



Lifelong
Learning
Programme



Project Number: DE/11/LLP-LdV/TOI/147 431

Quality Assurance Plan

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1. Introduction

The objective of this document is to provide evidence that all the milestones and expected results of the project have been successfully met during the first year of the project's lifetime. It includes a list of the expected results and milestones of this project as well as the evaluation criteria which have been used to evaluate the results and decide whether the objectives of each result have been achieved. In the cases that the milestone or expected result was not achieved or was not completed on time, this document provides the necessary explanations of why this has happened and the actions taken by the consortium to mitigate the risks of fulfilling the requirements of this project. This document was supposed to be developed at the end of the project, but the partners of the Consortium along with F&K found it necessary to submit a first year quality assurance plan in order to have a first overview of how the project is developing.

Particularly the whole process of assessment and evaluation is based on the comparison and evaluation of the results and deliverables of the project against the its aims and objectives. The results of the evaluation process continuously provide feedback to the project management so as to take the necessary corrective actions in case of non-satisfactory results. Here we present a thorough review of the objectives of each result along with possible risks/contingency plans that were used to assess and evaluate the performance of the project as well as the evaluation/quality control methods used.

2. Methodology for project assessment and evaluation

2.1. Overview

AGORA Europe II involves 8 partners from 6 different EU countries. Its aim is to create a portal area www.agora-eu.net, consisted of a user-friendly system with a simple, highly interactive and functional infrastructure dedicated to retail sector shop owners and workers, informing them about employment issues, possible career paths and educational training through electronic media. The users will be also able to find out news about other European citizens being in the same position as they are; and exchange ideas and experiences. The project's target is to contribute to the strengthening of its social policy by providing methods and services for enhancing and facilitating life-long learning, supporting active citizenship, with emphasis specifically in European urban traders.

The work carried out by a capable Consortium who worked hard during 12 months - since the first day of the project's start, in order to ensure that the project will meet its objectives. In order to guarantee the quality of the product and in order to meet all the objectives of the project, close cooperation among partners needed to be established and maintained throughout the project. The project's coordinating company (Intracom GmbH) and the project's Coordinator (Prof. Andreas Zagros) was in direct contact with individual National Coordinators. Furthermore, 3 partners' meetings (kick-off and 2 project meetings) took place at crucial milestone-points in time. Effective Working relationships were tested and cooperation / communication were expected to operate without problems. The partners communicated within the Consortium mainly through e-mail, phone calls and conference calls when needed.

The project's website was developed by POINT including one section with access restricted to the partners using it only to co-ordinate information exchange, keep up-to date information about the project, store project documents and more generally serve as a project repository for all information necessary to the administrative, technical and exploitation management. This sort of Intranet provided a web-based group work environment with contact information, up loadable and searchable document management system, project operational procedures, online project plan, etc. In practice, most communication was informal messages between participants using mainly email.

The establishment of the rules for communication as well as the dissemination of various management guidelines such as templates for presentations, templates for testing procedures, questionnaires, posting of all findings in the Intranet, has set the tone for a high level of quality at the initial stages of the project. It has to be noted that all the partners of the Consortium have created their own banners, leaflets and posters in order to present them to interested parties.

2.2. Tools & Methodologies

According to the project's work program there are two major evaluation milestones in the project which are the Interim (first year of the project) and the Final Report (second year of the project). The Interim Progress Report sets the framework for the evaluation of WP1 ("Requirements Analysis"), WP2 ("Design of the AGORA e-learning Environment"), part of WP3 ("Implementation and testing the AGORA system") and part of WP5 ("Dissemination and Exploitation Activities"). The Final Report sets the framework for the evaluation of the complete version of WP3 ("Implementation and testing the AGORA system"), WP4 ("Evaluating "AGORA" results – An extensive experiment") and the final version of WP5 ("Dissemination and Exploitation Activities").

