



QUALITY ASSURANCE MANUAL

D1.4

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DELIVERABLE INFORMATION

| | |
|------------------------|--|
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ACRONYMS

| | |
|------------|-----------------------------|
| CA | Consortium Agreement |
| DMP | Data Management Plan |
| EC | European Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| QAC | Quality Assurance Committee |
| PMB | Project Management Board |

1 INTRODUCTION

In project ZEAS, project quality activities are covered by WP1. These activities ensure an efficient execution of the project with good control of progress and quality of work and deliverables.

Monitoring the project progress and quality assessment activities are managed by the Quality Assurance Committee, appointed by Management Board. QAC is responsible for review of project deliverables and other outputs for conformity with the project plan before the submission to EC. Review of deliverable process is defined in separate document which is integrated into this one.

Therefore, the structure of D1.4 - Quality Assurance Manual is organized in the following sections:

- Quality assessment tools
- Project progress reports
- Conclusions

This document together with Deliverables D1.1 Project Management Handbook, D1.2 Risk Management Plan and D1.3 Data Management Plan establishes a framework for the project consortium to effectively carry out all management activities and monitor the project for current and future risks and avoid negative effects.

2 QUALITY ASSESSMENT TOOLS

2.1 Verification of work progress

The Quality Assurance Committee is responsible for the project quality management and to ensure that the project activities are necessary to design, plan and implement ZEAS are effective and efficient with respect to the purpose of the objectives and its performance.

The main responsibility of the QAC is to ensure that the scientific and technical activities of the project are accomplished successfully. While the QAC will oversee the application of QA standards to deliverables and, if needed, call on other internal or external experts.

The QAC will have quarterly meetings (usually as online conferences) to discuss progress within and across the WPs and the need for any corrective measures. The PMB will discuss arising issues in more detail than can be done by the Project Management Board, e.g. down to the task level. They will discuss and propose solutions in case of:

- Foreseeable difficulties in a WP to achieve objectives or deliverables
- Need for harmonisation of activities between and across WPs
- Obstacles and barriers causing delays in progress, in particular if this is likely to affect subsequent project activities or results.
- Need for reallocation of tasks within or among the WPs, if needed
- Weak performance or malfunctioning of a partner

The QAC decides whether an issue can be tackled internally or has to be communicated to and decided by the PMB or the EC. In the latter cases, the QAC will develop a proposal to be communicated to the PMB for decision.

To ensure a regular monitoring of the project's tasks, WP leaders are asked to report on the progress of their WP monthly in the PMB meeting. For this purpose, WP leaders should collect the views of the task leaders and try to present information regarding:

- Expected on-going activities;
- Short overview of the activities undertaken during that month period;
- Issues/delays with the activities. In case there are issues, the WP leader should also identify other tasks that can be impacted, and specify a plan to minimise the risks of delay or other negative consequences.

If there is a serious issue, LDCK, as Coordinator, will set up an additional virtual meeting with the WP leader and the task leader to develop a plan to minimise the impact of that issue.

To facilitate the project progress monitoring, the ZEAS Team, using MS Teams, was created and granted access to the consortium. This tool provides information and standard templates for internal communication on deliverables and milestones status.

Within the team site, the QAC has a dedicated channel for communication.

2.2 Deliverable Quality Assurance and Review Process

All Deliverables will be initially reviewed by the Work Package leader (WPL). Before submission to the EC they will undergo a review by the Project Coordinator (PC) and a Controller will be appointed for each Deliverable. Controllers, who can be members of the partners' organizations or other organizations, will have to check:

- The content of the Deliverable;
- The relevance with the subject;
- The coherence with the task objectives;
- The methodology followed;
- The quality of the outcomes;
- The quality of the presentation;
- The general layout.

For this purpose, a **Deliverable review template** is available on SharePoint. The draft will be marked as: a) acceptable in current state, b) acceptable with minor revisions, c) acceptable with major revisions or d) not acceptable due to high level of non-conformity.

This process will ensure that the outcomes will follow the conformance criteria and non-conformity is prevented; any non-conformity is identified in an early stage, recommendations and solutions are suggested, and their implementation can be monitored.

The PC will be responsible for the final review and submission.

