



D8.1

Project quality plan

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Abstract:	The project quality plan (the project handbook) constitutes a set of project templates, explanations on the project management process, review process, quality checks, meeting organisation, which is communicated to all partners.
Keywords:	Quality planning, quality assurance, quality control



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Executive Summary

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

- Quality planning refers to quality policies like meeting, deliverable or publication policies, the definition of responsibilities as well as the creation of a project visual identity including a project logo, project-like designed templates, etc. In order to communicate adequately within the project as well as with/to project-external persons, several tools, such as project policies including meetings, deliverables and the publication process of scientific papers, are established and explained in this document.
- Quality assurance involves the establishment of Interim Management Reports (IMR), clear definition of responsibilities and regular, clearly guided telephone conferences. A well-defined internal review process further supports the quality assurance of deliverables.
- Quality control focuses on feedback through internal processes (internal review process) and external advices (Advisory Board). It further monitors how feedback is implemented and assures the project outcomes through proactive risk management.

The plan is effective throughout the lifetime of the project, but is open to revision when necessary. Responsibilities for quality planning, assurance and control are shared between all partners, which allow various views on quality issues in order to reach the optimal outcome.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

The project quality plan is an essential part of the EXFILES project management. Its purpose is to describe how quality will be managed throughout the project-lifecycle. Quality always has to be planned in a project in order to prevent unnecessary rework, as well as waste of cost and time. Quality should also be considered from both, an outcome and process perspective. The processes and activities that produce deliverables need to fulfil certain quality levels in order to reach the expected high-quality outcome. To address all quality requirements and quality assurance mechanisms in the EXFILES project, an internal document called the 'Project Quality Plan' has been elaborated by the project team. This plan acts as the quality go-to resource for the project and all partners will adhere to the project quality plan. The quality plan is based on state-of-the-art quality management methodologies (e.g. ISO 21500) combined with the experience of the WP8 Leader Technikon, who successfully implemented it in several other research projects funded under H2020 and FP7 (e.g. ECOSSIAN, HECTOR, ALFA, FutureTPM).

Each project has its own characteristics in terms of partners, WPs etc. and therefore requires a tailor-made quality plan, clear definitions of responsibilities and contact persons. These elements, as well as guidelines on how to get on board of the EXFILES project are described within Chapter 2. The overall **Quality Management Strategy** of EXFILES is addressed in Chapter 3. It is divided into three key activities:

- **Quality Planning**

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

- **Quality Assurance**

Quality assurance creates and monitors project processes, which need to be performed effectively to reach the targeted outcome. "Assurance" intends to prevent mistakes and defects and to guarantee the high quality of the processes. This involves the establishment of Interim Management Reports, clear definition of responsibilities as well as regular and clearly guided telephone conferences (conf calls) but also face-to-face meetings. These activities within EXFILES are summarized in Section 3.2.

- **Quality Control**

Quality control will be actively performed by all partners, e.g. by acting as an internal reviewer of deliverables. A clear internal review process has been defined before deliverable submission to provide feedback to the editor. A proactive risk management process has already been mentioned within the DoA. The risk management has been established as planned in order to guarantee the project quality and avoid delays or failures. Feedback on the project progress and outcomes by the Advisory Board will support the quality control activities and guide the project into the right direction. This is described in Section 3.3.

The specific EXFILES quality requirements regarding meetings, deliverables and Interim Management Reports are outlined in Chapter 4.

The goal of the following chapters is to give an overall explanation and more operational guidelines of how the targeted high-quality can be assured.

Chapter 2 Getting on Board

This chapter introduces the project characteristics in order to allow new members to get easier on board and find the most important information at a glance. Therefore, this chapter will introduce shortly the main elements of the EXFILES project in terms of participants, WPs and responsibilities.