Examining the first milestone so far, the Consortium has performed a number of qualitative and quantitative audits to ensure that the overall quality of the project's results is up to the desired level. All the tasks leaders have been asked to provide a list with all the problems encountered/corrective actions during the execution of their tasks as well as an assessment of the quality of the outcomes of the tasks. Fortunately, there were no delays in this project during its first year, so no risks have aroused.

Additionally, the project's management has compiled and reviewed some aggregate information regarding the progress of the project such as the number of users contributing to the requirements collection phase, the quality of the people participating in the round table discussions and interviews, the effectiveness of the proposed dissemination strategy and the progress of the development team in various stages of the development progress.

Apart from this, the quality of each result/deliverable has been evaluated separately, first by the task leader, then by the Work Package leader and finally by the project coordinator. F&K has worked closely with all the partners of the Consortium but mainly with the project's Coordinator, in order to obtain the best result regarding the project's execution.

A number of methods have been used for evaluating the quality of the results. These methods are described later in this document (next section) along with possible risks associated with the evaluation of each deliverable.

3. Project Assessment and Evaluation

It has to be mentioned that in the specific project, there were no delay in the delivery date of results or deliverables. Regarding the internal quality measures, the team of F&K has distributed a poll to attendees of project meetings and asked them to assess the efficiency of the meeting and results were used to increase the quality of the meetings. For ***the visual products*** such as posters, banners, leaflets etc., the partners raised their criticisms individually and external attendees of the meetings have been asked to evaluate, and every partner organisation rated their own products as well as other partners' during their internal meetings.

Moreover, it has to be mentioned that ***the evaluation criteria*** of the training material were based on the template that had been prescribed during the 1st plenary meeting (February 2012, Mojmirovce, Slovakia). The partners followed strictly the criteria of the development of the material that conform to the learning objectives (informative), that had been introduced according to the needs analysis. Moreover, the assessment has been developed based on the initial target. Finally, we found out that the training material refers exactly to the target group that was defined during the meetings. Additionally, ***the Intranet*** was tested by F&K's technical team for functionality and stability. All possible scenarios from login to download were tested as well as on different internet browsers like Mozilla, opera etc. The intranet was regarded towards user-friendliness and to a clear human computer interaction.

Examining all the WPs in depth, we have to mention that, starting with **WP1 “Requirements Analysis”** of the project, the questionnaires were tested in Germany, Spain, Slovakia and Poland with potential users before being sent to all partners for translation and dissemination to the target group. The evaluation was focused not only on the content of the questionnaires but also on the time required to complete the questionnaire as well as the flow/sequence of questions. The aim was to provide a fully functional and complete questionnaire that could be filled very quickly in order to attract as many possible responders. ICOM as the coordinator has also reviewed the final version of the questionnaire as well as the results before distributing them to the users. The questionnaires are available in seven languages (EN, DE, GR, SK, TR, SP and PL).

A deliverable named “Review of existing technologies” was not foreseen at the proposal stage, but it was deemed as necessary to ensure that the technologies used for the development of the system are the appropriate ones. It is obvious from the results of the research that technology options that initially seem viable, at the end might have created difficulties in implementing the project. Intracom has developed a prototype for this integration and shared its experience with the rest of the technical partners. The aim is to test the integration and evaluate its feasibility. The final result of WP1, named “Needs Analysis Report” has been prepared by ICOM as well. A draft of the deliverable was distributed to the partners in order to provide their comments, which were taken into consideration by ICOM and preceded in further improvements. This deliverable refers to the results of the user requirement analysis and provides recommendations for development and testing. Additionally, POINT was involved in the specific report.

About 80% of the work referring to **WP2 “Design of the “AGORA” e-Learning Environment”** has been carried out so far. Ten training modules have been developed and they are divided into 3 categories: modules for Managers, modules for Workers and modules for Job Seekers. The evaluation of the material took place over the intranet. All partners had the possibility to evaluate and propose changes of the materials. The final versions are uploaded in the Intranet as well. The training material follows totally the template and the general rules that were agreed by the partners.

