Strengthening the Academic Alliance for Reconciliation in the Field of Higher Education in Peace, Conflict Transformation, Reconciliation studies in the Middle East and North Africa (AARMENA)

Quality Assurance Plan

(2020, 15, 2021)

Contents

Aims and Objectives

The Quality Assurance Plan seeks to ensure that adequate tools are in place to evaluate and monitor the project progress and the quality of deliverables. It describes the

procedures to follow-up the progress of the project's various WPs and their associated activities and outputs. It also includes the criteria for taking corrective actions in order to ensure that all deliverables are achieved while meeting the expectations of the EACEA and other stakeholders.

The QA will measure and assure the quality of the project's processes, outputs, and impacts in order to:
❖ Deliver value to the target beneficiaries,
❖ fulfil the requirements of the Erasmus+,
❖ operate in an efficient and timely manner, and
❖ assist in the strategic-decision making during and after project lifetime.

Management Quality Control

The Quality Assurance Plan is based on internal (Self-evaluation) and external (External Formative Evaluator) evaluation processes.

- Internal self-evaluation: The internal self-evaluation will be conducted periodically. Initially, an evaluation form will be established by Quality Team, and then shared with partners. The evaluation form seeks to monitor the progress of activities (and the project) and evaluates the quality of deliverables. It will also evaluate the project's achievements compared to the defined objectives. At the end of each reporting period (every year), an interim quality report will be established. These reports will be shared among all partners in order to provide feedback or take relevant corrective/remediation actions.

- External formative evaluation: upon the approval of the project consortium, an external formative evaluator will be hired to conduct an external evaluation process for the project. The evaluation will review the progress of the project and the achievement of deliverables to monitor the project's impact and to ensure the project's efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. It will also evaluate the quality of management of the project and the partnership performance. The external evaluation will also assess the effectiveness and the impact of dissemination activities.

The quality assurance team designed a comprehensive quality assurance plan, including forms, criteria and evaluation procedures.

The Quality Assurance Team will be required to:
- Analyze the evaluation forms and validate the data gathering tools.
- Monitor the deliverables and the progress of project activities (to meet the deadlines).

- Prepare interim and annual evaluation reports in cooperation with WP Leaders and the Formative Evaluator.

At the end of the project, the Quality Assurance Team will prepare and submit a comprehensive final Quality Assurance and Impact Assessment. The report will include an assessment of the project, the achieved deliverables, and objectives (including efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability), and the satisfaction level of all participants.

Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)
The quality assurance committee (QAC) consist of the following members:

- Dr. Phil. Iyad Muhsen AlDajani (University of Jena).
- Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Dietrich (Innsbruck University).
- Prof.Dr. Alluri, Rina Malagayo (Innsbruck University).
- Prof. Dr. Ahmad Al-Salymeh (University of Jordan).
- Porf.Dr. Ali Maqousi (Petra University).
- Prof. Dr. Naouel Abdelatif (Sétif 2 University).
- Prof. Dr. Mona Fethiza (Eloude University).
- Ms. Fouzia Marmash (Istiqlal University).
- Ms. Naseem Al-Sallaq (Al-Azhar University).
- Ms. Rawan Tahboub (University of Jena)

Quality Assurance Tasks

Quality Assurance Tools
Key QA tools include:
❖ Guidelines
❖ Standard templates
❖ Monthly meetings
❖ Evaluation forms
❖ External evaluations / reports

Quality Assurance Indicators
Indicators are included in the official project Logical Framework Matrix.

Quality Assurance Standards
This project aims at supporting the modernization, internet communication technologies aspects in reconciliation studies, and research quality of HEIs in the MENA. More specifically, it contributes to strengthening the role of HEIs in political decisions and policy-making processes through the development of HEIs' research capacities and

potential in fields related to reconciliation studies and researching reconciliation process in the middle of conflicts.

