DIGITBRAIN

D1.2 - Project Quality Handbook

WP1 - Project coordination and technical management

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Project details and Deliverable information

Project details

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Document history and quality check

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0.2	03/08/2020	Antonio M. Ortiz (PNO)	Added content
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Quality check review

Reviewer (s)	Main changes
André Stork	Overall review of the document

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List of abbreviations and definitions

Abbreviation	Definition
D	Deliverable
DoA	Description of Action
EC	European Commission
GA	Grant Agreement
H2020	Horizon 2020
KoM	Kick-off Meeting
M	Month
PC	Project coordinator
QC	Quality Checker
SC	Scientific Coordinator
WP	Work Package
WPL	Work Package Leader

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Executive summary

The aim of the Project Quality Handbook is to define a set of procedures and rules that shall allow the produced deliverables and/or documents to correctly communicate, explain and detail the activities performed and results reached within the project, satisfying the relevant quality standards.

The implementation of a quality process will support the DIGITbrain's consortium in the monitoring of the activities, the identification of new potential risks, the implementation of contingency plan and the timely communication of an eventual change to the European Commission.

All project participants will be involved in the quality assurance process.

The information provided in this deliverable is complementary to the rules and guidelines defined in the D1.1 "Project Management Handbook".

1. Introduction

The implementation of quality assurance procedures is part of the objectives (O1.7 and O1.8) clearly indicated in the DoA of DIGITbrain.

The quality assurance procedures should focus on monitoring activities built into the work programme to ensure that all project outcomes are compliant with the expected quality standards. This activity will be performed during all the project duration as Task 1.3, with the support of all beneficiaries to guarantee the correct implementation of the procedures here defined.

This deliverable describes the quality plan defined for the project, including:

- a schedule for the implementation of the quality check process,
- the identification of internal and external peer reviewers, as well as
- the way of reporting the quality check performed, to ensure that satisfactory quality standards are met.

The Project Quality Handbook is a living document throughout the entire duration of the project and a new version, if any change is implemented, will be reported in the Progress and/or Periodic Reports.

2. DIGITbrain quality assurance responsibilities

The implementation of quality assurance procedures will count on the support of all beneficiaries involved in the project. The different roles identified in the management structure (see D1.1) will take part in the DIGITbrain's quality process.

Each individual member of the project is directly responsible for:

- the quality of the work performed for the tasks under his/her responsibility,
- the identification and implementation of preventive and corrective actions (if needed),
- the identification of necessary improvements to the achieved results to meet the project initially expected results.

The following sections describe the different roles and responsibilities specifically linked to the quality assurance process.

2.1. Project Coordinator

The responsibilities of the Project Coordinator (PC), in relation to the quality, are:

- to prepare the Project Quality Handbook,
- to oversees the application of quality assurance process to deliverables,
- to carry out a final quality check of the format for each deliverable: i.e. correct filling of deliverable information, use of correct template and layout, etc.,
- to monitor and keep updated the risks table,
- to upload the final version (in pdf) of the deliverables into the European Commission Participant Portal.

2.2. Scientific Coordinator

The Scientific Coordinator (SC) will be involved in the preparation of technical deliverables as advisor, in the evaluation of the achieved results and of any relevant issue that might arise.

In particular, the SC will:

- provide feedback directly to the WP leader in case the deliverable is not as expected in the DoA. WP leader will take the necessary actions to correct this issue,
- ensure the overall coherence and complete coverage of topics related to the field in the project.

Therefore, the SC shall indicate possible suggestions/comments to improve the technical deliverables in case they do not reflect the expected aim.

2.3. Work Packages leaders

Each WP leader is responsible for the Quality Assurance (QA) within the respective lead WP and may delegate quality procedures to Task Leaders when appropriate. The tasks of the WP Leaders regarding quality issues are:

- define contributing partners to specific deliverable,
- organise meetings/conferences when necessary for the organisation of activities of the WP,
- update deliverable status table, to be communicated (in the progress reports or when specifically requested) to the Project Coordinator,
- identify risks and update the risks table, to be communicated (in the progress reports or when specifically requested) to the Project Coordinator,
- define intermediate steps for delivery of documents,
- provide visibility on activity progress,
- define and update the structure of the folders in the internal management portal related to the WP to facilitate the exchange of information.

