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## R7.2 PROJECT GUIDE

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# 1 Introduction

## Purpose and use

The main goal of the Project Guide is to support the beneficiaries in managing the DIGIWATER project locally efficiently and successfully and provide all documents necessary for monitoring, reporting and audits. It offers detailed insight into the management structure, activities and roles of partners and budgetary management, definition of eligible and ineligible costs, instructions for reporting and tendering procedures for purchasing goods and services, etc.

The Project Guide will give beneficiaries a shared understanding of what has to be achieved, what has to be delivered, who will be involved, when to deliver, and how to communicate during the project term. This Guide denotes an essential document that should be consulted by every consortium beneficiary and associated partner regarding their obligations, roles and responsibilities.

Most of the rules given in this guide are defined by the Grant Agreement and Consortium Agreement, but procedures for their practical implementation need to be designed in more detail. By clearly defining the procedures for financial and technical management, the communication between the project coordinator and other beneficiaries will be simplified.

Using this guide, the beneficiaries can successfully fulfil their contractual obligations and provide high-quality inputs to the project coordinator, whose responsibility is to further incorporate them in reports for Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

## Management

The Project Coordinator, in collaboration with the Project Steering Committee (PSC), is responsible for developing and managing this Project Guide. Requested deviations from its rules should be made in writing, providing clear justifications directly to the Project Coordinator. Approval for such variations can only be granted by the Project Coordinator, who may consult with the project's Steering Committee. Upon accepting any modification of the original Project Guide's rules, the Coordinator is responsible for issuing a revised version, with new version numbering updated consecutively.

The Project Guide is confidential and will be available only to DIGIWATER's beneficiaries and associated partners at the issue date. Copies of this Project management and reporting guide cannot be disseminated amongst third parties unless with prior approval of the Project Coordinator.

## 2 Management of the DIGIWATER project

### Management structure of the DIGIWATER project

The management structure of the DIGIWATER is designed to ensure effectiveness, flexibility and quality of work and to fit the specific requirements of the Erasmus+ programme for the successful realisation of planned project activities in line with the project application, budget and workplan.

The project consortium consists of 13 partners presented in Table 1.

Table 1 DIGIWATER project consortium.

Partner No.	Name of Partner	Acronym
P1	Norges miljø- og biovitenskapelige universitet	NMBU
P2	Technische Hochschule Ostwestfalen-Lippe	THOWL
P3	Istanbul Teknik Universitesi	ITU
P4	Sumaqua	Sumaqua
P5	Katholieke Universiteit Leuven	KUL
P6	Doscon	Doscon
P7	University of Cyprus	UCY
P8	University "Dunarea de Jos" of Galati	UGAL
P9	SmarTech Automation SRL	SmarTech
P10	MEMSIS	MEMSIS
P11	I.A.CO. Environmental & Water Consultants	IACO
P12	Stadtentwässerungsbetrieb Paderborn	STEB
P13	European Water Association	EWA

Project management is institutional responsibility which means efficient involvement of all institutions' services (finance department, international relation offices, and quality assurance services). By signing the Consortium Agreement, partners agreed with the defined project management procedures and were wholly committed to the project implementation.

### 2.1.1 Roles and responsibilities

The roles of the Project Coordinator can be summarised as follows:

- Oversees the implementation of activities in line with the Grant Agreement.
- Monitor the compliance by the partners with their obligations, and that the project is implemented as planned.
- Ensures the respect of Capacity Building in Higher Education (CBHE) rules.
- Act as the intermediary for all communications between the beneficiaries and the EACEA, including reports, payment and amendment requests.
- Ensure effective and smooth project communications.
- Immediately provides the EACEA with the information related to any change of any of the beneficiaries or to any event likely to affect or delay the implementation of the action.
- Bears responsibility for supplying documents and information to the EACEA which may be required.
- Establishes the requests for payment in line with the Grant Agreement.
- Ensures that the appropriate payments are made to the other beneficiaries without unjustified delay.
- Bears responsibility for providing all the necessary documents in the case of checks and audits initiated before the balance payment, and in the case of evaluation.
- Transfers to all beneficiaries, without delay, documents relating to the project.
- Request and review any documents or information required by the Agency and verify their completeness and correctness before passing them to the Agency.
- Submit the deliverables and reports to the Agency.
- Ensure that all payments are made to the other beneficiaries without unjustified delay.
- Inform the Agency of the amounts paid to each partner, when required under the agreement or requested by the Agency.
- Keep the address list of project contact persons updated and available.
- Transmit documents and information connected with the project to any other partners concerned.

In addition to the administrative and financial control functions foreseen in the Grant Agreement and mentioned above, the Project Coordinator performs project integration management and management of internal communications. The Project Coordinator makes sure that all partners receive the Project Guide – a concise reference to the project management structure, tasks, responsibilities and procedures at all levels of project execution at the beginning of the project.

The project manager will have access to a dedicated and experienced project accountant and support from the EU Project Management Office.

The roles of the project partners can be summarised as follows:

- Equally responsible as the Coordinator.
- Implement activities under their responsibility, in line with the Application and in a timely manner.
- Be responsible for complying with any legal obligations incumbent on them jointly or individually.
- Make proper internal arrangements for the adequate implementation of activities.
- Inform the Coordinator immediately of any change likely to affect the delay in implementation or any other change in name, address, or any legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation.
- Submit in due time to the Coordinator: the data needed to draw up records, financial statements or other documents; all necessary documents in the events of audits, checks or evaluation; and any additional information to be provided to the EACEA.
- Contribute to disseminating the project results in their organisation, community and/or region.

All partners, including the Coordinator, are responsible for promoting that financing is provided from the European Union funds, in line with the visibility demands ruled by the Grant Agreement.