The Quality assurance will investigate the develop of researchers' skills and capabilities in reconciliation studies. investigating the activities for strengthen strategic partnerships and networking with leading conflict resolution and reconciliation centres in the HEI and the partner universities. researching whether the projects promoted interdisciplinary research related in reconciliation studies (e.g. conflict, political science, law, information technologies and internet communication technologies for reconciliation studies).

Quality of the project deliverables-outcomes and outputs:

The deliverables of project can be classified into tangible deliverables such as reports, publications, manuals, methodology, plans, printed and electronically available promotional material, as well as intangible deliverables in the form of organized events (training, conference, seminar, info days, etc.).

The quality expectation will focus:

❖ **Quality of document-based deliverables**
   Project documents should be consistent in terms of appearance and style to reflect the project identity. Therefore, all project documents of the same type should have a consistent structure. All partners must use the templates of the project and the procedures for document reviews.

❖ **Quality of promotional materials**
   The project promotional materials will reflect the visual identity of the project and the Erasmus+ Programme. The project coordinator (FSU) is responsible for the design of all promotional material. The draft version will be sent to all partners for comments and suggestions, before printing, publishing, and distribution. The materials will be disseminated by all project partners at events which are relevant to reach the project's target groups.
   Promotional materials include: project brochures, roll-ups, posters, and flyers.

❖ **Quality of the project events**
   Preparation for events should be done in advance with the suitable time period that may range from several weeks for workshops and meetings till months for the Symposium.
   All information related to the event should be prepared and agreed on between the project consortium related partners beforehand. Information includes presentations, list of invitees, invitation, event schedule, evaluation forms, logistical information.
   - All presentations or training materials should follow the project template for power point documents as in Annex 2
   - Digital Photo for the even in addition to the registration of the attendees.
   - Project posters, roll-up, and other promotional materials shall be displayed during the event.
   - Each event will be documented by various materials as described in the table below.

- Recording the minutes of the event online and uploading all document for dissemination purposes.
- Feedback from the participants has to be collected to assess the quality of the event organizers and the event benefits (in case of training).
- Produce an event report.
- Press release about the event must be prepared in accordance to the laws and regulations.

❖ **Quality of the project websites and online platform**

- Online environment: the project website and online platform will present updated information about the project, partners, activities, and results, allowing everyone to have access to information related to the project. In addition, social media will facilitate interactions with main beneficiaries.
- All intellectual outputs of the project will be available to the public during and after the project. All tools will be implemented with high performance, good functionality, and stability, emphasizing the maximum reach and awareness of the target audience.

❖ **Quality of Project Management**

The main aim of the project management quality is to put a structure in place to actively monitor and promote quality. This tool provides a framework for assessing the quality management for identified work package related to time and a budget plan that need development

AARMENA project will follow the different guidelines and regulations of the Erasmus+ CBHE programme. In more details, the following documents will be the project references for its management:
1. project Grant Agreement
2. project Partnership Agreements
3. project Dissemination and Exploitation Plan
4. guidelines for the Use of Grants
5. project budget and task assignment

❖ **Internal Monitoring**
- Internal quality monitoring will be carried out throughout the project and will involve all members of the project team. Project monitoring will be carried out by collecting feedback from the activities participants.The instruments measures and implementation will be based on:
  - Project list of deliverables (KPIs)
  - LFM and work plan
  - budget
  - Periodic reviews and evaluations for project packages
  - Feedback and surveys mechanism
❖ **Project Quality Assurance Strategy**

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- The quality assurance in the AARMENA project encompasses four levels of quality control (1) Deliverable authors, Task-, and WP-leaders, (2) Deliverable reviewers, (3) Coordinator level.

