as they get aware of those risks. In particular, partners may think of preventive actions (avoiding that the risk occurs) and corrective actions (decreasing the severity and impact), specifying also the resources that would be needed.

The Steering Committee may react in several ways, ranging from the simple acceptance of the situation in the case of negligible risks, to the enforcement of a mitigation plan including alternatives, workarounds and the proposed corrective actions that will make the risk consequences acceptable for the consortium.

Also the external reviewers (representatives of NEO and EACEA) may be involved in the risk management. During their monitoring visits they will assess if there is a risk that the project will fail to meet its key indicators and if there is a risk that project partners will not be able to spend all the money according to the planned project budget.

The proper allocation of resources to the project by the individual project partners is of outmost importance. There are several possible risks connected: the delay of the project implementation as defined in the project work plan; the rushed implementation of the work plan with low quality; an underspending during the project implementation (also causing a shift in the headings' ratio), meaning that the project timetable is followed with reference to technical deliverables, yet the relevant expenditures are not timely invoiced or validated; etc.

The project partners all have to ensure that they allocate the needed resources to the project, both human and financial.

6.1. Practical approach to risk identification

The first step in project risk management is to identify the risks that are present in a project. The risks should furthermore be identified as early as possible in order to deal with them properly and to think about corrective and/or preventive actions.

In order to identify and monitor the risks within MEDIATS project, the description of risk has to be provided.

6.2. Risks monitoring procedure

All project partners, e.g. WP leaders are responsible for risk monitoring process of the activities on its WP.

- WP owners identify possible risks/uncertainties in their WP and prepare its description.
- The risks monitoring sheet are communicated to Project coordinator (NLBA).
- Project Coordinator (NLBA) register, analyses and priorities risks/uncertainties and discussed the possible solutions with PSC.
- Project Coordinator (NLBA) plans and implements risk responses.

Steering Committee meetings will be used also to organize a risk brainstorming sessions and find the solutions.

7. Partners' administrative and financial reporting

The main guidelines for the reporting are laid out in the Project Management Plan. There will be six biannual financial reports of the partners and 2 general quality reports. Project Contact persons from each HEI are responsible for project administration and Coordinator together with Cooordinator will check the supporting documents for financial reporting uploads on google drive twice a year. During their review, they will take into consideration following assessment criteria:

- Conformity of the expenditures with the budget of the project;
- Eligibility of the expenditures;
- Correctness and completeness of all supporting documents and certified copies of invoices;
- Correctness of the calculations and applied exchange rates;
- That any changes which occurred between budget categories are eligible and justified;
- Financial biannual reports must be signed in original by the appointed contact person of partner institution;
- Expenditures must be in conformity, including full eligibility, with the allocated budget.

In case that information in Biannual Report are not complete or justified, the PS will help and make recommendations on how this situation can be rectified prior to the final approval of the Biannual report by the Coordinator. The Report approved in this way is the basis for the transfer of next instalment to the partner institution.