- **Project Coordinator (PC)** is responsible for overall project management (technical and operational), communication and reporting to EACEA and efficient use of the project grant. The PC formalises the Consortium Agreement, legal activities, tasks and networking among the project partners, creates a consortium structure with the assistance of the project team, monitors the compliance of the Grant Agreement, assesses and controls any deviation in the progress of the project, monitors the executions of the project workplan, prepares and submits mid-term and final project reports, implements project policies and procedures, acquires resources required to accomplish project tasks, manages the project team and maintains excellent communication with all project partners.
- **The Project Steering Committee (PSC)** is the ultimate decision-making and conflict resolution body of the project. It will be chaired by the Project Coordinator and attended by one representative of each partner university. The PSC will be responsible for the overall strategic orientation of the project. It will make sure that the adopted strategy is respected in order to reach excellence in project execution. PSC will produce the Project Guide at the beginning of the project. The Guide will be designed at the kick-off meeting and it will serve as a reference for all the partners covering partner roles and responsibilities, tasks of WP and task leaders, communication flow within the consortium and practical instructions to standardise and optimise the project coordination and management.

The tasks of the PSC include:

- Assessment / agreement on project progress and resources status and allocations;



- Changes to be submitted for approval by the Agency;
  - Changes to the work programme and its timing;
  - Ensuring the leverage effect of the project and achievement of expected impacts;
  - Resolve conflicts on technical, financial and strategic issues and consult the Agency, if needed.
  - The PSC will meet physically at the kick-off meeting and annually, while exceptional sessions (telephone or web conference) will be called upon and organized when needed or requested by project partners or the Agency.
- **WP Leaders (WPL)** are responsible for monitoring the overall progress of the WP and its activities. The general function of WPL is to be a contact person between the WP team and the PC and other WP leaders, to establish and manage the WP team composed of all representatives from all partners, to participate in the detailed planning, monitoring and reporting of each task in the WP, to manage tasks in individual WP to ensure that output performance, costs and deadlines are met, to monitor and be responsible for academic and technical progress of the tasks in the WP. Moreover, WPL's obligations are to collect and submit the required academic, technical, financial and administrative data, to prepare and submit reports on time in line with the DIGIWATER work plan, to manage the WP as a self-contained entity to ensure that the involved partner will commit to using the required resources to carry out the tasks in the WP, to support the PC for preparations of mid-term and final project reports, to acquire resources needed to accomplish project tasks and to maintain excellent communication within the WP and with the PC and other WP leaders.
  - **Task Leaders (TL)** are in charge of implementing and monitoring the assigned tasks, ensuring its quality level and timeliness within established schedule and budget constraints, and active participation of other partners.

The PC will ensure the technical and administrative activities of the project. The duties are as follows:

- Daily administrative and technical management of the project and reporting.
- Establishment of a budget and schedule-controlling system.
- Collection and storage of data for monitoring in terms of the proper implementation of the action.
- Control of the use of resources and budgetary execution.

### 2.1.2 Decision making

All major project decisions will be made in SC regular meetings. SC decisions will be consensual, but if it is necessary, a voting procedure will be applied. All SC members will have one vote. However, urgent cases may need immediate decisions to move the project forward. In such cases, the Project Coordinator will communicate with all SC members via email, Zoom and/or WhatsApp/Viber messaging application to reach decisions. If necessary, a voting procedure will be

applied via the Doodle application. Operational decisions will be made in agreement with PSC by the Project Coordinator for the project level and by the WPLs for the work package level. All decisions will be documented and saved in a project archive.

Related members have five working days to respond to all situations and at all levels communicated via email and/or WhatsApp/Viber. An absence of a response will be interpreted as an acceptance. If voting is needed, the members have two days to vote. An absence of a reply will be interpreted as a vote for the case.

## 2.2 Communication

Communication will be done within the consortium, with EACEA by the Project Officer, with National Erasmus+ Office (NEO) and other stakeholders. The Project Coordinator is the central point for communication with the project partners, EACEA, NEO and stakeholders with the support of all partners.

### 2.2.1 Communication within the Consortium

Communication between the Project Coordinator and all DIGSIWATER project partners will be defined to ensure overall project implementation on time. It is needed to determine communication channels and frequency.

The main management issues will be discussed during the planned SC and PMC meetings. The partners are obliged to prepare, implement and document all DIGIWATER coordination meetings and to provide an efficient implementation of all decisions respecting the deadlines and dates agreed upon at the meetings.

All other types of communication (e-mail, project management platform, Skype, phone conversation, video-conferencing, etc.) will ensure permanent communication between the meetings. Communication should be transparent based on trust and confidence and consider intercultural differences, but always in line with contractual obligations (the Consortium Agreement).

The general DIGIWATER e-mail address, [waternorway@nmbu.no](mailto:waternorway@nmbu.no), will be used for sharing information among all project partners.

### 2.2.2 Communicating and promoting the project

Since the EU grants are financed by public funds, beneficiaries are generally expected to actively engage in communication activities, promote the projects and acknowledge the EU support publicly. The communication activities have already been a part of the proposal. A Dissemination and Exploitation plan should define SMART objectives (adapted to various relevant target audiences) and set out a description and timing for each activity.

Good communication can be summarised as follows:

- Starts at the outset of the action and continues throughout its entire lifetime;
- Is strategically planned and not just ad-hoc efforts;
- Identifies and sets clear communication objectives (e.g. final and intermediate communication aims, short-, medium- and long-term impact);

- Is targeted and adapted to audiences that go beyond the project's community, including the media and the public;
- Chooses relevant messages (e.g. How does the action's work relate to our everyday lives? Why does the target audience need to know about the action?);
- Uses the suitable medium and means (e.g. working at the right level — local, regional, national, EU-wide; using the right ways to communicate — > one-way exchange (website, brochure, etc.) or two-way exchange (workshop, HEI visit, roundtable, etc.); where relevant, include measures for public/societal engagement on issues related to the action).

Beneficiaries of EU funding must display the EU flag and funding statement ("Co-Funded by the European Union") in all their communication and dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, supplies or significant results funded by the grant.

Also, the beneficiaries are moreover expected to disseminate their project results. In this way, the projects can benefit a larger group of people and reach wider target groups.

### 2.2.3 Communication with EACEA and NEO

To implement the supervision and provide necessary assistance, the EACEA assigns a Project Officer (PO).

Any communication with EACEA is done only by the Coordinator. Only in exceptional and/or duly justified circumstances, the EACEA will correspond with other project partners. EU grants are managed fully electronically through the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ("Portal"). Therefore, all communications must be made electronically through the Portal under the Portal Terms and Conditions and using the forms and templates provided (except if explicitly instructed otherwise by the granting authority).