2.1 Project Structure

EXFILES is a research and innovation project with nine Work Packages (WPs) and 14 partners, coordinated by TEC. The complete list of beneficiaries is as follows:

- 1) **TEC** - TECHNIKON Forschungs- und Planungsgesellschaft mbH, Austria (AT)
- 2) **CEA** - Commissariat à l'énergie atomique et aux énergies alternatives
- 3) **IRCGN** – Ministère de l'intérieur
- 4) **BKA** – Bundeskriminalamt
- 5) **CNI** – Centro Nacional de Inteligencia
- 6) **CSIC** – Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior Deinvestigaciones Scientificas
- 7) **NFI** – Netherland Forensic Institute
- 8) **RHUL** – Royal Holloway and Bedford new College
- 9) **RISCURE** – Riscure BV
- 10) **Texplained** - Texplained
- 11) **ULille** – Université de Lille
- 12) **Cyber Intel** – Cyber Intelligence SL
- 13) **NCIS** - Politidirektoratet
- 14) **SYNACKTIV** - Synacktiv

2.1.1 General Assembly

The **General Assembly** (GA) is the assembly of all partners. It was established within the proposal and therefore included into the Consortium Agreement (see CA 6.3.1):

“The General Assembly is the ultimate decision-making body of the Consortium to which both the Executive Board and the Strategic Direction shall report and be accountable. In addition to the rules described in”

The following representatives and deputies have been defined to present their organization within the EXFILES General Assembly:

	Representative	Deputy
TEC	Klaus-Michael	Patrick
CEA	Assia	Driss
IRCGN	Adam	Stéphane
BKA	Jürgen	Christian
CNI	Andrés	Cinta

	Representative	Deputy
CSIC	Salvador	Manuel
NFI	Klaas	Nico
RHUL	Konstantinos	Rebecca
RISCURE	Alexander	Jasiek
Texplained	Clarisse	Oliver
ULille	Marcel	Audrey
Cyber Intel	Hector	Ismael
NCIS	Håvard	Kenneth
SYNACKTIV	Renaud	Tiphaine

2.1.2 Executive Board

The **Executive Board** (EB) is the assembly of all work package leaders and is chaired by the technical leader, Assia Tria from CEA. It was established within the proposal and therefore included into the Consortium Agreement (see CA 6.3.2):

“The Executive Board is the supervisory body for the execution of the Project which shall report to both the Strategic Direction and the General Assembly and be accountable to the General Assembly. In addition to the rules described.”

The following representatives and deputies have been defined for the EXFILES Executive Board:

		WP Leader	Deputy
WP1	CNI	Fernando	David
WP2	ULille	Marcel	Audrey
WP3	Cyber Intel	Hector	Ismael
WP4	Texplained	Oliver	Clarisse
WP5	CEA	Driss	Assia
WP6	BKA	Christian	Jürgen
WP7	TEC	Patrick	Marion
WP8	TEC	Patrick	Marion
WP9	TEC	Patrick	Marion

A **Technical Progress** conf call is held **once a month via an Audio Conference system**. Project members can find the dial in information for these calls on the project internal file sharing platform.

2.1.3 Advisory Board Members

To strengthen the influence and engagement of public corporations and organisations within the EXFILES project, the consortium will be assisted and advised by an Advisory Board. Project members have access to an overview of its members and their contact details via the project internal sharing platform.

2.2 Steps towards Participation

1) Initial registration

New participants in the project need to contact the coordinator (TEC) in order to receive an account and access, among other things, to the project internal sharing platform.

2) Contact details and mailing list

All contact details will be added to the EXFILES contact list and the new participant to relevant mailing lists upon subscription requests, as these are central tools for all project internal communication.

Further details are described in Deliverable D7.1 – “*Internal and external IT communication infrastructure and project website*” and the internal Project Handbook.

3) Project handbook

New participants will receive the handbook as short introduction to get familiar with:

- the *EXFILES infrastructure* (file sharing platform, public website, mailing lists, conference call tools, etc.),
- the *project structure* (partners, hierarchy of bodies, most important documents at a glance) – see Section 2.1,
- the *project procedures* (decisions, meetings, deliverables, publications) and
- the *project templates* (the internal handbook includes links to the templates on the file sharing platform).

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

4) Security incident process

In case a participant detects any potential security issues, he or she is invited to send an email to the coordinator (TEC) and the Security Officer (CNI). The Coordinator and the Security Screening Board are responsible to ensure a quick reaction and investigation.

5) Introduction to partners and start

Once being familiar with the project policies and the IT tools, newcomers will find the most relevant documents like the Description of Action (DoA), Grant Agreement (GA) and Consortium Agreement (CA) on the project internal file sharing platform.