Regarding **WP3 “Implementation and testing the “AGORA system”**, the Intranet was developed on time by POINT and in general about 50% of this WP is completed. The system was tested for its functionality by the partners internally. Also the consortium users were allowed to use the Intranet for one month before fully deploying it and making it available to all partners. Concerning **WP4 “Evaluating “AGORA” results – An extensive experiment”**, no work has been carried out so far. The work will start within the forthcoming months according to the proposal.

The partners of the Consortium have worked really hard within the framework of **WP5 “Dissemination and exploitation activities”** under the auspice of POINT and COOP. POINT has designed and developed the public website of the AGORA Europe II project since month 3rd of the project start. The content was provided by POINT as well. The portal was tested internally by the partners of the consortium. The portal was made available and the partners were asked to send their comments. A common methodology for testing software applications was followed by F&K in order to test the system. The truth is that no special comments were provided. The website is already offered in 7 languages (EN, GR, DE, SP, TR, SK and PL) and is available in the following address: <http://www.agora-eu.org>.

An exploitation and dissemination manager from COOP has prepared a table which is sent to the partners in a regular basis in order to complete their dissemination activities that have been realized so far. Newsletters are prepared by COOP as well and they are all translated into the partners’ languages. Dissemination event calendars have been distributed to the partners of the Consortium on a regular basis keeping them aware of forthcoming events. The project logo was developed by COOP and will be using during the entire project. Banners, leaflets and posters were designed by each partner and all partners voted for their preferences during their 2nd Plenary meeting in Athens (July 2012).

All partners of the Consortium have contributed to the dissemination activities in different ways, either by participating in events (workshops and round tables), or including short descriptions of AGORA Europe II in their websites. It is worth mentioning that all of the partners have developed a market survey in their countries in order to be informed about the competition of our product and start

preparing a SWOT analysis in order to present it in the Plan for Using & Disseminating Knowledge at the end of the project. Exploitation activities have already been discussed between the partners and they will be finalised after a clear description of the project's outcomes will have been realized.

Regarding **WP6 "Project Management"**, three project meetings have taken place within the first year of the project, where an expert from F&K was present in the kick-off (Berlin) and the 2nd plenary meeting (Athens) of the project along with the rest of the partners of the Consortium. There are no special references that have to be mentioned during the meetings. The Interim progress report was developed according to management guidelines which were in-line with the LLP guidelines and best practices as they are mentioned in the appropriate handbook. F&K has verified that Interim Report is aligned with the needs and demands of LLP Germany.

Finally, the quality assurance plan has been under the supervision of the Quality Manager from F&K acquiring valuable information from all the partners in person. A whole team has worked for this report watching closely during all this first year of the project the partners' activities. This plan was scheduled for the end of the project at month 24 (September 2013). But, for its best execution, it was agreed to develop one more plan for the first year of the project.

4. Conclusions

It is only has to be noted that the partner WSNIF from Poland has withdrawn from the project and its duties have been replaced by the company 36.6.

This document is responsible for the Overall Project Assessment. F&K's team tried to explain in the best possible detail the approach of the AGORA Europe II team to guarantee the quality of the AGORA platform. The methods used for testing the platform, ensured that the project has met its objectives according to the proposal and each milestone has been achieved within its time-schedule and that its objectives have been qualitatively & quantitatively accomplished.

The existence of the Interim Report – September 2012 (and Final Report at the end of the project – September 2013) acted as reference to enforcing quality controls throughout the project as well as the presence of a dedicated Work Package (WP4 – AGORA evaluation) for evaluating the outcomes of the project. The number of users (internal and external) that were involved in the project's evaluation makes certain that most of the platform's issues have been addressed. It is in our belief that the product will be ready to be commercialized at its end.