The Project Coordinator communicates with NEO to inform it about the project events and ask for support for the project realisation.

### 2.2.4 Conflict resolution

The project partners must be fully informed about the project and aware of the implementation constraints. They should be aware of any institutional or legal obstacles affecting the project implementation. A proactive attitude is needed to prevent problems that jeopardise timely project realisation.

During the project implementation, particular problems can arise from different approaches to some project activities that can delay the realisation of other activities. Occurred disagreements should not lead to conflicts. Effective conflict management measures for overcoming problems are part of this guide as a Contingency Plan.

WP leaders will signal the problem in the realisation of project tasks, and the Project Coordinator will induce enhanced communication around that issue. If the problem is not solved by direct communication with the PC, it can be addressed in written form to the Steering Committee, which will mediate to solve the conflict. Voting based on an absolute majority at the Steering Committee meeting (that can be arranged extraordinarily via Zoom or alternatives), execution of project tasks can be reassigned, and budget re-allocated (through amendments).

## 2.3. Publicity obligations

Following the Grant Agreement regarding the publicity and use of the relevant logo, the beneficiaries shall follow the instructions on the Erasmus+ website at the following link: [https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/visual-identity\\_en](https://www.eacea.ec.europa.eu/about-eacea/visual-identity_en).

All institutions in the project consortium are responsible for promoting that financing for the project is provided from the European Union funds in the framework of the Erasmus+ programme. Therefore, any communication, publication or output resulting from the project, made by the project institutions jointly or individually, including at conferences, seminars or in any information or promotional materials (such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc.), must indicate that the project has received European Union funding and display the European Union emblem.

### 2.3.1. Erasmus+ logo

Logo to be used:



### 2.3.2. Disclaimer

Any communication or dissemination activity related to the action must use factually accurate information. Moreover, it must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

***" Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or [name of the granting authority]. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them."***

### 2.3.3. Additional provisions on use of the results

The granting authority also has the right to exploit non-sensitive results of the action for information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes, using any of the following modes:

- Use for its own purposes (in particular, making them available to persons working for the granting authority or any other EU service (including institutions, bodies, offices, agencies, etc.) or EU Member State institution or body; copying or reproducing them in whole or in part, in unlimited numbers; and communication through press information services).
- Distribution to the public in hard copies, in electronic or digital format, on the internet including social networks, as a downloadable or non-downloadable file.
- Editing or redrafting (including shortening, summarising, changing, correcting, cutting, inserting elements (e.g. meta-data, legends or other graphic, visual, audio or text elements extracting parts (e.g. audio or video files), dividing into parts or use in a compilation.
- Translation (including inserting subtitles/dubbing) in all official languages of EU.
- Storage in paper, electronic or other form.
- Archiving in line with applicable document-management rules.

- The right to authorise third parties to act on its behalf or sub-license to third parties, including if there is licensed background, any of the rights or modes of exploitation set out in this provision.
- Processing, analysing, aggregating the results and producing derivative works;
- Disseminating the results in widely accessible databases or indexes (such as through 'open access' or 'open data' portals or similar repositories, whether free of charge or not).

## 2.4. Data protection

### Data processing by the granting authority

*Any personal data under the Agreement will be processed under the responsibility of the data controller of the granting authority in accordance with and for the purposes set out in the Portal Privacy Statement. The data processing will be subject to Regulation 2018/172513.*

### Data processing by the beneficiaries

The beneficiaries must process personal data under the Agreement in compliance with the applicable EU, international and national law on data protection. They must ensure that personal data is:

- Processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subjects.
- Collected for specified, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes.
- Adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed.
- Accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date.
- Kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the data is processed and
- Processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the data.

#### 2.4.1 Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

### Rights of the granting authority on the use of materials, documents and information received for policy, information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes

*The granting authority has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the action and materials and documents received from the beneficiaries (notably summaries for publication, deliverables, as well as any other material, such as pictures or audio-visual material, in paper or electronic form) for policy information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes — during the action or afterwards.*

*The right to use the beneficiaries' materials, documents and information is granted in the form of a royalty-free, non-exclusive and irrevocable licence, which includes the following rights:*

- *Use for its own purposes (in particular, making them available to persons working for the granting authority or any other EU service (including institutions, bodies, offices, agencies, etc.) or EU Member State institution or body; copying or reproducing them in*

*whole or in part, in unlimited numbers; and communication through press information services);*

- *Distribution to the public (publication as hard copies and in electronic or digital format, publication on the internet including social media, as a downloadable or non-downloadable file, broadcasting by any channel, public display or presentation, communicating through press information services, or inclusion in widely accessible databases or indexes);*
- *Editing or redrafting (including shortening, summarising, inserting other elements (e.g. meta-data, legends, other graphic, visual, audio or text elements), extracting parts (e.g. audio or video files), dividing into parts, use in a compilation);*
- *Translation (including inserting subtitles/dubbing) in all official languages of EU);*
- *Storage in paper, electronic or other form;*
- *Archiving, in line with applicable document-management rules;*
- *The right to authorise third parties to act on its behalf or sub-license to third parties including if there is licensed background;*
- *Processing, analysing, aggregating the materials, documents and information received and producing derivative works;*
- *Disseminating the results in widely accessible databases or indexes*

*The rights of use are granted for the whole duration of the industrial or intellectual property rights concerned. If materials or documents are subject to moral rights or third party rights (including intellectual property rights or rights of natural persons on their image and voice), the beneficiaries must ensure that they comply with their obligations under this Agreement (in particular, by obtaining the necessary licences and authorisations from the rights holders concerned).*

#### **Access rights for the granting authority, EU institutions, bodies, offices or agencies and national authorities to results for policy purposes**

*The beneficiaries must grant access to their results — on a royalty-free basis — to the granting authority, other EU institutions, bodies, offices or agencies, for developing, implementing and monitoring EU policies or programmes. Such access rights are limited to non-commercial and non-competitive use.*

*The access rights also extend to national authorities of EU Member States or associated countries, for developing, implementing and monitoring their policies or programmes in this area. In this case, access is subject to a bilateral agreement to define specific conditions ensuring that the access will be used only for the intended purpose and appropriate confidentiality obligations are in place. Moreover, the requesting national authority or EU institution, body, office or agency (including the granting authority) must inform all other national authorities of such a request.*

#### **Access rights for third parties to ensure continuity and interoperability**

*Where the call conditions impose continuity or interoperability obligations, the beneficiaries must make the materials, documents and information and results produced in the framework of the action available to the public (freely accessible on the Internet under open licences or open-source licences).*

## 2.5. Management of DIGIWATER project activities

### 2.5.1. DIGIWATER project activities and outputs

The project outputs are essential for each work package, including milestones and deliverables. Milestones are control points in the project that help to chart progress (kick-off meetings, reports submitting, first draft of a survey, prototype, etc.). They may correspond to the completion of the key deliverables, which allows the next phase of the work to begin or is needed at intermediary points.