Chapter 3 Quality Management Strategy

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

3.1 Quality Planning

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

3.1.1 Visual Identity

The creation of a corporate visual identity plays a significant role in the way the EXFILES project presents itself to both internal and external stakeholders. A corporate visual identity expresses the values and ambitions of our project and its characteristics. In addition, it provides the project with visibility and distinctiveness. Our corporate visual identity is of great importance for people being aware of the project and remember its name and core objectives at the right time. The following subchapters present the actions, which were taken in order to create a visual identity of the project

3.1.2 Project Policies

The internal project guidelines, or so-called project policies, were established to organize internal and external processes in terms of meetings, deliverables and publications, to ensure quality.

3.1.2.1 Meetings

The consortium decided in general, that the hosting partner of a meeting pays for conference facilities, catering, and the like while each partner pays for accommodation and provisions. Usually the host invites for lunch and coffee breaks during the meeting. If possible, the hosting partner invites the partners to one common dinner. The meeting locations have to change regularly in order to achieve a fair distribution of costs. To keep costs down, we prefer to meet at company facilities that can often be used for free. Due to the current situation (COVID-19) digital meetings might replace some face-to-face meeting.

If that is not possible, the host can also arrange/ask for offers for conference rooms in a hotel. Then the partners pay separately their conference fees (room fees including coffee and lunch breaks).

The following bullet points should be a kind of checklist for the host of upcoming meetings/workshops:

Meeting Room(s):

- On the first day we need one big room for approx. 35-40 people (if every partner shows up with 2-3 persons; a participant list will be created and provides further details).
- For the second day parallel sessions might be suitable. To plan such sessions, one-two rooms (for approx. 15 - 20 persons each) are required. (It will be discussed in advanced how many break-out sessions will be necessary for the dedicated meeting.)

- Are there any costs for the conference room/day/person, e.g. coffee break or lunch?
- Are there any other expenses?

Infrastructure/Equipment:

- Free WLAN at conference
- Internet connection
- Projector in each room
- Flip charts and pens
- Power outlets for all participants
- Optional: Microphone/Speaker for large rooms

If the meeting is held remotely, the consortium will use the coordinator's or a partner's conf call system.

3.1.2.2 Deliverables

Deliverables must be put into the "Deliverables Folder" of the corresponding Work Package on the file sharing platform. Please use the following file naming:

- ***EXFILES-[D.xx.x]-[Title]-[Level of Dissemination]-[Due-Month].***

Type of deliverables

- **"R"** (Document, report)
- **"DEM"** (Demonstrator, pilot, prototype)
Deliverables marked with type "DEM" will be accompanied by a small written report outlining its structure and purpose in order to justify the achievement of the deliverable.
- **"DEC"** (Websites, patent filings, videos, etc.)
Deliverables marked with type "DEC" will be accompanied by a small written report outlining its structure and purpose in order to justify the achievement of the deliverable.
- **"OTHER"** (Other)
Deliverables marked with type "OTHER" will be accompanied by a small written report outlining its structure and purpose in order to justify the achievement of the deliverable.
- **"ORDP"** (Open Research Data Pilot)
Deliverables marked with type "ORDP" consists in the Data Management Plan and its accompanying guidelines.
- **"ETHICS"** (Other)
Deliverables marked with type "ETHICS" are specific deliverables required by the European Commission to ensure processes and materials related to the project satisfy ethical expectations.

Dissemination level

- **"PU"** (Public): for deliverables which will be publicly disclosed.
- **"CO"** (Confidential): for deliverables which will be disclosed only to the consortium and the European Commission.

- **“CI”** (Classified Information): information as referred to in Commission Decision 2001/844/EC

As deliverables are the most important outcome of the project, excellent quality needs to be ensured. Therefore, an internal review process has been defined, which is described in detail in Section 3.3.2. Additionally, a more detailed description concerning document management and the projects' collaborative tools can be found in Deliverable D7.1 “Internal and external IT communication infrastructure and project website”.