2.4. Deliverable responsible

The value and amount of the work carried out in the task is represented in the deliverable. Deliverables should reflect the work done in the related task; therefore, they must provide a clear picture of the activities fulfilled and results achieved.

The beneficiary responsible of each deliverable is already identified in the DoA; however, the specific name of the person in charge of the deliverable preparation will be defined in the quality review process.

The tasks of the partner(s) responsible for a deliverable regarding quality issues are:

- define the structure of the document,
- collect information from contributing partners,
- create a single master document that is properly structured and have a natural flow and consistency. Deliverables should not be just a collection of contributions but a single coherent document providing credible proofs for all the claims made in the document,
- keep updated the master file and manage the organisation of the information,
- update WP leader about progress of activities,
- identify risks and update the risk table related to the specific task/deliverable (in the internal progress reports or when specifically requested),
- provide the deliverable in time to allow the internal quality process assurance (see Section 3).

Each version of the deliverables should be shared in the internal management platform and the files should be identified/named as indicated in D1.1 "Project Management Handbook".

Changes in the different versions must be done in track-changes modality.

Final version of the deliverable (in word and pdf format) must be saved in the internal management platform and a communication should be sent to the PC to proceed with the submission to the EC.

The final responsibility for the quality of a deliverable belongs to the partner responsible for the activity (WP Leader and Task Leader).

2.5.   Quality Checker

At least one Quality Checker (QC) shall review each deliverable. QCs shall not be authors or co-authors of the deliverable to be reviewed.

QCs are invited to give detailed and constructive comments (with references, whenever possible) that will help the authors to improve the deliverable.

It will be the responsibility of the QCs to indicate whether the report is too large for the purpose (and the work included).

For data protection reasons, the internal QCs are indicated in a separate file only available for the consortium partners in the Innovation Place platform. For the technical deliverables, since all the technical WPs are interrelated, the following assignments will be followed (at least in the first period):

- WP Leader of WP3 will perform the QC for WP4 deliverable and vice versa.
- WP Leader of WP5 will perform the QC for WP6 deliverable and vice versa.
- For WP7, the Technical Coordinator will perform the QC of the deliverables, supported by the Exploitation Manager.

3. DIGITbrain's quality assurance process

The quality assurance process defines the procedures, schedule, quality reviews and reporting activities to be implemented for each deliverable identified in the DoA.

For data protection reasons, this deliverable being public, the names of deliverables responsible as well as the names of the QCs, will be available just for the consortium in the internal project management area, with restricted access only for partners.

3.1.   Deliverables

As already indicated in the DoA, each deliverable has a responsible partner already identified.

All deliverables of types P = Prototype, D = Demonstrator and O = Other, should be accompanied by a short report, that will be submitted as document in pdf in the Participant Portal. This report shall be reviewed following the rules as defined here for deliverables of type R = Report.

Deliverables should be conceived according to the objectives and the target audience, e.g. project stakeholders, open calls participants, general public, etc. As already said, the deliverables should reflect the work done in the related task.

Recommendations received by the Project Officer (PO), during the KoM, to be taken into consideration for the preparation of deliverables:

- avoid plagiarism! Copy&Paste is not a valid option and can lead to severe problems for all beneficiaries,
- avoid being repetitive, please not repeat information/content available in the DoA or in any other deliverable: use references to the other documents when needed.

- be clear about the objective of the deliverable, and then be very concise about which content to include in the document.

From lessons learned in other H2020 projects, it would be effective to answer (by the deliverable responsible) the following three questions before starting the preparation of the document:

- what is the purpose of the deliverable?
- Who is the target audience?
- What is the best way to convey the information?

The deliverable leader is responsible for the arrangements, initiation and monitoring of the quality control process. QCs, already identified as part of this document, should be confirmed when the preparation of the document starts.

Following the path described in Section 3.2, contacting QCs, deadlines, etc., is under the responsibility of the deliverable responsible in collaboration and supervision with the WP leader.

3.2.   Quality control path and timeline

The quality control path designed for DIGITbrain is represented in the following figure. This process might be fine-tuned after the first months of the project; any changes to the process will be communicated to the partners by email and the new process together with the diagram illustrating the updated process will be upload to the internal management portal.