Deliverables are outputs to be submitted to the EU (publication, leaflet, progress report, brochure...).

Timely delivery following the project work plan identified in the Application Form and Action Plans is expected.

A consistent and standard format for all document-based deliverables (Word documents and PowerPoint presentations defined in Dissemination and Exploitation Plan as Annex DE1 and DE2, respectively) is to be followed by all partners as well as templates provided within this Guide:

- Annex PM1: Risk monitoring form
- Annex PM2: Internal WPs progress report form

Those templates are to be adopted by the SC members to ensure uniform features of deliverables. However, this is not relevant to deliverables that need a different format (i.e. project brochures, newsletters).

The DIGIWATER partners should also rely on the following reference documents:

- Grant Agreement;
- Consortium Agreement;
- DIGIWATER Quality and Assurance Plan;
- DIGIWATER Dissemination and Exploitation Plan.

### 2.5.2. DIGIWATER events

All events within the project should be organized professionally and in due time in line with the work plan. The organizers should provide a complete information package to the participants, including the draft agenda, letter of invitation and 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 weeks for training, promotional events and roundtables, up to several months for workshop and final conference.

The meeting organizers ensure a smooth registration process (including a list of attendees) and the implementation of the meeting respecting the appropriate time for event sessions and breaks, and the availability of all necessary materials (e.g. training and promotional material). The organizers will also ensure the recording of the minutes of the meetings in a concise style. Furthermore, where appropriate (e.g. for training and workshops), an event evaluation list will be distributed among participants and event reports related to the event evaluation list will be prepared by organizers including summary review of statistical data with the graphical presentations of collected data about participants' satisfaction.

The partners should inform the public in general, the press and media (online and offline) of the event, which must visibly indicate "Funded by the European Union" as well as the graphic logos of the project and EU.

A poster or roll-up should be displayed during the event. Each event should be documented by various materials.

### 2.5.3. Coordination of DIGIWATER project activities

The distribution of responsibilities and tasks is clear, appropriate, and according to project partner' specific expertise and capacity, commitment and active contribution. It should be noted that all project activities must be in line with the workplan. The project workplan serves as the central control mechanism, specifying project phases and by decomposing these phases into specific tasks with associated timeframes, resources, dependencies, and deliverables. During project implementation, it also serves as a status tool by showing completion progress.

Work package leaders (WPLs) manage and are responsible for their work packages (WPs). All operational tasks are initiated by WPLs who allocate the tasks to the task leaders nominated by the partner contact persons. In addition, WPLs are responsible for updating the PC on the status of ongoing tasks on PC request. For each completed task, the responsible WPL will submit deliverables to the QAC for initial evaluation and endorsement. The deliverable will then be submitted to SC via PC for final approval. In case the deliverable is rejected at any stage, the WPL will be informed immediately.

If deliverable cannot be delivered on time scheduled, WP leaders are obliged to inform the PC at least a month before the deadline. The PC should inform the PO and ask for a rescheduling.

In case a Partner can no longer fulfil its tasks indicated in the approved application, the Partner must forward any completed or part completed work to date to the Coordinator. The decision on whether the Partner is able to fulfil the tasks may be determined by the Partner, or in case of failing to deliver outputs on time, by the Coordinator.



## 3. Contractual management

The project must be implemented in the contractual and financial terms and conditions set out in the Grant Agreement.

### 3.1. Amendments to the Grant Agreement

*The Agreement may be amended, unless the amendment entails changes to the Agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or breach the principle of equal treatment of applicants. Amendments may be requested by any of the parties.*

*The party requesting an amendment must submit a request for amendment signed directly in the Portal Amendment tool. The coordinator submits and receives requests for amendment on behalf of the beneficiaries. If a change of coordinator is requested without its agreement, the submission must be done by another beneficiary (acting on behalf of the other beneficiaries). The request for amendment must include:*

- *the reasons why;*
- *the appropriate supporting documents and*
- *for a change of coordinator without its agreement: the opinion of the coordinator (or proof that this opinion has been requested in writing).*

*The granting authority may request additional information. If the party receiving the request agrees, it must sign the amendment in the tool within 45 days of receiving notification (or any additional information the granting authority has requested). If it does not agree, it must formally notify its disagreement within the same deadline. The deadline may be extended, if necessary for the assessment of the request. If no notification is received within the deadline, the request is considered to have been rejected.*

Amendments usually are NOT necessary for:

- budget transfers covered by the budget flexibility;
- name or address changes of a participant — done directly in the Participant Register;
- universal takeovers (merger/acquisition) of a participant — done directly in the Participant Register;
- changes of the banking details — done directly in the Participant Register.

The signed amendment is the legal document containing the changes to the Grant Agreement. It is legally binding and will be incorporated into the Agreement. The consolidated version is only for information.

#### 3.1.1. Amendment request

The amendment request consists of:

- updated structured information on the Grant Management System screens;
- amendment request letter: the letter with the request and reasons for the amendment;
- amendment core- the legal document with the list of amendment clauses;
- supporting documents: documents uploaded by the consortium, consolidated Grant Agreement, etc.

All participants can contribute to the amendment, but it is the Coordinator who will have to launch, finalise, submit and sign the request.

