Project: 101114602 — EGAI — ERASMUS-EDU-2022-POL-EXP-HE

Task 1.2
Quality Review Report
(Final Report)

Project Acronym	EGAI
Project Title	UNITA AS A MODEL FOR INSTITUTIONALIZED UNIVERSITY COOPERATION: FROM THE EUROPEAN GROUPING OF ECONOMIC INTEREST TO THE EUROPEAN GROUPING OF ACADEMIC INTEREST
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* PU = Public; PP = Restricted to other programme (including the Commission Services); RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services); CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Agency Services)

Abstract

The quality assurance of the project has been integrated within that of the UNITA project, which is based on quality assurance and quality control activities, within the framework designed by the Quality and Evaluation Board (QEB) of UNITA.

This process involves the participation of the Project Manager (PM), Project Coordinator (PC), Quality & Evaluation Board (QEB), Quality Ecosystems (QES), UNITA Offices, Work Package Leaders (WPL) and task forces (WPTF), Governance stakeholders (GS), corresponding to each of the projects, and beneficiaries[1], for completing the Quality Review Checklist, on which this report is based on.

During the eligibility period the EGAI project was evaluated by the QEB. The QEB process started on October 16, 2023, and its final report was approved on January 16, 2024. This document includes the QEB's recommendations and the corresponding follow-up actions.

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[1] Beneficiaries – staff, students.

Summary

1. EGAI Project Quality Evaluation Process

Quality is important in any project and, therefore, it should be monitored. To maintain and ensure the quality implementation of UNITA Constellation Projects, a Quality Review process was created to:

- review the compliance performance of each key project activities, in several domains – Scope, Schedule, Cost, Quality, Risk, Issues & Decisions, Communication, Project Organization and Stakeholder Satisfaction;

- report findings, such as problems' root causes; and

- provide recommendations.

The Quality Review process for this Project involved several steps and the participation/contribution of several members:

- Project Manager (PM) and Project Coordinator (PC) – from EGAI Project;

- Quality & Evaluation Board (QEB), Quality Ecosystems (QES) – Transversal to all Projects;

- UNITA Offices (UO) – Transversal to all Projects;

- Work Package Leaders (WPL) – From the EGAI Project;

- Work Package task forces (WPTF) – From EGAI Project;

- Governance stakeholders (GS) – From EGAI Project; and

- Beneficiaries[2] – Of the EGAI Project.

1.1. The process

The process started with a meeting between the QES, the PM and the PC, in which the process and the role of the participants were explained, and the Quality Review Checklist (QRC) was presented.

The QRC was used to assess the project's compliance with the planned activities (and related outputs) in several domains, as mentioned previously. Each question had the indication of who should be responsible for its answer and who/what should be consulted in order to obtain it. The entire filling process is described on the first sheet of the Excel document, "Procedure".

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2 Beneficiaries – staff, students.

Once completed, it was up to the QEB to carry out the analysis and complete the "Recommendations" sheet, making any suggestions for improvement that it deems necessary. Subsequently, another meeting was held with the PM and PC, where these results were presented and discussed.

Having reached consensus on the QRC, the Report was drafted, and later both the QRC and the Report were sent to the QEB for final approval.

The last step of the process saw the PC and PM identifying the actions needed to implement the QEB recommendations, with related deadlines and who's responsible for them, and informing the QEB and the Management Committee about their follow-up.

The actions related to the final phase of the project were integrated into the QEB report by the Coordinator and Project Manager. The report was sent to the QEB.

1.2. The roles

Each member of the Project have played a role in the process:

- Quality Ecosystem (QES): was responsible for the kick-off evaluation, it monitored and supported the process evolution, provided information in some domains of the Quality Review Checklist (QRC), collected and merged the contributions of other members, prepared the latest version of the QRC, proposed recommendations and drafted the Report.

- WP Leaders: provided information to the EGAI PM and PC, and answered several questions in the QRC Domains.

- Project Manager (PM) and Project Coordinator (PC): filled in the answer to some questions in the various QRC domains and approved the latest version of the QRC and of the Report, before they are sent to the QEB. They also identified who is responsible and the deadlines for the actions, to comply with the Quality recommendations, and supported their implementation.

- Quality & Evaluation Board (QEB): reviewed and approved the final document and suggested more recommendations if needed.

- UNITA Offices (UO): provided information related to costs and human resources.

- Work Package task forces (WPTF), Governance stakeholders (GS) and Beneficiaries: these members provided information that allowed them to answer questions related to satisfaction and documentation knowledge.

2. EGAI Project Quality Evaluation Results

The following section contains information from the QEB report, as well as details about the final phase of the project and the follow-up actions that were taken.

The overall EGAI quality evaluation score is 98% as an average between all the Domains, with the "Project Organization" Domain being the only one where the score did not reach 100%.

