

# **‘INTENSE: Integrated Doctoral Program for Environmental Policy, Management and Technology’**



## **Quality Control Plan**

586471-EPP-1-2017-1-EE-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP

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## ***1. General Objectives***

- Quality Control Plan defines the project's quality objectives and the procedures for achieving those objectives.
- This Quality Plan is exclusively associated with the INTENSE project and affects all partners belonging to the INTENSE Consortium and subcontractors participating in the project. It covers only the organisational, administrative and managerial aspects of the project.
- Quality control and monitoring procedures started at the begin of the project.

## ***2. Project Management Structure***

The INTENSE project management structure guarantees an efficient and well-balanced decision style, where all of the subunits contribute to the quality of the project outcomes (deliverables). The bodies that are involved in this process are:

- Project Coordinator (PC): grant administration (content-related and financial management strategy), communication with and reporting to EACEA.
- Project Manager (PM): appointed by coordinator; operational planning and implementation, communication within consortium.
- Local Project Managers (LPMs): local planning and implementation, communication with PM, selection of staff for participation in mobility's, organization of meetings and workshops.
- Steering Group (SG): supporting and supervising the project management

- Work Package Leaders (WPLs): co-ordinating all WP tasks to guarantee the production of deliverables in compliance with established time table and WPLs will be responsible for a location of resources and notifying the project co-ordinator on any deviations from the project work plan.
- European Commission: The project will be carried out with assistance from the European Commission (Project Officer and Erasmus+ Offices) and, due to the project nature and objectives, partners will pay attention to involving relevant (external) stakeholders in the assessment of the project milestones.

### ***3. Submission of Deliverables/Outputs***

Each deliverable or outputs is assigned to one (or several in the case of short-term courses) leading responsible partner(s). They will have the responsibility that the deliverable is approved in terms of content, presentation and linguistic quality.

More specifically the responsible partner assures that the content of a deliverable is consistent with the output of the team working on the deliverable and that the overall goals of the project are met. Further, the deliverable is approved by a corresponding WP Leader and by the project's Quality Assurance Team (composed of Local Project Managers).

Any issues endangering the success of the work package or the project have to be reported immediately to the project coordinator.

Deliverables have to be submitted in standard form and layout determined by the Project Coordinator (PC).

#### ***4. Role of the Coordinator in Regard to the Project's Quality***

The project coordinator is responsible for the overall management and success of the project. The leader of the WP 4 (Quality) will assist the coordinator with regard to:

- Monitoring the progress of the project as to schedules and deliverables;
- Monitoring the procedures and compliance with the agreed principles;
- Consulting the plans of further steps, as well as plans on scope and features of the agreed project products and assuring that these comply with the agreed objectives and principles;
- Coordinating the periodic evaluation of the project according to the evaluation plans, running the surveys of partners' satisfaction;
- Reporting the project progress regarding this quality issues.

#### ***5. Evaluation Plan***

In response to operational purposes, evaluation will monitor:

- project progress, with particular attention on the respect of deadlines;
- effectiveness of project management/coordination;
- modalities of communication among partners;
- partners' role and tasks/performance;
- timing, sequences and quality of outputs;
- satisfaction with current results.

The Quality Control and Monitoring work package follows the project life-cycle and is related to all project activities and outputs.

Evaluation plan provides an overview of a periodic review of the project's overall functioning (monitoring and quality control) and benefit of the partners'

participation. The review will take place in the course of the project lifecycle by self-administered questionnaires (at distance) and evaluation sessions (during face to face meetings):

- Collecting and assessing formative user feedback in a structured and systematic way (e.g. questionnaire, structured interviews, focus group);
- Informally involving experts and professionals (during the presentation, evaluation and dissemination events) in order to collect feedback and comments on the project and the perception of the products;
- Peer reviewing the deliverables in a small group of distinctive experts in the field organised by the partner responsible for evaluation and monitoring.

Summative evaluation will be carried out towards the end of the project in order to assess if the project objectives had been achieved and suggest future actions.

The QA activities are carried out on different Levels:

I. Project Level (Internal)

- Work Package activities: Quality Control and Monitoring (WP leader and co-leader)
- Steering Group: One member from each partner; Monitoring the overall progress of the project
- Evaluation of Activities (e.g. Training)

II. External

- External experts evaluate the most important activities and make QA of the whole project.

## 6. Quality Control activities

Activity	Deadline	Level
4.1 Monitoring of academic mobility and staff time allocation	All project time	Internal
4.2 Quality assurance and peer-review of project outcomes	All project time	Internal/External
4.3 Analysis of lessons learned from project QA	All project time	Internal/External

## 7. Quality objectives

A principal aim will be to provide support in exploring an appropriate range of approaches to ensure the quality of project implementation and outputs. WP4 will also seek to address QA issues in the PCs on the level of values, so QA is not only perceived as paperwork to do, but as a valuable tool that needs to be used responsibly. This objective will be supported by an external QA officer.