Tasks of the Coordinator:

- Check that the updated information on the Grant Management System screens is correct;
- Quality check: Check that the Amendment documents are correct and all supporting documents are attached.

### 3.1.2. Actions to be completed before the amendment

- Make sure new participants are registered and validated (PIC); new beneficiaries and affiliated entities must be registered and validated in the Participant Register before the amendment can be requested, while associated partners need to be only registered (have a PIC);
- Make sure that new bank accounts are registered and validated in the Participant Register before an amendment is requested.

Amendments must be prepared in the Portal Grant Management System.

### 3.1.3. Amendments initiated by the Granting Authority

If the Granting Authority requests an amendment, the request is also prepared and signed electronically in the Portal Grant Management System. The beneficiaries will receive an e-mail notification prompting them to accept the request. To do so, the Coordinator's PLSIGN must countersign the amendment on the consortium's behalf.

## 3.2. Grant reduction

Tasks and responsibilities formulated and endorsed in the Consortium Agreement must be respected. In the case of poor, partial or late project implementation, grant reductions are foreseen.

*The granting authority may — at beneficiary termination, final payment or afterwards — reduce the grant for a beneficiary, if:*

- *the beneficiary (or a person having powers of representation, decision-making or control, or person essential for the award/implementation of the grant) has committed:*
  - *substantial errors, irregularities or*
  - *fraud or serious breach of obligations under this Agreement or during its award (including improper implementation of the action, non-compliance with the call conditions, submission of false information, failure to provide required information, breach of ethics or security rules (if applicable), etc.), or*
- *the beneficiary (or a person having powers of representation, decision-making or control, or person essential for the award/implementation of the grant) has committed — in other EU grants awarded to it under similar conditions — systemic or recurrent errors, irregularities, fraud or serious breach of obligations that have a material impact on this grant.*

## 4. Project reporting

Reporting is a contractual obligation that has to be fulfilled by all the beneficiaries. Although it is the Coordinator's responsibility to submit the reports and their mandatory supporting documents in due time, the completion of the reports and the validation of the information they contain is a responsibility that falls under each of the beneficiaries that compose the project consortium. There are two modes of reporting towards EACEA:

- Continuous Reporting: available from the beginning of a project;
- Periodic Reporting: available at the end of a reporting period (M18 and M36).

The reporting process consists of several phases:

- Logging in to the Funding & Tenders Portal when a notification is received;
- Completing the tabs available in continuous reporting;
- Each time a periodic report is submitted to the EU, a snapshot is taken from the data entered for continuous reporting and used for the periodic report.

### 4.1. Continuous reporting on milestones & deliverables

During the project, beneficiaries are expected to provide regular updates on the status of the project - continuous reporting. The continuous reporting includes:

- Progress in achieving milestones;
- Deliverables;
- Updates to the publishable summary;
- Response to critical risks, publications, communications activities, and IPRs;
- Programme-specific monitoring information (if required).

The Continuous Reporting Module is accessible through the link received at the project's beginning. Milestones and deliverables should be submitted by each participant for their work or by the Project Coordinator for all work done by others. It is advised to report on milestones and deliverables following the schedule set out for them.

The Continuous Reporting Module also allows beneficiaries to report on critical risks, prepare the summary for publication and the programme-specific information on indicators.

#### 4.1.1. Completing the project summary

A separate summary for each periodic report (just an updated summary for the previous period) must be provided. The summary must be suitable for direct publication by the Granting Authority, especially:

- Be a stand-alone text — no references to other parts of the report, only to publicly available information;
- Easily understandable by a general audience;
- preferably not longer than 7,480 characters (roughly two pages);
- with no confidential/sensitive data.

Diagrams or photographs illustrating and promoting project work (the rights of third parties must be cleared in advance) can be uploaded.

#### 4.1.2. Updating the deliverables

The deliverables must be submitted according to the timing specified in the Continuous Reporting section. When the periodic report is submitted, it is necessary to check if all deliverables due have been provided and, if not, to explain in the Comments column (especially for missing or late deliverables and/or cancelled or grouped deliverables).

#### 4.1.3. Updating the milestones

Milestones are control points in the project that help chart progress (kick-off meetings, steering committees, etc.) They may correspond to the completion of a key deliverable, which allows the next phase of the work to begin or is needed at intermediary points. It is necessary to specify whether the milestones were achieved or not. If not, an estimation of when it will be is requested. The milestones table included in each periodic report is cumulative (it shows all milestones from the beginning of the project).

#### 4.1.4. Updating the risks

It is necessary to update the critical risks in the Continuous Reporting Module. It is advised to assess the state of the listed risks and, if necessary, specify new mitigation measures or add newly identified risks.

At the end of each period, beneficiaries should give the state of play of every risk identified in Annex PM1 and, if necessary, provide new mitigation measures.

#### 4.1.5. Updating the communication activities (dissemination)

Communication on the project is a strategically planned process that starts at the outset of the action and continues throughout its life, aimed at promoting the action and its results. It requires strategic and targeted measures for communicating about the action and its results to a multitude of audiences, including the media and public, and possibly engaging in a two-way exchange. A list of the communication activities should be uploaded on the Portal.

The questionnaire is made available during both Periodic and Continuous Reporting. Its purpose is to collect additional data to evaluate this specific type of action.

#### 4.1.6. Completing the Events and Training

The Events and Training questionnaire lists all events and training activities for the project. The Events and Training questionnaire information will be included in the Technical Part (Part A) of the relevant Periodic Report (PDF). In addition, the Events and Training tab contains a table listing all communication activities for the project.

## 4.1.7. Completing the Financial support for 3rd parties questionnaire

The custom questionnaire is made available during both Periodic and Continuous Reporting. It allows the participants to enter sub-calls and awarded beneficiaries.

## 4.2. Periodic reports

In addition, the beneficiaries must provide periodic reports to request interim and final payments following the schedule and modalities set out in the Data Sheet (M18 and M36).

When these are due, they must be submitted directly in the Periodic Reporting Module of the Portal Grant Management System. The periodic report should be prepared by the consortium participants together and submitted by the Coordinator. The periodic report is advised to report on the progress of the work. When the Coordinator submits the periodic report, the IT tool will capture the information from the Continuous Reporting Module to generate Part A of the Technical Report. The system will also consolidate the Individual Financial Statements and create the use of resources report (if required) and the Summary Financial Statements (for the consortium).