A Deliverable template, a Deliverable Review template, and other templates are available on SharePoint.

Deliverable review plan and approval process

Every contractual Deliverable, prior to its submission to the EC, will be subject to a review according to the following time plan and process:

- For each Deliverable the WPL is responsible to appoint an appropriate Controller, who may be affiliated to the WP Leading Organisation or to organisations which are part of the PROJECT Consortium;
- A draft version of the Deliverable should be sent by the Deliverable leader (DL) to the Controller as well as WPL and PC in cc at least **20 calendar days** before the submission deadline;
- The Controller will have **6 calendar days** to review the Deliverable;

- In case corrective actions are needed, the Controller shall send the document back to the DL, pointing out the corrective actions needed. The partner shall make the requested amendments and integrations and send the document back to the **Controller within 6 calendar days**.
- The Controller shall upload the deliverable for feedback in the SharePoint, informing the **Quality Assurance Committee** and whole consortium via e-mail. Any feedback shall be sent to the DL (and the Controller) within **3 calendar days** from notification.
- The DL will have **3 calendar days** to incorporate the received feedback and send it back to the Project Coordinator.
- The final version of the Deliverable should be sent to the Project Coordinator not later than **2 calendar days** before the submission deadline;
- The Project Coordinator submits the Deliverable to the EC and the file is stored at the internal area of the MS Teams (**SharePoint >General>Files>Deliverables**);
- It is the WPL’s and PC’s responsibility to ensure that this schedule is followed.

2.3 Deliverable Review Process and Timeframe

The schedule proposed in Table 1 is recommended and deliverable leaders are encouraged to adhere to it. However, the timing of specific review stages can be adapted if previously agreed between the deliverable leader and the corresponding reviewers.

| Time Frame & File | Draft Version (20 Calendar days before ddl) | Revised Draft (14 Calendar days before ddl) | Pre-final Version (8 Calendar days before ddl) | Internal Communication | Final Version (2 Calendar days before ddl) | Submission (by Deliverable Deadline) |
|-------------------|---|---|--|------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| From | Deliverable leader | Controller | Deliverable leader | | Deliverable leader | |
| To | Controller | Deliverable leader | Project Coordinator | | Project Coordinator | |
| File | Draft | Revised Draft | Pre-final Version | | Final Version | |

Table 1: Deliverable Review Process and Timeframe

It is the responsibility of the deliverable leader to make sure that the document is ready for starting the review process by the corresponding date and, therefore, to plan the previous writing phase accordingly. The deliverable leader should also take into consideration any internal rule regarding QA adopted by the contributing Parties, so to avoid delays.

2.4 Method to be used by reviewers

When working with Word documents, reviewers' comments and contributions should be done using the “Track Changes” mode combined with specific text comments aligned with the specific section. If the revision is based on a pdf document, the reviewer should use the possibility of adding notes to the text. All files under review should be stored at the relevant file area in the ZEAS SharePoint to have version control and backup.

The reviewers are invited to give detailed and constructive comments (with references, whenever possible) that will help the authors to improve the deliverable. A guiding list of review criteria is provided in Table 2. Example of Deliverable review template questionnaire.

| Aspect | Item | Yes | No |
|-----------------------|---|-----|----|
| Presentation & Layout | Compatibility with the Project template | | |
| | Body text and headings match standards | | |
| | Pages are numbered correctly | | |
| | Headers and footers are updated appropriately | | |
| | Deliverable details | | |
| | Table of content | | |
| | List of abbreviations | | |
| | List of tables | | |
| | Lists of figures | | |
| Body of Document | Document text concise and clear | | |
| | Spelling and grammar check complete | | |
| | Writing style and grammar of high quality | | |
| | Document uses consistent tense | | |
| | Appropriate language | | |
| | Sentences with simple structures | | |