3.1.2.3 Policy for publication of Results

- 1) **Inform the consortium about your scientific publication via** the publication mailing list. Prior notice of any planned publication shall be given to the other parties concerned at least 30 days before the publication in accordance with the CA 8.4.1. Any objection to the planned publication shall be made in writing to all Parties within 21 days after receipt of the written notice. If no objection is made within the time limit stated above, the publication is permitted. (CA 8.4.1)
- 2) **Ensure that the paper includes the acknowledgement from the EU**
All publications or any other dissemination relating to foreground was generated with the assistance of financial support from the Union and shall include the following statement (GA 29.4):



“This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 883156”

- 3) **The paper details shall be included into the publications list on the project internal file sharing platform**
- 4) **As soon as the paper is accepted/published, provide a post-print to TEC** (check copyrights! – a useful tool to find out the copyrights via the ISSN number can be found via the following link: <http://www.sherpa.ac.uk/romeo/index.php>)
- 5) **TEC will create a folder on the project internal file sharing platform, and update the website accordingly**
- 6) **You will receive a data specification sheet to be filled for each underlying dataset** (metadata of your dataset, metadata to be filled in for confidential datasets as well)

3.2 Quality Assurance

The focus of quality assurance is on the creation and monitoring of processes. Quality assurance creates and monitors project processes, which need to be performed effectively to reach the targeted outcome. This involves the establishment of Interim Management Reports, clear responsibilities and regular, clearly guided telephone conferences and face-to-face meetings.

3.2.1 Interim Management Reports (IMR)

The basic idea of internal “Interim Management Reports” is to implement a tool, which forces each partner to provide information regarding their ongoing and planned work as well as information on the resources spent. The IMR is planned as a short report on a quarterly basis. It is an efficient tool to provide the coordinator a good understanding of the status and progress of the work and to detect any possible delays or deviations well in advance. Furthermore, the cumulative report serves as a

helpful basis for the creation of the periodic reports due to the European Commission. The following sections explain the structure and the section targets of the IMR. While Chapter 1 of the IMR gives a short introduction to the partners, Chapter 2 “Explanation of the work carried out by the beneficiaries and overview of the progress including deviations” asks for partner information regarding the work performed within the respective quarter. This helps the coordinator to monitor partner activities and the progress made within the last quarter. It further asks the WP leader explicitly for the achievements and results per WP, in order to have a clear view on the results and how they will impact the ongoing work. This information will also be used in top of traditional meetings to detect communication opportunities.

It is also of high importance to add a section which gives the partners the opportunity to describe deviations and corrections. This section gives ideas of issues partners have to cope with and that may be related to other deeper problems. This will be at the core of the risk management process followed for the project coordination and management, as is possible to check in the example bellow:

WP8 – Project, Risk and Innovation Management [M01-M36]
Overview on Tasks in WP12: T8.1: Administrative Coordination [M01-M36] T8.2: Technical Coordination and Innovation Management [M01-M36] T8.3: Financial, Quality and Risk Management [M06-M36]
<i>Explain the work carried out in WP9 during the reporting period for your beneficiary!</i> <fill in>
<i>Explain the <u>reasons for deviations</u> from the DoA, the <u>consequences</u> and the <u>proposed corrective actions</u>.</i> <i>Include explanations for tasks not fully implemented, critical objectives not fully achieved and/or not being on schedule. Explain also the impact on other WP/tasks on the available resources and the planning.</i>
Deviation from DoA: <yes/no>
<i>If yes, please provide the following information:</i>
Reason: <fill in if applicable> Consequences: <fill in if applicable> Corrective actions: <fill in if applicable>

Figure 1: Extract of IMR Chapter 2 “Explanation of the work carried out by the beneficiaries and overview of the progress including deviations”

The IMR gives the coordinator and all partners the position to share information about ongoing work of the overall project, to be up to date and always able to provide an informed answer. The third chapter of the IMR focuses on the use of efforts. A dedicated table where partners fill in rough estimates of their efforts each quarter provides a good comparison of “plan” vs. “is” person months. The IMR is also used as a tool to help the coordinator and the technical lead to control the risk of rejection of costs during the financial reporting: it provides a basis on which the partners may be advised on the eligibility of costs and activities¹.

¹ Legal note: please note these advices are not committing advices: each partner is eventually responsible to ensure it satisfies the eligibility conditions stated by the Funding Authority.

WP	Total Planned (according to DoA)	Actual Expenditure								
		M01-M03	M04-M06	M07-M09	M10-M12	M13-M15	M16-M18	Total (M01-M18)	Total in %	Remaining resources
WP1	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	!Zero Divide	2,00
WP2	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	0%	0,50
WP3	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	0%	7,00
WP4	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	0%	8,00
WP5	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	0%	43,00
WP6	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	0%	1,00
WP7	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	0%	0,50
WP8	0	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	<fill in>	0,00	0%	1,00
Total	0	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,00	0%	63,00

Figure 2: Extract of IMR Chapter 3 “Effort Overview”

This well-thought-out IMR concept will support the quality assurance within the EXFILES project in order to cope with potential risks, leap chances, and monitor the projects process towards objectives.