The periodic report consists of the Technical Report and Financial Report.

The Financial Report consists of structured individual and consolidated Financial Statements (retrieved from the Grant Management System).

The technical report Part A and the financial report are generated automatically based on the data in the Grant Management System; Part B needs to be prepared outside the tools (using the template downloaded from the system) and then uploaded as PDF (together with Annexes, if any).

All participants should contribute to the parts, but the Coordinator will have to submit them as a single report.

Tasks of the Coordinator:

- Check that the Continuous Reporting Module is updated in time (before the Periodic Report is Locked for review);
- Check that all participants have submitted their Financial Statements;
- Quality checks;
- Check that the Report is coherent and that information in Part A and B is consistent;
- Make sure that the template has been followed and all sections are completed and no annex.

### 4.2.1 Submitting the periodic reports

At the end of each reporting period, each beneficiary will receive a notification to complete the following:

- Their contribution to the Technical Part (this is common for all beneficiaries in the project);
- Their contribution to the Status of Work Packages (this is common for all beneficiaries).

They can see the read-only Status of Work Packages and the Periodic Report composition task, which need to be completed by the Coordinator. To fill in the information, the beneficiary must log on to the Funding & Tenders Portal and access the relevant project.

Process description and steps:

- Step 1: All beneficiaries receive a notification and log on to the Funding & Tenders Portal
- Step 2: All beneficiaries complete their contribution to the Technical Part of the Periodic Report and Lock for Review once completed
- Step 3: The Coordinator completes the Status of Work Packages and Locks & Includes them
- Step 4: The Coordinator receives a notification that the Financial Statement for all beneficiaries is ready to be signed
- Step 5: The Coordinator reviews the elements of the Periodic Report & submits it to the EU
- Step 6: The EU reviews the submitted Periodic Report and accepts, requests additional information or rejects it
- Step 7: Interim Payment

#### 4.2.2 Final report

The Periodic Reporting Module (and periodic reports) are also used for the final report - the report for the last reporting period, to close the grant. The system requests, screens, and documents used are the same.

#### 4.2.3 Beneficiary termination reporting

If one of the beneficiaries has to leave the consortium, the Coordinator has to prepare a termination report (Technical Report Part B and Financial Report) and a report on the distribution of payments to this beneficiary in the Grant Management System.

#### 4.2.4 Reporting to the Coordinator

Beneficiaries are obliged to prepare, complete and submit all reports to the Coordinator in due time, as requested by the Executive Agency and the Coordinator, to fulfil reporting obligations within the set deadlines and following the project work plan.

In order to provide adequate information on the progress of the project within the Consortium, the beneficiary will prepare internal reports – Partner’s Technical reports consisting of description of the progress made, statistics and indicators, table of achieved/planned outcomes etc. at the request of the coordinator.

In case the beneficiary does not provide all required reports with appropriate and accurate information therein, within 10 working days from the coordinator’s request, the coordinator will inform the beneficiary’s project manager about this in written form, with the beneficiary’s legal representative in carbon copy. Failure to provide all requested documents and information within 10 working days from the date of coordinator’s notice will result in suspending further instalments of the Erasmus+ grant contribution to the beneficiary. The coordinator reserves the right to consult the Executive Agency if the activities declared by beneficiary and/or delivered outputs are questionable.

The coordinator shall provide the beneficiary with the appropriate reporting forms for the declaration of activities and the respective instructions for their completion.

The reporting consists of the following:

- Technical report on the implementation of the project - Annex PM2, describing the progress made, status of WPs and table of achieved/planned outcomes.
- Financial report claiming the amount of resources spent per WPs – Annex PM3 (only for II Partner’s Report and Final Partner’s Report - linked with the reports toward EACEA)
- Request for payment of the next instalment of funding.

Each partner has to respect the reporting deadlines (also stated in the Consortium Agreement) and submit their reports to the project coordinator in due time as requested. If those are not submitted to the coordinator within the set deadline, they will not be included in the progress report of the project that the coordinator is responsible for delivering to the EACEA, which may cause the grant reduction.

## 5. Financial management

### 5.1. Estimated budget and form of funding

According to the rules in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide, only the work conducted in the frame of DIGIWATER will be awarded.

To achieve cost-effectiveness the following measures will be implemented: personal and travelling costs are planned in line with each project partner's activities. Bearing in mind the number and scope of activities, personal cost is rational and adjusted to effective needs for their realization. Each partner will choose the level of engagement of its staff whose engagement will be compensated in line with the delivered results. Relying on these basic principles and participation in WPs, number of person-months is determined for each partner.

Travel costs are economically planned through the simultaneous realization of activities from several WPs, including development activities with project management and quality plan activities. To avoid multiple travel costs, the cheapest available transport means will be used whenever possible (buses, low-cost airlines) will be held at the same time and place back-to-back with other project events.

To achieve efficient coordination of project activities and to reduce emissions by extended travelling, ICT will be used for communication (e-mail, Viber, WhatsApp) whenever possible and virtual platforms such as Teams, Google Meet, Zoom. In addition, the project website and social networks will be used in largest possible extent as efficient methods for dissemination.

DIGIWATER budget is balanced and harmonized among partners and among WPs, in line with planned project activities and procurement of equipment. Third countries not associated with the Programme HEIs have an equal share in funds. EU Member States and third countries associated with the Programme HEIs budget are fully balanced among each other, realistic and derived from their tasks and obligations.

The maximum Erasmus+ grant contribution to the project costs for the contractual period covered by the Grant Agreement amounts to 1,000,000.00 EUR.

### 5.2. Transfer of the funding and use of the grant

Financial management will align with the general rules for the financial management of Erasmus+ projects given in the Grant Agreement, performed by the Project Coordinator, monitored and controlled by the Steering Committee. Partner request for payment is needed for money transfer from NMBU to project partner. DIGIWATER involves the application of a contract that meets the financial requirements of the National and EU regulations.