Project Quality Review	
Project Name:	EGAI
Project Manager:	Sara Bin
Solution Provider:	Project Manager and Project Coordinator
Project Quality Reviewer:	Quality and Evaluation Board and Quality Ecosystem Group
Review Date:	20/10/2023
Overall Score:	**98%**
Overall Project Quality Assessment	

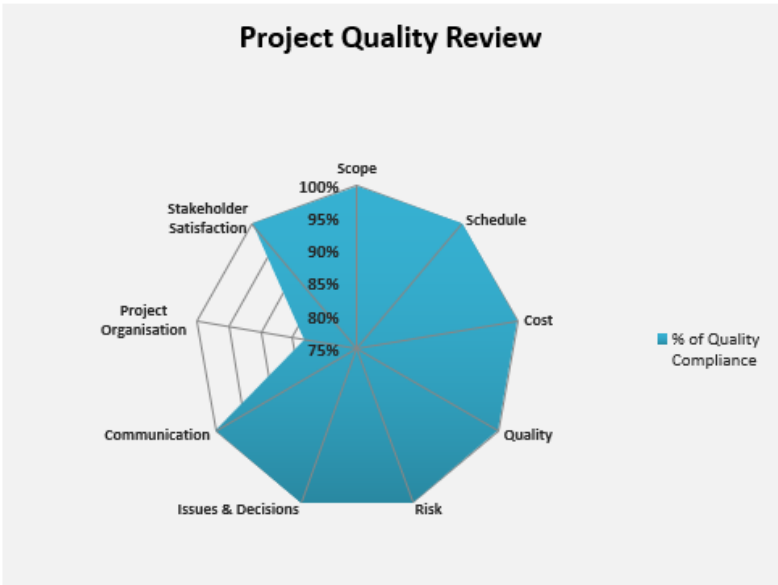*Figure 1 – Project overall score.*

Figure 2 – Spider web graphic of the project domains/overall score.

Figure 3 – Column graphic of the project domains score.

2.1. Domain findings, Recommendations and Follow-up

Area	% of Quality Compliance	Score	Included?
Scope	🟢	100%	Yes
Schedule	🟢	100%	Yes
Cost	🟢	100%	Yes
Quality	🟢	100%	Yes
Risk	🟢	100%	Yes
Issues & Decisions	🟢	100%	Yes
Communication	🟢	100%	Yes
Project Organisation	🟢	83%	Yes
Stakeholder Satisfaction	🟢	100%	Yes

Figure 4 – Domain score compliance

- SCOPE: 100% compliance.

The project was aligned with the objectives set, and all deliverables were defined and documented.

Changes/adaptations to the final event "T4.2: Organization of the scientific conference" have been made, discussed and approved in meetings, registered in minutes and emails. The scientific conference was replaced by the final event for all the policy experimentation projects scheduled for April 29, according to the agreement with the DG Higher Education.

An additional conference was organized in Chambery entitled "Paving the Way for European Universities".

Recommendation(s): As the project was small and lasts only one year, there were no need for a log from the PM point of view; to register any change the QEB suggested to use the minutes and not emails, as well as store them in the Datacloud so that in case of need, they were available for consultation.

Follow-up(s): All minutes are stored in the Datacloud, available for consultation. The moment the minutes are uploaded, WPL were notified by email.

- SCHEDULE: 100% compliance.

Resources were allocated to effectively meet the schedule: the project was on track and within the estimated timeline.

An extension was requested to the European Commission for the fulfilment of the first Milestone "Agreement: signature of the EGAI consortium agreement", since its delivery date was set for the month in which the Consortium Universities were on vacation.

An amendment was requested and approved to extend the project duration to 13 months to ensure participation in the final event for all the policy experimentation projects on April 29. The extension did not affect the implementation of the activities, which continued as planned. The extension only allowed to claim costs related to the preparation and attendance of the event by the project representatives.

All other deliverables and milestones were met as planned.

Recommendations(s): No recommendations for this domain.

Follow-up(s): No follow-ups for this domain.

- COST: 100% compliance

The project was compliant with the budget. There were no cost overruns or unexpected expenses. However, some adjustments among partners have been made, in accordance with the "flexibility budget" clause (as stipulated in the Grant Agreement). The cost control, as the budget for this project was low, was made by the PM along with the member of the UNITA Office in charge of the budget. They met and together analysed the costs and expenses of the project. The budget file was not available for consultation, but it was discussed during the meetings between the PM and the WPL.

Recommendation(s): The budget file should be made available for consultation in the Datacloud, so that it can be consulted by all members if necessary.

Follow-up(s): Budget was stored in the Datacloud, available for consultation.

- QUALITY: 100% compliance.