The quality assurance process will involve the following roles (see Figure 1):

1. **Deliverable responsible (editors):** the partner(s)/person(s) responsible for the deliverable, provide a document that is quality checked by him/her with respect to contents, format, grammar, orthography and style.
   Editors must ensure that there will not be any inconsistencies across deliverables and the same terminologies are used across deliverables.
2. **Deliverable contributors:** the partner(s)/person(s) contributing to the deliverable, provide complete and concise input that is quality checked by him/her with respect to contents, format, grammar, orthography, and style, complying to the structure of the deliverable to which they contribute.
3. **WP leader (WPL):** when the WP leader is a different partner/person from the deliverable responsible, he/she read all inputs and verifies that the contents are in line with the expected results and tasks listed in the DoA.
4. **Scientific Coordinator:** after release by the WPL, the SC may check the deliverable too. The WPL can consult with the SC in case of lacking quality.
5. **Project Coordinator:** will check the deliverable once it will be ready for submission. The deliverable responsible should send the final version in .docx and .pdf to the Project Coordinator.
6. **(internal) QCs:** QCs expect to receive deliverables which are ready to be submitted to the EC. QC oversee formatting issues, perform consistency checks but are not responsible for language issues. QC will double check complete coverage of topics

related to the tasks. The QCs might be involved in the structuring of a deliverable as advisors. QCs evaluate the achieved results and any relevant issue that might need to be documented in the deliverable.

Therefore, the QCs are expected to provide feedback about the clarity and structure of the information provided in the deliverable and on the content.
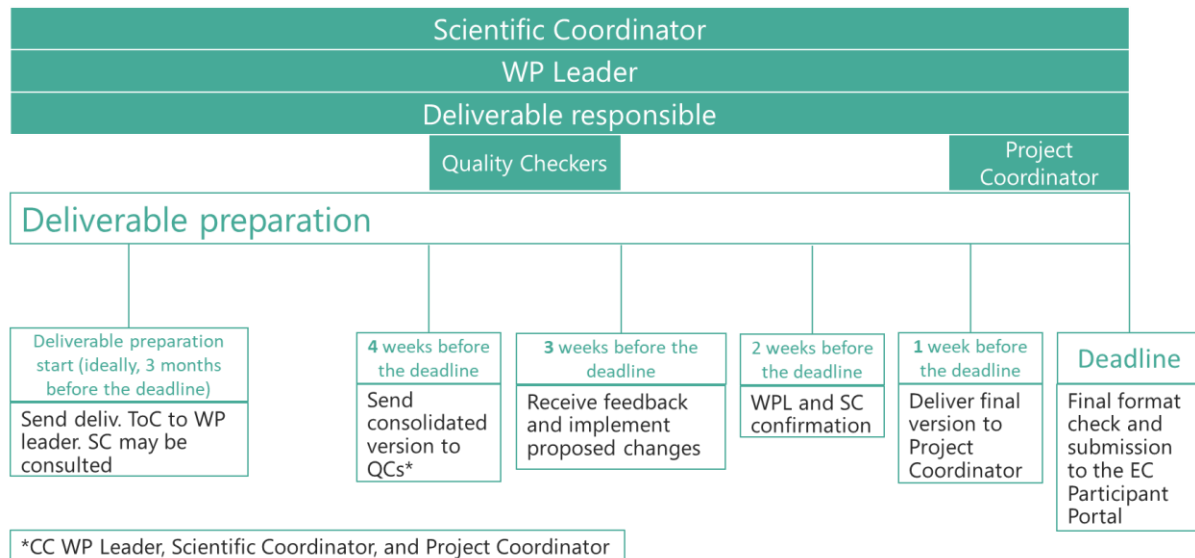

Figure 1. Quality control actors and timeline.

It is expected that constant quality checks will be applied during the production process of the deliverables and the final check will mainly involve a formal quality control. Such quality control will be based on the following steps (see Figure 1):