The Project Coordinator transfers Erasmus+ grant contributions to partner institutions using the beneficiary's bank account details specified in the Consortium Agreement. If the bank account of the beneficiary changes, the new bank account details need to be sent on time to the coordinator by filling in Annex II of the Consortium Agreement and signed by the beneficiary's legal representative. The costs of financial transfers, charged by the bank, shall be borne by the beneficiary receiving part of the grant from the Project Coordinator. These expenses will be deducted from the next instalment to the beneficiary.

When the necessary preconditions are met (e.g. all the required documentation is submitted to the Project Coordinator and budgetary resources are spent in the amount of a minimum of 70% of the



previous instalment), beneficiaries will send a request for the payment to the Project Coordinator, duly signed by the legal representative of the beneficiary. The transfer of the Erasmus+ grant contribution to the beneficiary will be implemented in line with the procedure defined in the Consortium Agreement, respecting the dynamics of the implementation of the project activities.

If, for whatever reason, some of the allocated activities are not undertaken or completed by the beneficiary, the Grant Holder (NMBU) will not transfer the funds to the partner who is responsible for carrying out any such activities.

Beneficiaries are obliged to use the Erasmus+ grant contribution exclusively for the purposes defined by the project and in line with the terms and provisions of the Consortium Agreement and the Grant Agreement and its annexes. Erasmus+ grant amounts received in advance and not used by the beneficiary shall be reimbursed to the Project Coordinator at least 30 days after the project's contractual period ends.

All partners will co-finance the environment for proper work, publication of some dissemination results and staff work.

## 5.3. Payments arrangements - from EACEA to the Coordinator

### 5.3.1. Payments

Payments will be made in accordance with the schedule and modalities. They will be made in euro to the bank account indicated by the coordinator and must be distributed without unjustified delay.

Payments to this bank account will discharge the granting authority from its payment obligation. The cost of payment transfers will be borne as follows:

- The Agency and/or the Commission bears the cost of transfers charged by its bank;
- The beneficiary bears the cost of transfers charged by its bank;
- The party causing a repetition of a transfer bears all costs of the repeated transfer.

Payments by the granting authority will be considered to have been carried out on the date when they are debited to its account.

### 5.3.2. Recoveries

Recoveries will be made, if — at beneficiary termination, final payment or afterwards — it turns out that the granting authority has paid too much and needs to recover the amounts undue.

The general liability regime for recoveries (first-line liability) is as follows: At final payment, the coordinator will be fully liable for recoveries, even if it has not been the final recipient of the undue amounts. At beneficiary termination or after final payment, recoveries will be made directly against the beneficiaries concerned.

Beneficiaries will be fully liable for repaying the debts of their affiliated entities. In case of enforced recoveries:

- The beneficiaries will be jointly and severally liable for repaying debts of another beneficiary under the Agreement (including late-payment interest), if required by the granting authority.
- Affiliated entities will be held liable for repaying debts of their beneficiaries under the Agreement (including late-payment interest), if required by the granting authority (see Data Sheet, Point 4.4).

### 5.3.3. Notification of amounts due

The Agency must send a formal notification to the coordinator:

- (a) informing it of the amount due; and
- (b) specifying whether the notification concerns a further pre-financing payment or the payment of the balance.

For the payment of the balance, the Agency must also specify the final amount of the grant determined in accordance with Article 11.25

## 5.4. Exchange rates

Requests for payment and financial statements must be drafted in euros.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities with general accounts in a currency other than the euro must convert costs incurred in another currency into euros at the average of the daily exchange rates published in the C series of the Official Journal of the European Union, determined over the corresponding reporting period (available at <http://www.ecb.europa.eu/stats/exchange/euiOfxref/html/index.en.html>).

If no daily euro exchange rate is published in the Official Journal of the European Union for the currency in question, conversion must be made at the average of the monthly accounting rates established by the Commission and published on its website ([http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts\\_grants/info\\_contracts/inforeuiO/inforeuiO\\_en.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuiO/inforeuiO_en.cfm)), determined over the corresponding reporting period.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities with general accounts in euros must convert costs incurred in another currency into euros in accordance with their usual accounting practices.

## 5.5. Checks, audits, reviews & investigations

To ensure sound financial management and compliance with the Grant Agreement rules, the Granting Authority will perform project reviews and financial audits on participants. Reviews will focus on the technical implementation of the action or other aspects of the Grant Agreement.

### Internal checks

The granting authority may, during the action or afterwards, check the proper implementation of the action and compliance with the obligations under the Agreement, including deliverables and reports.

### Project reviews

The Granting Authority will regularly monitor the project implementation and check the proper implementation of the action and compliance with the Grant Agreement obligations, including assessing deliverables and reports. In addition, the Granting Authority may also carry out in-depth project reviews. Those reviews typically focus on the technical implementation of the project, but may also cover financial and budgetary aspects or compliance with other obligations under the GA.

### Audits

The granting authority may carry out audits on the proper implementation of the action and compliance with the obligations under the Agreement.

Such audits may be started during the implementation of the action. They will be formally notified to the beneficiary concerned and will be considered to start on the date of the notification.

The granting authority may use its own audit service, delegate audits to a centralised service or use external audit firms. If it uses an external firm, the beneficiary concerned will be informed and have the right to object on grounds of commercial confidentiality or conflict of interest. The beneficiary concerned must cooperate diligently and provide — within the deadline requested — any information (including complete accounts, individual salary statements or other personal data) to verify compliance with the Agreement. Sensitive information and documents will be treated in accordance.

On the basis of the audit findings, a draft audit report will be drawn up. The auditors will formally notify the draft audit report to the beneficiary concerned, which has 30 days from receiving notification to make observations (contradictory audit procedure).

Checks, reviews and audits will focus on the technical implementation of the action, in particular on the fulfilment of the conditions for releasing lump sum contributions per work package or on other aspects of the grant agreement such as ethics and research integrity, dissemination and exploitation of results, management of intellectual property, and gender equality.

## 5.6. Record-keeping

As previously written, a project review will not focus on financial and budgetary aspects. The proof of the proper implementation of the action compared to the work described in the description of action will be based on the deliverables, milestones and technical periodic reports.