3.2.2 Responsibilities & Internal Review

Transparency of roles and responsibilities has a big impact on the project success. Uncertainty can dramatically affect individual, organisational as well as the consortium performance. Therefore, as already mentioned in Chapter 2 responsible persons for each organisation and per WP were defined. In a further step, responsibilities for deliverables are defined. While organisations leading deliverables were already defined within the DoA, the concrete editor (ie. a person from the organisation) responsible for requesting and guiding partner inputs towards a punctual and high-quality submission, is named two months before the submission deadline. Following the principle of clear leadership, only one person can be editor for each deliverable. In line with the internal review process (described in Section 3.3.2), one or two specific internal reviewers will be defined for each deliverable and clear deadlines for first draft version, the review feedback as well as for the submission are established.

3.2.3 Telephone Conferences & Meetings

Communication is definitely one of the most essential foundations of successful project collaborations. Therefore, the EXFILES consortium established regular conference calls and video-conferences (e.g. monthly Technical Progress conference calls requesting WP status reports and checking the project progress and several WP-internal/ cross-WP meetings and conference calls). Currently, TEC provides their conference system for regular Technical Progress conference calls and the WP Leaders are responsible to define a system for their WP-internal calls. The virtual meetings are planned in parallel to the face-to-face meetings.

To ensure the project success, it is necessary to implement an efficient meeting structure. At the beginning of the EXFILES project, the online Kick-off meeting took place on 8-9th July 2020. The different expectations and schedules were discussed in order to make a definitive plan about the further work plan and required actions.

We plan two Executive Board meetings per year which will be combined with the General Assembly meetings once a year (planned venue is at a partner's premises). In addition, there will be some WP-internal/cross-WP face-to-face meetings on request, but based on the partners' experience, there will be more remote conferences than physical meetings. Each beneficiary is responsible for appropriately managing its travel and other costs in order to ensure a continuity in its representation to the different kinds of relevant meetings throughout the project.

3.3 Quality Control

The focus of quality control is on feedback and deviation management in the project. Quality control ensures that feedback: it is taken into account from internal as well as from external advisors and therefore positively influences the work towards the project objectives. Risk Management is an integral element of quality control as the proactive notice of deviations from the DoA allows the consortium to control the consequences or even transform those consequences into opportunities.

3.3.1 Advisory Board

The consortium will be supported and advised by an external Advisory Board (AB), consisting of selected European organisations. Their valuable feedback to the technical process of the project brings many benefits for the EXFILES project. The AB members will provide an external unprejudiced view advising on the project in terms of detailed technical goals and impact, comment on economic feasibility and achieved or missed targets. To ensure high quality results within the EXFILES project, a strong cooperation with the AB members will actively be pursued and facilitated by frequent interaction in the form of face-to-face meetings, conference calls and feedback rounds.

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

3.3.2 Internal Review Process

To ensure submitted deliverables of high quality, an internal review process has been defined. The main goal of this process is to establish internal feedback by partners who did not directly participate as editor or contributors to the deliverable before submitting it to the European Commission. Ideally, the internal reviewer(s) is selected amongst partners not contributing to the WP. The reviewer(s) should be assigned at least two months before the submission deadline. As a pre-step of the review process, the editor has to share the ToC with the reviewer(s) and the management team at least one and a half months before submission deadline, so they are able to check if something important is missing in the ToC. The review feedback should primarily focus on the content of the deliverable (soundness, readability, proper coverage of what the deliverable is supposed to report on) and additionally report on typos, formatting, and overall appearance.

In addition, the reviewer(s) also the SSB will perform a check of the deliverable and ensure that no security issues occur (e.g. CI included in a PU/CO deliverable). The SSB has the same amount of time as the selected reviewer and also follows the same procedure when providing feedback.

The review process is shown and explained below. Please note the exact dates may be adapted for some deliverables depending on their characteristics (size or importance for instance) and/or timing (holidays for instance); such modifications will be announced well ahead of time to the relevant partners.