❖ **External Monitoring**
- NEO performs three types of monitoring, based on deliverable achievement: 1- Preventive (in the first project year) 2- Advisory (after the first project year) 3- Control (after the end of the project – sustainability check). Based on the project progress, the NEO sends the report on their findings to EACEA.
- The external evaluation will be performed by external experts (Formative Evaluator and Financial Auditor). The external evaluation entails reviewing the deliverables and the financial aspect of the different interventions/activities. The formative evaluator will also evaluate the quality of management, the partnership performance, as well as the effectiveness and the impact of dissemination activities.

❖ **Partners' technical and financial reporting**
- The partners are entitled to deliver technical and financial reports. These reports will be prepared in cooperation between the Quality Assurance Team and the External Evaluators (formative and financial). Partners will be required to fill in periodical reports (self-evaluations) in order to regularly monitor the progress of the project in terms of expenses incurred, carried out activities, as well as the achieved outputs.
  1. Interim Evaluation Report (first, second, third)
  2. Final Quality Assurance and Impact Assessment Report
  3. Internal Monitoring
  4. External Monitoring and Evaluation
  5. Partners' technical and financial

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Quality Assurance Matrix

Matrix below describes the quality assurance Activities for the AARMENA QA project.

Activity	Description	Verification
T4.1: Formation of the project's Quality Assurance team	A dedicated internal quality team will be nominated to assure that activities are performed adequately and precisely. The team will be responsible for drawing up a detailed quality plan and evaluation survey.	QA team formed
T4.2: Generation of project quality assurance and monitoring plan	The WP leader will form the quality assurance team and will design a comprehensive quality assurance plan. The plan includes the procedures to monitor the project activities and the procedures to evaluate the quality of deliverables. The Leader shall present the quality assurance plan during the kick-off meeting and will explain the forms, methods and time frame of evaluation.	QA Plan Presentation QA forms
T4.3: Identification of project's KPIs and milestones	For each work package each leader will prepare a work plan with KPIs and milestones for achieving the aspired outcomes.	WPs work plans
T4.4: Establishment of progress and self-evaluation framework (survey)	An evaluation form will be established the by quality assurance team, and then shared with partners. The evaluation form seeks to monitor the progress of activities (and the project) and evaluates the quality of deliverables. It will also evaluate the project's achievements compared to the defined objectives. At the end of each reporting period, and an interim quality report will be established, mainly based on the results of the self-evaluation survey.	Surveys
T4.5: Follow up project progress & self-evaluation		Monthly meetings (MoM) Quarterly reports

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T4.6: Hiring of the formative evaluator	The external evaluation will be performed by external experts (Formative Evaluator and Financial Auditor).The external evaluation entails reviewing the deliverables and the financial aspect of the different interventions/activities. The formative evaluator will also evaluate the quality of management, the partnership performance, as well as the effectiveness and the impact of dissemination activities.	
T4.7: Preparation of first interim report		Interim report
T4.8: Preparation of second interim report		Interim report
T4.9: Preparation of third interim report	Indeed, partners will be required to fill in periodical reports in order to regularly monitor the progress of the project in terms of expenses incurred, carried out activities, as well as the achieved outputs. For each reporting period, each partner shall provide the WP Leader with required information and supporting documents. A quality and evaluation report will be issued periodically to indicate the status of the project, make recommendations and corrective actions. In addition, the External Formative Evaluator and the Financial Auditor will submit two mid-term reports and a final (evaluation/financial) comprehensive report.	Interim report
T4.10: Preparation of final quality assurance and impact assessment report	The quality assurance team (in cooperation with the formative evaluator and financial auditor) will be responsible for the preparation and submission of comprehensive quality assurance and impact assessment report. The report will include the results of the final project assessment, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, the achieved outcomes, and the financial aspects.	Final report Annexes
T4.11: Preparation Report	To ensure the quality of the WP and the WP deliverables, and to ensure the participation of all partners in the consortium, the WP Leader will Prepare WP5 Report. The Report will	

| | include a description of the WP, the role of the WP Leader, the level of involvement of all partners, the challenges faced during the implementation (for learning purposes), and a description of all deliverables. | |