For the project Deliverables that were completed at the moment of the QEB evaluation: D4.1 - UNITA website section for Legal Entity (M3) and D2.1 - Report: analysis on the object of the academic EEIG (M6). The first one met the specified quality standards, i.e. the Deliverable Quality Review was used to evaluate its quality. In fact, by using it, some corrections were identified and the adjustments made resulted in the website improvement. For the second one, the Deliverable Quality Review was not used since it was finished too close to the delivery deadline. This delay in the quality process happened because of the difficulties encountered to conclude the work in time (more on this topic in the "Project Organization" Domain). Likewise, it was not utilised for subsequent deliverables as they were completed near the deadline.

The Strategic Committee defined the contents and methodology for drafting all deliverables. Deliverables T2.3 and T2.2 are based on surveys compiled by all project components. Once drafted, all deliverables were shared and made available on the data cloud.

Recommendation(s): No recommendations for this domain.

Follow-up(s): No follow-ups for this domain.

- RISK: 100% compliance.

The risks identified at the beginning of the project were monitored and managed by the PM, however it was not possible to evaluate if the mitigation strategies were effective, since there was no log. No new risk has emerged that needs to be addressed.

Every point related to a risk had been discussed during a meeting between the PM and the persons close to the risk identified, and every decision had been recorded on the minutes or in emails.

Recommendation(s): The QEB ensured that everything is recorded in the minutes and that they are available to everyone in the Datacloud.

Follow-up(s): All meetings were recorded and minutes were available on the Datacloud.

- ISSUES and DECISIONS: 100% compliance.

The issues identified have been tracked and solved in a timely manner and the decisions made were aligned with the project objectives.

Emails and meetings had been used for making the decisions and solving the issues. No log was used, and all was registered in emails and meeting minutes. The PM and PC mentioned that this process worked effectively, and reckon that there was no need for a log as the project is small. They thought that simplifying documental tasks was the best option.

Recommendation(s): Respecting the PM and PC choice, the QEB had recommended to make sure that at least the minutes were made with the identification of the issue and the decisions made to solve them. They also should be available for consultation on the Datacloud.

Follow-up(s): All minutes respected the criteria above and were stored in the Datacloud, available for consultation.

- COMMUNICATION: 100% compliance.

The stakeholders of this project are the other UNITA Alliances and the European Union Institutions. They were all well informed about the project progress and updated by participating in regular meetings at DG Higher Education, both online and on site, as well as other specially organized meetings. The other alliances were involved in the events

organized under the Project, including as speakers. It can be considered that the communication between the project team and the stakeholders was effective and that there were no bottleneck or breakdown communication.

Recommendation(s): No recommendations for this domain.

Follow-up(s): No follow-ups for this domain.

- PROJECT ORGANISATION: 83% compliance.

The roles and responsibilities of each team member were clearly defined and understood, leading to a well organised and functional team, working as a unit.

However, although the processes for team collaboration and coordination were in place, the administration of deliverables has always been too close to the deadline, despite the preventive actions taken.

Recommendation(s): The QEB suggested establishing intermediate deadlines to develop parts of the work, or a methodology of work that requests the WP members to produce work for each meeting, to keep them engaged and on track.

Follow-up(s): The working methodology followed, encouraged engagement and exchange with partners, with a view to mutual collaboration and sharing.

- USERS SATISFACTION: 100% compliance.

The stakeholders of this project were satisfied with the project progress and outcomes, because the requirements were being met as planned. No dissatisfaction area has been identified.

As the stakeholders of this project are the Rectors of the UNITA Universities, the satisfaction about the project was evaluated during the on-site meeting of the Governance Board in Chambéry at the beginning of November, where the PM of the project was present as well. However, there was no survey applied during the meeting, and after consulting the minute, no specific information regarding this topic was registered, therefore, no formal registration of this feedback exists.

Recommendation(s): We suggest using questions survey, and have the feedback written in the meeting minutes.

Follow-up(s): Recommendations for assessing stakeholder satisfaction were adopted. As part of the Spring School, questionnaires were delivered to participants that were collected and shared on the Datacloud, available for consultation.

3. Conclusions

The short duration of the project and the limited number of expected deliverables suggested a simplification of the quality assessment process as initially conceived, which was structured on the model planned for the Unita project. However, even following this adjustment, it was possible to formulate some recommendations that were taken into consideration for subsequent activities. In general, it can be observed how the project team worked in a coordinated and cohesive manner, allowing for the complete satisfaction of the set objectives. During the final events, it was possible to register the widespread satisfaction of the stakeholders. Indeed, the scientific conference "Paving the way for European Universities", organized in Chambery, saw the participation of 70 people online and 30 in person. Similarly, the Spring School was attended by 32 people in person and 5 online. From the participants who filled out the satisfaction questionnaire, a general positive response emerged, reflecting their overall satisfaction with the events. The diverse attendance both in-person and online underscored the accessibility and relevance of the content presented.