Therefore, there is a need to keep records on: technical documents, publications, deliverables, documentation required by good research practices and any document proving that the work was done as detailed in Annex 1.

## 5.7. Ineligible costs

In addition to Article II. 19.4 of the General Conditions, the following costs are ineligible:

- Equipment such as: furniture, motor vehicles of any kind, equipment for research and development purposes, telephones, mobile phones, alarm systems and anti-theft systems;
- Costs of premises (purchase, rent, heating, maintenance, repairs etc.).
- Costs linked to the purchase of real estate;

Expenses for activities - and related travel - that are not carried out in the project beneficiaries' country (see Annex IV), unless listed as an eligible activity in the Erasmus+ Programme Guide or explicit prior authorisation has been granted by the Agency; depreciation costs (see Art.1.13).

## 6. Contingency Plan

The contingency Plan identifies and assesses possible risks of the DIGIWATER project that could jeopardise the achievement of project objectives and offers controlling mechanisms and corrective actions for their mitigation. It is based on risk monitoring which is incorporated into internal quality management. Risk monitoring should be constant and complete control of all segments of project realisation (deadlines, partner responsibilities, provided project documentation, financial and administrative rules) and prediction of issues that could endanger some of the project activities, joint with suggestions of possible intervention and solutions.

### Risk identification

All events, conditions, and conflicts that potentially delay the delivery of deliverables and lower the quality of the deliverables are considered project risks. They all must be identified and recorded in the risk monitoring form.

### Risk assessment

After the risks are identified, each individual must be assessed on how likely they will occur and how much impact they will have on the project's success. Generally, the effect of the risk can be realised from one or combinations of the following consequences:

- Project outcomes (benefits) are delayed or reduced;
- The project output quality is reduced;
- Timeframes are extended;
- Costs are increased.

The probability of occurring can be categorised into three levels:

- High – Greater than 70% probability of occurrence;
- Medium – Between 30% and 70% probability of occurrence;
- Low – Below 30% probability of occurrence.

The impact can also be categorised into three levels:

- High – Risk that has the potential to impact significantly project cost, project schedule or performance;
- Medium – Risk that has the potential to impact project cost slightly, project schedule or performance;
- Low – Risk that has little impact on cost, schedule or performance.

According to probability and impact, the risk level can be determined from the risk assessment matrix presented in Table 2. Risks that fall in critical, significant and moderate classes require risk response planning, including risk mitigation and contingency plans. Therefore, priority is given to the critical and significant risks.

Table 2 Risk assessment matrix.

Probability	Impact		
	Low	Medium	High
Unlikely	Mild	Mild	Moderate
Likely	Mild	Moderate	Significant
Most likely	Moderate	Significant	Critical

### Risk response planning

Each major risk (those falling in the red and yellow zones in Table 14) should be assigned to a project team member for monitoring purposes to ensure that the risk will not fail to be noticed.

For each major risk, one of the following approaches will be selected to address it:

- Avoid – eliminate the threat by removing the cause;
- Mitigate – Identify ways to reduce the probability or the impact of the risk;
- Accept – Nothing will be done.

For each risk that will be mitigated, the Steering Committee will identify ways to prevent it from occurring or reduce its probability or impact. This may include prototyping, adding tasks to the project schedule, adding resources, etc.

For each major risk to be mitigated or accepted, a series of actions will be outlined if the risk does materialise to minimise its impact.

### Project risk management

The DIGIWATER bears certain assumptions and risks related to the achievements of the project objectives. In the project proposal, they are identified and described in detail.

The risk assessment will be carried out and reviewed during the Steering Committee meetings, which will deliver corrective actions and potential adaptations of the work plan based on a sound process. The risk management strategy addresses issues that could endanger the achievement of the overall goal of the project and its specific objectives, considering potential timing risks (postponing of activities/deliverables), performance risks (project management) or sustainability of the project results.

The main aim will be to provide a sound assessment, anticipate challenges systematically, and minimise the potentially negative overall impact. Identifying and assessing new risks is a joint responsibility of all project partners, who must communicate them to the Project Coordinator and the Steering Committee, eventually suggesting also possible interventions and solutions as soon as they become aware of those risks. In particular, partners may think of preventive actions (avoiding the risk occurring) and corrective actions (decreasing the severity and impact), also specifying the resources that would be needed.

## Annex PM1: Risk Monitoring form

### RISK DESCRIPTION

<b>Risk title</b>		
<b>Description of risk</b>	<b>Probability</b> (unlikely, likely, most likely)  <b>Impact</b> (low, medium, high)	<i>Comments, remarks, recommendations</i>
<b>Preventive action</b>	<i>Describe here what has to be taken into consideration to avoid that a risk occurs</i>	<i>Comments, remarks, recommendations</i>
<b>Corrective action</b>	<i>Describe what can be done to decrease the severity and what resources will be needed</i>	<i>Comments, remarks, recommendations</i>
<b>Decision of SC, QAC and Project Coordinator</b>	<i>Explanation</i>	

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Location, date

Signature

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## Internal Work Progress Report

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### PROJECT INFO

Project title	Digitalisation of water industry by innovative graduate water education
Project acronym	DIGIWATER
Project reference number	621764-EPP-1-2020-1-NO-EPPKA2-KA
Action type	Knowledge Alliances in Higher Education
Web address	<a href="http://waterharmony.net/projects/digiwater/">http://waterharmony.net/projects/digiwater/</a>
Coordination institution	Norwegian University of Life Sciences (NMBU)
Project duration	01 January 2021 – 31 December 2023

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Work package	WP7 Project management
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Lead institution	NMBU
Author(s)	
Document status	
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### VERSIONING AND CONTRIBUTION HISTORY

Version	Date	Revision description	Partner responsible
v.01			

Work package:				
Activities (Report on the implementation status of the activities that were to be implemented during the reporting period and explain deviations from Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement. In case an activity was				
Task No	Task name	Description and deliverable	Implemented	Explain what was done and by whom; explain what was not done and why not; indicate how you intend to handle the situation and new timing; indicate if it was a one-off issue or how you intend to avoid similar issues in the future
T1.1		Task leader:	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other issues Mention and explain unexpected events and adjustments that had to be made. Explain				