



Work Package 4 – Quality Assurance

# Fourth Internal Evaluation Report

*November 2022*

This report includes contributions from all project partners.  
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## Objectives of the internal evaluation

As part of W2–Quality Assurance, internal evaluations have to be conducted twice a year. The aim of the internal evaluation is to evaluate the project’s progress and co-operation between project partners regularly. Moreover, the evaluation aims at reviewing and improving communication and project results including the website, organization of meetings and issues related to COVID-19.

Against this background, this report provides an overview of the results of the sixth and seventh internal evaluation conducted in March and September 2022.

## Data collection

The internal evaluation was based on an online questionnaire with 6 indicator groups and 50 items. Each item represented a statement. A five-step scale indicated the degree of agreement (between “strongly agree” and “strongly disagree”). A comments section in each indicator group ensured the option to add individual responses and remarks. The questionnaire was developed by TU Dresden; it was sent to the project coordinator for revision and feedback prior to the launch of the survey. After revision, the final version of the questionnaire covered the following issues:

1. Project co-ordination
2. Co-operation between project partners
3. Communication
4. Project website
5. Division of work-packages
6. Issues related to COVID-19

Suggestions for improvement

Findings were sent to all project partners. The results of the sixth internal evaluation were presented to the project team in June 2022 during the monthly meeting. Together with the findings of the seventh internal evaluation all results are covered by the fourth internal evaluation report.

LimeSurvey, a web–based online survey tool provided by the German partner TU Dresden, was used to conduct the survey, and the link to the survey was sent out to all partners by email.

## Results

With a total of 12 responses (sixth internal evaluation) and a total of 9 responses (seventh internal evaluation) – including all project partners<sup>1</sup> – the survey provides valuable information on the project's progress and co-operation between project partners.

The results are presented along the above-mentioned issues. First, the findings of the sixth and seventh internal survey are compared, for they both took place in 2022. We will then relate them to the findings of 2021, where the fourth and fifth internal survey were conducted in order to identify any long-term changes and developments.

### *Project co-ordination*

For the year 2022, project coordination remains consistently good and very good. The participants rate the project management as clear and helpful; for almost all of them the division of the work-packages is clear and comprehensible. There seems to be no ambiguity regarding their own roles and tasks in the project and the cooperation as well as feedback and support from the project coordinator are emphasized. When asked whether deadlines are easy to meet and whether the scheduling is realistic, participants answered significantly less affirmatively and with larger standard deviation at the beginning of the year than at the end of the year (arithmetic mean 3.83 and 3.88, respectively). Ratings on organization and frequency of meetings remained roughly the same over the year (arithmetic mean 3.83 and 4.0, respectively). This aspect shows a relatively high standard deviation, i.e. despite the overall good to very good arithmetic mean, there are respondents who deviate very significantly from this mean and are dissatisfied with the frequency of meetings. The open answers section highlights (as in 2021) two points: On the one hand, there should be a quicker response to emails and – in case of doubt – a meeting for clarification should be arranged as soon as possible. Furthermore, it is pointed out that more personal contact and closer collaboration are necessary to maintain nourishing relationships and achieve the best commitment.

Compared to 2021, there have been no significant changes in 2022. The project participants are very satisfied with the co-ordination of the CONTESSA project.

### *Cooperation between project partners*

As in 2021, almost all participants are (very) satisfied with the cooperation between the (inter)national project team. The project partners express their satisfaction with the feedback from colleagues, their cultural sensitivity and openness as well as the transparency of decision-making processes. The arithmetic mean of the positive ratings is consistently between 4.00 and 5.00. Respondents perceive the lowest level of satisfaction with regard to the involvement of associated partners. Although satisfaction is generally stated (arithmetic mean 4.00), there is a greater standard deviation compared to all other questions. Accordingly, not all partner institutions succeed in sufficiently involving the associated partners. Although this aspect improved throughout the project, it still seems to be a particular challenge. In 2021 it was stated

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<sup>1</sup> The seventh internal evaluation was not completed by two partner institutions.

this issue is related mainly to restrictions regarding the fight against COVID-19. For example, the involvement of associated partners would depend on personal contacts, which is very important not only for cultural reasons.

The strong positive ratings for the cooperation between project partners from 2020 and 2021 were confirmed in 2022.

### *Communication*

The project partners are very satisfied with the communication. As in 2021, the positive ratings remain at an very high average of 4.5 to 5 (arithmetic mean). Only in relation to the frequency of meetings and the weekly status emails stronger standard deviations were found. As in 2021, there is an equal distribution of people who would like more frequent updates and those who are satisfied with the current frequency. The open response format were rarely used. The majority of respondents using this format stated that the frequency of the meetings was sufficient and should remain.

As in the years before, communication in 2021 was predominantly rated good to very good. Compared to 2021, partners are even more satisfied with communication; in particular, they feel better informed about project's progress (arithmetic mean 5.00) and the results of the individual work packages (arithmetic mean 5.00).

### *Website*

Satisfaction regarding the design and information content of the website is predominantly rated very positive (arithmetic mean 4.5 to 4.92). Respondents feel sufficient with accessing, traceability, information provided, updates and design of the website.

When asked whether respondents actively participate in updating the website (e.g. by sending pictures, news, information etc.), some respondents disagreed. As in previous years, there is still potential for active participation in updating the website.

### *Division of work-packages*

The respondents are very satisfied with the division of the work-packages. With few exceptions, the respondents are satisfied with the capacities and resources of the home institutions and the European Union. Here, there are hardly any changes compared to previous years. Particularly high approval rates (arithmetic mean 5.00) are found for the statement 'It is clear to me what my project team has to do and how we will address our tasks'. Consequently, only very few respondents state that they need more support to cope with the tasks. Also with an arithmetic mean of 5.0, the respondents agree with the statement that they know exactly whom to contact in the course of problems achieving the objectives. Here, too, is an improvement of the already very good values of previous years.

### *Issues related to COVID-19*

In 2022, the majority of respondents continue to struggle with the circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the majority of respondents require more effort and resources to complete work packages, and the majority reports waiting longer for urgent deliverables than would normally be the case. While respondents indicate that partners are understanding any delays, this decreases slightly as the year progresses. The standard deviations of the survey responses indicate that project and partner countries are affected differently by the pandemic. Especially in the course of the first survey in 2022, participants stated that as a result of the pandemic, health and financial problems arose, staff members were absent due to long-covid, the enrollment of students at the partner universities is declining (which makes the establishment of the modules more difficult) and staff members have left the universities that now have to be won back at great expense.

Even though the direct constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic and related measures are decreasing, the medium- and long-term consequences (loss of staff and staff shortages, decline in enrollment) apparently continue to cause difficulties.

## **Conclusion**

With few exceptions, the results point at a very high level of satisfaction among project members with regard to coordination, cooperation, communication, the website, and the distribution of work packages and the associated resources and capacities. In fact, the satisfaction rates, which were already high from the beginning, could be increased over the course of the project.