| | | | |
|--------------------|---|--|--|
| | Smooth transitions from one section to another | | |
| | Unnecessary information and words are eliminated | | |
| | Each abbreviation is introduced the first time used | | |
| | Appendices with correct sequence | | |
| | References are identified and listed appropriately | | |
| Consistency | Names and terminology used consistently | | |
| | Charts, graphs, and diagrams are labeled accurately | | |
| | Internal cross-references are accurate | | |
| | Hyperlinks have been tested and work | | |
| | Valid referencing | | |
| | The material is consistent with other existing documents | | |
| Content | Purpose of the document is clear and complete | | |
| | Scope of the document is accurate and complete | | |
| | Document satisfies the defined goals and objectives as per description of tasks in the relevant Work Plan | | |
| | Document is based on the relative literature review | | |
| | Document flow and structure are logical for the reader to follow | | |
| | Potential impact on future deliverables has been considered | | |
| | Material is technically accurate and feasible | | |
| | Potential resources cost and/or schedule impact have been considered | | |
| | Risk factors have been considered, where appropriate | | |
| | Sensitive or proprietary data has been redacted or masked | | |
| | Personal data, privacy, and/or other details are specified | | |

Comments

Deliverable Draft Approval:

| | |
|---|--|
| Acceptable in current state | |
| Acceptable with minor revisions, as per my comments | |
| Acceptable with major revisions, as per my comments | |
| Not acceptable due to high level of non-conformity, as per my comments | |

Date:

Signature:

Print Name:

Title:

Role:

Table 2: Example of Deliverable review template questionnaire

2.5 If a reviewer fails the agreed deadline

In the case where, by unexpected reasons, the reviewer is not able to meet the deadline, the deliverable leader should be informed as soon as possible.

In exceptional cases, if the deliverable leader is not able to replace the reviewer in due time, then the leader should check whether the QA is guaranteed by one reviewer. If it is believed that this is not the case, then the leader should inform the QAC via the leader of the WP within which the deliverable is produced.

The reviewers should take into consideration, when applicable, the issue of protection and management of IPR of the project results, making any suitable comments on this respect.

3 PROJECT PROGRESS REPORTS

Project progress reports will be prepared as a part of periodic reports that will be submitted to the Commission at M19, M37 and M50. The reports will follow the applicable EC template and contain all financial and technical information regarding the project progress, meetings, decisions made and issues which necessitates to be reported to the EC.

Project Progress Reports (PPRs) will have to be available at:

- M20 covering period M1-M18 to be reported to EC as periodic report by 29 August 2025,
- M38 covering period M19-M36 to be reported to EC as periodic report by 1 March 2027,
- M50 covering period M37-M48 to be reported to EC as periodic report by 29 February 2028.

In addition, intermediate internal reports will be prepared if and when deemed necessary by the PMT to supplement the monthly follow-up of activities.

LDCK will provide the reporting tools

- PPR templates (WP status reports) for each WP which will include, besides the activity reporting and the assessment of WP progress towards objectives, information about efforts and cost spent in the reporting period.
- PPR tool for reporting of efforts (by person-month) and costs (by kEUR) by each ZEAS partner.

Stages in the progress reporting:

1. Initiation and preparation of the project progress reports
 - The Coordinator will send a reminder to the WP leaders on the 1st day after the reporting period ends on provision of project status reports and the applicable deadlines.
 - WP leaders are responsible to collect scientific and technical information from the task leaders and the participating partners in the WP and assemble the report within the deadlines.
 - The Coordinator will send a reminder to partners on the same dates to update the PPR tool with used efforts (by person-months) and costs (by kEUR). The beneficiaries are obliged to follow the assigned deadlines for reporting of efforts and costs.
2. Reporting of the status to the PMT
 - The Coordinator will review the WP status reporting and follow up that all WPs have made the necessary reporting within the deadlines.
 - WP leaders will provide an overall report of the WP status, including efforts reported for relevant WPs in the PPR tool during the next PMT meeting. Be attentive that the reported progress (WP status reports) and reported efforts (PPR tool) are to be coherent.
 - The PMT will control the effort and cost consumptions in order to avoid severe deviations from the plan and propose mitigation actions when necessary.
3. Reporting of the status to the EC
 - The reporting to the EC will be based on the information collected in the two steps outlined

above.

- Periodic progress reports will be reported by the Coordinator to the EC at M19, M37 and M50 and follow the internal deadlines applicable for the project deliverables.
- The PMT is responsible for the reporting of the scientific and technical activities of the project in a timely manner with the appropriate quality.
- The Coordinator is responsible to submit the provided periodic progress reports in a timely manner.

4 CONSORTIUM PARTIES