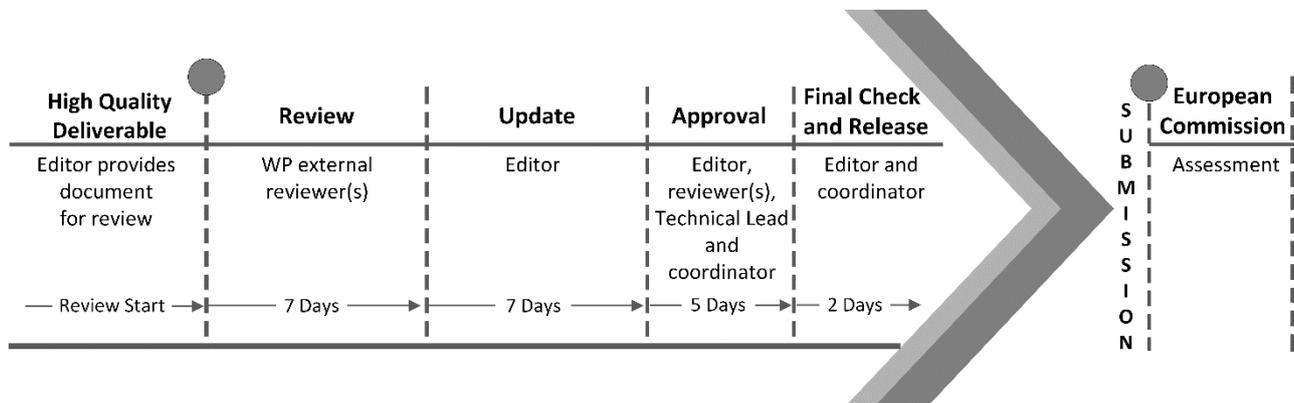


Figure 3: Internal Review Process

Below are described the steps of the internal review process. Each step has a driver which is responsible for enabling a smooth step execution, for detecting any issue susceptible to cause delay or quality issue in the deliverable production and/or delivery, for propagating the information about these issues to the impacted participants to the process, for ensuring the step ends timely, and which is the main contact point of the parties involved at this step.

3.3.2.1 Steps driven by WP leaders

Step 0 “Edition”:

1. The editor and the contributors produce the High-Quality Deliverable draft and activates the “Track changes” mode before saving to ensure the comments which will be made by the reviewers are noticeable.
2. The editor puts it on the project internal file sharing platform in the “Deliverables/Dxx.x” directory of the relevant WP folder.
3. The editor also puts a copy of the review form template to this folder, which will then be used by the reviewers.
4. The editor also creates an empty directory “Reviews” which will be used by the reviewers.
5. The editor sends an email to the internal reviewer(s) with the WP leader, the Security Officer and the project management team in copy to notify them that the deliverable is ready for review.

Step 1 “Review” – 7 days:

1. The reviewer(s) reads the High-Quality Deliverable and compare the content against its objective as defined in the work plan.
2. The reviewer(s) checks the “Track changes” mode is activated and gives feedback by adding comments and edits in the deliverable draft with mark-up as follows: typos and small changes are directly entered on the text while using "track changes". Comments are entered into the text as MS Word comments.
3. The reviewer(s) fill in the **Internal Review Template**. The internal review form guides the reviewers through specific questions, in order to make sure that the content complies with the quality claims of the EC (e.g. accordance with the DoA, required information, structure, etc.) as well as the project partners. It monitors the structure as well as the compliance with the description in the DoA. This gives feedback to editor of this Deliverable in a clearly structured form and helps the editor to address all comments. Below a screenshot of the internal review form in EXFILES is presented.
4. The reviewer(s) sends an email to the editor with the WP leader and the project management team in copy to notify them that the deliverable is ready for update.



Review Form
For the Internal Reviewer
EXFILES deliverable:

* Type of comments: M = Major comment, m = minor comment, a = advice			
Date of Internal Review: 		Internal Reviewer: 	
	Answer	Comments	Type*
1. Is the deliverable in accordance with			
i. the Description of Action?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
ii. the international State-of-the-Art?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
2. Is the quality of the deliverable such			
i. that it can be sent to the EC?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
ii. that it needs further editing?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
iii. that the content needs to be improved?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
3. Does the Deliverable include			
i. a clear structure (e.g. appropriate, understandable presentation of the work performed)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
ii. a sufficient and meaningful executive summary	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
iii. an appropriate introduction	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a
iv. a meaningful summary & conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		<input type="checkbox"/> M <input type="checkbox"/> m <input type="checkbox"/> a

Figure 4: Internal Review Form

Step 2 “Update” – 7 days:

1. The editor makes the necessary changes and updates. For the updates, it is important that in general, comments are not directly removed. Instead, there must be first a discussion between the involved authors to update the deliverable according to the received comments. Secondly, the editor either adds text to comment how they were addressed or adds additional comments on its own.
2. The editor sends an email to the internal reviewer(s), the Security Officer, the project management team and with the WP leader in copy to notify them that the deliverable is ready for approval.