Schedule and budget compliance, quality of deliverables are important indicators that are monitored by QAT and PM.

## 8. QA of Achievement of Objectives

Objective	Criteria	Schedule
<p>WP1 <b>Preparation of INTENSE development and exploitation activities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducting in-depth survey of end-users and the institutional contexts</li> <li>• ToRs for the development of learning and institutional infrastructure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth survey of end-users and the institutional contexts is developed</li> <li>• ToRs are developed</li> </ul>	<p>During the implementation stages and at the end of the WP1</p>

<p><b>WP2</b> <b>Development of the INTENSE institutional infrastructure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of COP, research frameworks and transition plans</li> <li>• Revision of “passports of a PhD specialisation”</li> <li>• Launching national INTENSE schools</li> <li>• Development of organisational and QA expertise at PCIs</li> <li>• Sharing of research facilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COP, research frameworks, transition plans and model agreements are developed and disseminated</li> <li>• Recommendations are developed, discussed and disseminated</li> <li>• National INTENSE schools and the International INTENSE Network are launched</li> <li>• Training activities are carried out</li> <li>• Practical agreements are developed. The guidelines and protocols are developed</li> </ul>	<p>During the implementation stages and at the end of the WP2</p>
<p><b>WP3</b> <b>Development of learning infrastructure and contents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of the INTENSE open education platform</li> <li>• Development of eLearning modules and MOOCs</li> <li>• Development of eScience modules</li> <li>• Development of transferrable skills courses and learning materials</li> <li>• Training events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eLearning modules and MOOCs are developed and disseminated</li> <li>• eScience modules are developed and disseminated</li> <li>• Courses are carried out</li> <li>• Training events are carried out</li> </ul>	<p>During the implementation stages and at the end of the WP3</p>
<p><b>WP4</b> <b>Quality assurance and monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring of academic mobility and staff time allocation</li> <li>• Quality assurance and peer-review of project outcomes</li> <li>• Analysis of lessons learned from project QA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular monitoring reports</li> <li>• Smooth project progress</li> </ul>	<p>During the implementation stages and at the end of the WP4</p>



<p><b>WP5</b> <b>INTENSE dissemination and exploitation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launching and maintenance of the INTENSE web portal</li> <li>• INTENSE business plan</li> <li>• Network, training and dissemination events</li> <li>• Running INTENSE governance infrastructure</li> <li>• Implementation of INTENSE research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• INTENSE web portal is launched and up-dated. Social media publications</li> <li>• INTENSE business plan is developed</li> <li>• INTENSE research conferences are carried out</li> <li>• INTENSE governance infrastructure is developed</li> <li>• INTENSE research training are implemented</li> </ul>	<p>During the implementation stages and at the end of the WP5</p>
<p><b>WP6</b> <b>INTENSE management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and signing of Consortium Agreement</li> <li>• Establishment and work of the Steering Committee; meetings of the GAP</li> <li>• Day-to-day management, communication, reporting to EACEA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signed Consortium Agreement</li> <li>• Steering Committee and the GAP are established</li> <li>• Smooth project progress, reports are prepared and submitted in time</li> </ul>	<p>During the implementation stages and at the end of the WP6</p>

## 9. Impact Indicators

Short term impact indicators:

Short term impact	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
<p>Enhanced quality of doctoral provision in environmental studies at PCIs</p>	<p>Student, academic staff at PCIs, research administrators, institution</p>	<p>80 PhD students enrolled to INTENSE by M36; Access to INTENSE distance learning infrastructure and e-courses (over 90% of enrolled students using e-services) Increased publication activity of PhD students and their supervisors (10% more papers submitted by INTENSE PhD students compared to the numbers achieved by the same amount of first-year PhD students before INTENSE)</p>	<p>Better progression of PhD theses, as noted in progression reports Application of governance and QA guidelines at all the PhD programs concerned</p>

Dissemination of knowledge and skills to wider student body through demonstrating and teaching by PhD students	Undergraduate and Masters students	Feedback on PhD student performance from anonymous questionnaires (over 75% of undergraduate students are satisfied with teaching by PhD students, as demonstrated in course surveys)	Satisfaction of their audience, as demonstrated by overly positive anonymous comments in course surveys
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Long term impact indicators:

Long term impact	Target groups/potential beneficiaries	Quantitative indicators	Qualitative indicators
Improved quality assurance	Administrators, supervisors, students	N/A	Positive feedback from institution and ministries of education / doctoral degree attestation bodies, as demonstrated by their official letters and in the end-of-the project survey
Access to INTENSE e-learning	PC academic institutions involved to INTENSE, INTENSE PhD students and supervisors	Access arranged and reported to PhD students at 7 PC academics institutions involved in INTENSE and the associate partners joining INTENSE schools (at least 3) by M23	Positive feedback from PhD students and supervisors on access arrangements, as notices in the end-of-the-project survey
Online and offline research collaboration and shared access to research facilities	PhD students and PIs and their supervisors	At least 20% of PhD students requested and receives access to INTENSE shared research facilities At least 10% of PhD students involved in research collaboration through online tools	Positive feedback from PhD students and supervisors on online&offline collaboration and on access arrangements, as notices in the end-of-the-project survey
Promotion of INTENSE as the network of research excellence to the international academic community	International students outside PCs potentially interested to pursue PhD in environmental studies and interested in the region; researchers looking for collaboration in the region or within INTENSE topics	All the INTENSE- endorsed international conferences resulting in special issues in international peer-reviewed journals with impact factor over 1 (by M36)	Emerging international visibility of the INTENSE network and enhanced visibility of INTENSE partners, as demonstrated by the number and level of participants on INTENSE conferences
Graduation (successful	PhD students enrolled on the INTENSE	During the project: N/A	Overly successful progression of INTENSE

completion of PhD programme)	programme	After the end of the project: Number of students graduating compared with those that are not enrolled plus in comparable non-participating school/universities in the partner countries (at least 10% higher)	students, as demonstrated in their accreditation reports
Employability	PhD students	During the project: N/A After the end of the project: Number in professional posts relevant to their PhD programme one year following graduation (at least 10% of increase within 5 years after the end of the project)	Interest of potential employers in INTENSE graduates, as demonstrated in the end-of-the-project survey
Publication in peer-reviewed international journals	Student, supervisors	During the project: At least 20% of INTENSE PhD students have made submissions to international peer-reviewed journals by M36 After the end of the project: Number of publications relating to the PhD compared students graduation prior to the INTENSE program (at least 10% of increase within 5 years after the end of the project)	N/A
Number of applications from prospective PhD students	Supervisors, institution	During the project: All the vacancies filled in UA and 5% growth in MN&VN in the 2 <sup>nd</sup> INTENSE intake compared to the 1 <sup>st</sup> one After the end of the project: Number of applications prior to and after involvement in the INTENSE programme (at least 10% of increase within 5 years after the end of the project).	N/A

		Number of viewings of school, institution web-sites/requests for information (at least 20% of increase within 5 years after the end of the project)	
Sharing and dissemination of best-practice	Institution, partner country	During the project: At least 5 new institutions expressed interest in joining INTENSE schools by M36 Adoption of some or all of the components of the INTENSE program by at least 4 institutions within the partner countries and elsewhere After the end of the project: Number of dissemination events or talks on external events (at least 3 20 events per year)	
Improved quality assurance	Institution, partner country	During the project: N/A After the end of the project: Improved scores of participating institutions/schools in national, regional and world research and student satisfaction rankings (at least 10% of increase within 5 years after the end of the project)	Peer-review process launched and overly positively evaluated in the end-of-the project
Improved international profiles and visibility of PC institutions	PC institutions involved to INTENSE schools	Number of applications from prospective international PhD students (at least 20% of increase within 5 years after the end of the project)	Progress in international rankings (where applicable)
More competitive research outcomes delivered to end-users	Governments at all levels, companies, NGOs, broader society	During the project: After the end of the project: Increased R&D-related income (at least 10% of increase within 5 years after the end of the project)	Satisfaction of end-users and broader stakeholder circles

<p>Promotion of INTENSE as the network of research excellence to the international academic community</p>	<p>International students outside PCs potentially interested to pursue PhD in environmental studies and interested in the region; researchers looking for collaboration in the region or within INTENSE topics</p>	<p>At least 2 INTENSE-endorsed international conferences annually, resulting in special issues in international peer-reviewed journals with impact factor over 1; at least 10 good applications from international students on the 1<sup>st</sup> year after the end of the project</p>	<p>Enhanced international visibility of the INTENSE network and the partner institutions; overall interest of international students and researchers in the INTENSE and its members</p>
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## ***10. Quality Assurance Team***

To implement the plan, Quality Assurance Team (QAT) is set up composed of LPMs or their delegates. QAT monitors and evaluates the quality indicators of the project outputs and outcomes. Quality reports/decisions on each deliverable are issued by two independent bodies – WP Leaders and QAT. External assessments are envisaged for such key deliverables as the university courses (peer-reviewing and approval by Academic Councils of Faculties and/or Universities) The quality reports are available online to all the consortium members and, where relevant, disseminated to external stakeholders.

QAT assists Project Manager (PM) in monitoring the project performance indicators and updating the project work plan, as well as in synthesising a feedback from field monitoring visits by National Erasmus+ Offices into periodic internal quality reviews. This information is then integrated into the work packages. The Coordinator takes operational decisions on risk mitigation; strategic decisions are taken by Steering Group.

## ***11. QAT Members***

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