- **Deliverable preparation start (expected 3 months before the deadline, whenever possible)**: deliverable responsible sends initial Table of Contents to WP Leader. WPL and SC may have a telco to kick-off the deliverable writing period 3 months before the deadline.
- **4 weeks before the deadline**: deliverable responsible sends the consolidated version (including all the inputs form the partners – full content) to the QCs, cc'ing the WP Leader, Scientific Coordinator, and Project Coordinator. NB: "all the inputs" means complete inputs not just the ones received so far, i.e. the deliverable responsible (many times the WPL) has to ensure along the process that 4 weeks before the deadline he/she can send a consolidated version of the deliverable to the QCs. Already including his/her own QC and quality improvement measures.
- **3 weeks before the deadline**: Deliverable responsible receives feedback from the internal QCs and implements proposed changes.
- **2 weeks before deadline:** Then, WP Leader and Scientific Coordinator will have one week to confirm that the deliverable complies with the expected quality level.
- **1 week before the deadline**: deliverable responsible, after receiving the approval from WPL and SC, delivers the final version to the Project Coordinator.
- **Deliverable deadline**: final format check and submission to the EC Participant Portal.

The exact schedule for each deliverable, also considering the availability of the different persons involved, will be agreed in the deliverable writing kick-off telco(s).

3.3. Methods to be used for the quality control

The following recommendations will be shared with each person involved in the quality control:

- when working with Word documents, QCs' comments and contributions are to be done using the "Track Changes" mode combined with specific text comments aligned with the specific section. Collaborative online edition may be available for specific deliverables which require input from multiple partners. In any case, all deliverables to be sent to the QCs should be in an editable format.
- In the case where, by unexpected reasons, the QC is not able to meet the deadline, the deliverable leader should be informed as soon as possible to be able to replace the QCs.
- The QCs should take into consideration, when applicable, the issue of GDPR and management of IPR of the project results, making any suitable comments on this respect.

3.3.1. Quality check template

The QCs involved in the quality check should complete a "QC form" providing some information about the check performed to keep track of the QC process and be able to implement, when requested, improvements/changes. Additional comments can be included in the deliverable text to indicate proposed changes. The DIGITbrain deliverable QC form, detailed in Table 1 will also be part of the deliverables template and will be removed after the QC process is completed and before the submission to the European Commission.

Table 1. DIGITbrain deliverable QC form.

Deliverable number, title, and version		
QC name:	QC organisation	Date:
01 - Are title, number, type and dissemination level in accordance with the definition in the DoA?		
02 - Is the scope and content of the deliverable in line with its definition in the DoA?		
02b - If this is not the case, is there a justification for it and/or is a contingency plan presented?		
03 - Does the document contain an "Executive summary" section, and an "Introduction" correctly positioning the deliverable in the project and defining its objectives?		
04 - Are the objectives of the deliverable and its activities clearly stated?		

05 - Is the deliverable consistent with its objectives?
06 - Is the Executive summary sufficiently informative, especially when read as a stand-alone text?
07 - Is the organization of the deliverable satisfactory (e.g. introduction, objective, methods, results, conclusions, references, etc.)?
08 - Is the deliverable in accordance with the template (project branding, front page, second page, table of contents, list of figures, list of tables, fonts, headings, spacing, captions of figures and tables, page numbers, etc.)?
09 - If relevant, does the deliverable explain its relationship with other project deliverables (including other versions of this deliverable – past and future)?
10 - If symbols or abbreviations are used in the deliverable: is there a complete list of symbols and abbreviations?
11 - Is the scientific / technical approach sound, adequate and state of the art?
12 - Are interpretations and conclusions sound, justified by the data and consistent with the objectives?
13 - Is the quantity of data/information presented adequate?
14 - Does the content justify the length?
15 - Are the figures and tables all necessary and correctly referenced?
16 - Are the figures and tables complete (e.g. content, numbers and captions), clearly presented and of good quality? Are the references cited relevant and up to date?
17 - Are all the cited references in the Bibliography/References Section?
18 - Is the deliverable written in British English, with good syntax and grammar, and adequate language for the target group(s)? Are grammar and spelling checks ok?
19 - Do hyperlinks and references work?
20 - Additional comments (if any)

4. Conclusions

This deliverable, the Project Quality Handbook, summarizes the procedures that will be implemented by DIGITbrain consortium to conduct the work towards meeting the project objectives with the highest possible quality level.

All partners are committee to guarantee the quality standards expected for the project.

D1.2 is a complementary document to the information provided in the GA and in D1.1 and should be considered as a handbook to be used as a reference for all beneficiaries and for the entire project duration.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY / REFERENCES

- DIGITbrain Grant Agreement (GA): Part A and Part B.
- Deliverable D1.1 "DIGITbrain Management Handbook".