3.3.2.2 Steps driven by the Coordinator

Step 3 “Approval” – 5 days:

1. The reviewer(s) checks his/her comments have been addressed and, if required, updates his/her review form and confirm to the project management team, with the editor and the WP leader in copy, that the deliverable is ready for final check and release.
2. The Coordinator checks the deliverable and may propose comments and changes or confirms that the deliverable is ready for final check and release.

Step 4 “Submission” – 2 days:

1. The editor makes the last fixes, performs a final check and puts the final version on the project internal file sharing platform.
2. The editor sends an email to the coordination with the internal reviewer(s) and the WP leader in copy to notify them that the deliverable is final.
3. The Coordinator performs a final check (formatting updates, consistency check, check of front page, etc.) and creates the final pdf.

The Coordinator finally submits the final document to the EC.

3.3.3 Risk Management

To guarantee the achievement of the objectives of the EXFILES project, it is essential to identify and understand the significant project risks.

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

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

The risks defined in the DoA, will be graded into low/medium/high risk levels.

	low	low probability of occurrence and low impact
	medium	low/ high probability of occurrence and high/low impact
	high	high probability of occurrence and high impact

The risks will be monitored on a regular basis and an updated risk table will be provided within the periodic reports. Further, a detailed classification and evaluation will be provided within WP8 “Project, Risk and Innovation Management”. The Risk Assessment Plan will show how potential risks

are assessed and mitigated in order to avoid any negative influence on the EXFILES project objectives.

In addition to the above-mentioned tools and procedures, the project partners' and the project management team's profound experience with H2020 projects implicates a high level of competence, expert knowledge, skills and qualifications, which further increases the quality of the project work. Furthermore, besides these hard skills, also soft skills, such as motivation, team spirit, and interpersonal interaction contribute to high quality project performance.

Chapter 4 EXFILES Quality Requirements

The following subchapters describe specific requirements that must be taken into account every time one of the processes described in Chapter 3 is carried out. The fulfilment of these requirements is essential to achieve the expected quality throughout the project duration.

4.1 Meetings and Telephone Conferences

Details about the EXFILES meeting process can be found in Section 3.1.2.1 and 3.2.3.

The host of an EXFILES internal meeting has to prepare a 1-2 pager with logistic information about one month before the meeting. This 1-2 pager is checked by the coordinator TEC and discussed within the TP-call to make sure that the meeting allocation fits the planned meeting and the number of participants. The number of participants can be evaluated by a participant list on the project internal file sharing platform, which needs to be filled by all partners at least one and a half months before the meeting. The coordinator together with the meeting host, has to prepare the agenda about one month before the meeting as well. For those people not able to physically attend the meeting, the host is responsible for preparing a possibility to join the meeting remotely.

All these specific requirements are already taken into account when choosing the host of the next meeting. If a partner volunteers to host a meeting, but is not able to fulfil the meeting process described in Section 3.1.2.1, he will not be chosen for hosting it.

The Technical Progress meetings are held every month via a conf call system provided by Technikon.

The coordinator is continuously in touch with the EB members, regularly collects discussion items and prepares the agenda for these conf calls. To ensure the quality of the conf calls, the agenda has to be shared with the EB one week before the conf call.

4.2 Deliverables

Details about the Deliverables and the review process can be found in Section 3.1.2.2 and Section 3.3.2.

The Coordinator gets in touch with the responsible organisation as well as the dedicated reviewers already one and a half months before the submission deadline to check the first draft of the table of content. The reviewers then provide feedback on the table of content and already possible shortcomings on an early stage. The editor is responsible for updating the table of content accordingly.

The editor has to send the deliverable 3-4 weeks before submission to the reviewer(s), the Security Officer as well as the project management team. The reviewer(s) performs a review of the deliverable and makes sure that it meets all requirements described in the DoA. This is the minimum quality requirement for EXFILES. Our aim is that the content of deliverables goes even beyond to what is described in the DoA.

The editor is responsible to check the feedback of the reviewers and to update the deliverable accordingly. The final version of the deliverable is then sent to the reviewer(s), the Security Officer and the project management team for final approval. If a deliverable does not fulfil the quality requirements of EXFILES, this process will be repeated until it is at least in line with the DoA. The caused delay has to be explained and justified by the Editor, who - together with the Coordinator - checks, if the delay affects other deliverables or the project progress in general.

The reviewer(s) has to fill a deliverable review form, which serves as an internal prove that at least the minimum quality requirement - deliverable complies with the DoA - is achieved.

As soon as the reviewer(s) gives his/her okay, the Coordinator performs a final check and formatting updates, before officially submitting the deliverable via the participant portal.

If a deliverable is not ready for submission by the official submission deadline, the Coordinator will inform the project officer about the delay and mention if this delay has any impact on other deliverables or the project progress in general.

4.3 Interim Management Reports & Risk assessment

Details about the Interim Management Reports and the Risk assessment can be found in Section 3.2.1 and 3.3.3 respectively.

The Interim Management Reports have to be provided by each Partner on a quarterly basis. For this purpose the coordinator TEC creates individual templates, which allow all partners to prepare their report without blocking any other partner. Technikon then checks the individual reports and if shortcomings (e.g. inconsistencies in the description and effort overview) are identified, the responsible partner is contacted individually and needs to update his report. In the end, Technikon prepares a cumulative report with the inputs from all partners, which is checked by all partners. If shortcomings or inconsistencies are identified, they will be discussed in the next TP conf call and fixed latest within the next Interim Management Report.

4.4 Overview of the EXFILES quality requirements

The following table provides and overview of the EXFILES quality requirements.

Category	Requirement	Metric(s)
Meetings and telephone conferences	Notice of upcoming meetings sent on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Meetings and telephone conferences	Meeting agenda sent on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Meetings and telephone conferences	Review of actions from previous meetings during the meeting itself	Done in all meetings
Meetings and telephone conferences	All points from the Agenda are addressed during the meeting itself	Less than 5% non-conformities
Meetings and telephone conferences	Meeting minutes sent on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Meetings and telephone conferences	Validation of the meeting minutes from the previous conf call	Done in all meetings
Deliverables	Editor/Reviewer roles assigned on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Deliverables	TOC sent on time	Less than 10% non-conformities

Category	Requirement	Metric(s)
Deliverables	Draft sent on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Deliverables	Reviews sent on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Deliverables	Final version sent on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Deliverables	Approval made on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Deliverables	Submission made on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
IMR	IMR filled on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
IMR	No request for revision required by EXFILES Management	Less than 10% need to be revised
IMR	No inconsistencies identified in the Cumulative Report	Done with all Cumulative Reports
Risk Assessment	Risk assessment filled in on time	Less than 10% non-conformities
Risk Assessment	No request for revision required by EXFILES Management	Less than 10% need to be revised

Chapter 5 Summary and Conclusion

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

The coordinator and technical leader monitor that the above-described processes are fulfilled. In case of any deviations to the planned work the management team is in charge of taking necessary mitigation measures. The plan is effective throughout the lifetime of the project, but is open to revision with the governance and process improvements which will happen during the execution. As described in Chapter 3, responsibilities for quality planning, assurance and control are shared, but clearly defined, between all partners, which allow various views on quality issues in order to reach the optimal outcome.

However, being this a public deliverable, not all details about the quality processes and requirements are included.

Technikon prepared a project- and a financial-handbook, including more detailed information, which is available for all project partners on the project internal file sharing platform.

Chapter 6 List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Translation
AB	Advisory Board
CA	Consortium Agreement
CPA	Critical Path Analysis
DoA	Description of Action (Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement)
EB	Executive Board
EC	European Commission
F2F	Face-to-Face
GA	Grant Agreement
H2020	Horizon 2020
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMR	Interim Management Report
NDA	Non-Disclosure Agreement
PM	Person Month
PR	Periodic Report
RTD	Research and Technical Development
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SSB	Security Screening Board
ToC	Table of Content
WP	Work Package